

Our Wellington

Your weekly Council guide to your city

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WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL **Wellington**

Owhiro Bay restoration an award winner

The City Council's restoration of the former Owhiro Bay Quarry has been recognised with an important environmental award.

The Council has won the Aggregate and Quarry Association's 2005 Mimico Environmental Excellence Award. It recognises the massive transformation of the site in the six years since quarrying ceased.

The quarry operated for nearly 80 years and provided huge amounts of rock and beach gravel for Wellington's construction industry. However, the quarry operations could not carry on forever, both from an economic and environmental point of view. The quarry was exacting a major toll on this popular stretch of coastline.

The improvements have been ongoing since the Council purchased the former quarry site from Milburn in 1999. The Council was responding to growing community pressure to close the operation, which was literally a



Aerial view of the new and improved coastline.

scar on the South Coast. Now with the new improvements, it is starting to look right again.

The \$500,000 rehabilitation of the rugged stretch of the South Coast has involved the shifting and recontouring of an estimated 300,000 cubic metres of overburden, tailings and soil,

extensive planting of coastal native plant species, realignment of a coastal track and the restoration of the Hape Stream, which runs through the site.

Some newcomers may find it difficult to compare this part of the coast now, against what it was like before the quarry closure. Nature increasingly

has a foothold and the landscape is beginning to thrive.

Some of the major benefits of the project have included the restoration of the Hape Stream, allowing eels and whitebait to return. The enthusiastic involvement of schools and community groups, who are continuing to plant the old quarry slopes with hardy native vegetation, will add to the quarry's natural growth and development.



Wildlife now enjoy a more natural environment.

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Plus, the restriction of vehicles allows recreational users to walk the rugged coast line without having to dodge cars.

Winning the award is a great achievement for the Council and the community, says Council Quarry Manager Brian Bouzaid — who has led the restoration project. It's a tribute to very hard work by many Council staff and community volunteers over the past few years. It's now a pleasure to visit this place.



The planting is essential to the quarry's continuing development.