



Equestrians in Mahurangi

Presentation to Greg Sayers, Auckland Councillor for Rodney

Naomi Marshall, Karen Richardson and Nadia Sakey

7th May 2025

Matakana Branch Pony Club – an active part of the community



Riders Without Horses

DO YOU LOVE HORSES BUT DON'T HAVE ONE OF YOUR OWN?

We are excited to be bringing back the **Riders Without Horses Programme (RWH)** for the 2024/2025 season. Learn everything about horse management and care for horses along with fun activities!

Note: This is a non-riding course, however there will be the occasional opportunity for small rides and working around horses.

Benefits for participants:

- Join a pony club
- Learn horse management skills
- Learn how to safely work with horses
- Have fun and meet new people

A deeper delve into Equitation Science

with Toni Atkins

IN CONJUNCTION WITH MATAKANA PONY CLUB
OPEN TO ALL ADULT RIDERS

- Make giving the correct response easier
- The key to a calm horse comes from control of the legs
- Combined training using negative and positive reinforcement
- Understanding the basics of horse psychology
- Learn to be consistently consistent so your horse can relax and rely on you

Lesson is a mix of unmounted and mounted

Sue Pennington Equestrian Clinic

IN CONJUNCTION WITH MATAKANA PONY CLUB
OPEN TO ALL RIDERS

Sue's coaching focuses on helping you improve your and your horse's asymmetry, for improved soundness leading to more harmony and connection between you and your horse.

Sue works with you to create a more balanced and aware posture that helps you and your horse excel in your chosen discipline, whether that be Show Jumping, Dressage, Eventing, Western, Endurance or Pleasure Riding!

Sue is a qualified ESNZ Coach as well as one of only three Accredited Ride With Your Mind Coaches across NZ. Lessons are tailored to suit each unique combination.

Dates: Sunday 13th Oct, Saturday 14th Dec, Sunday 16th Feb and Sunday 6th April
Where: Matakana Pony Club, Diamond Jubilee Park, Matakana (if wet grounds, at a local arena)
Cost: Private 2 Rides, Group 4 Rides, \$15 per person. Please pay using the QR code. Enquire now: www.suepennington.co.nz

'Have a go' Fun Dressage

with Toni Atkins, qualified ESNZ Dressage Coach

IN CONJUNCTION WITH MATAKANA PONY CLUB
OPEN TO ADULT MEMBERS

Come along for fun and informal Dressage clinics. A great opportunity to ride 1 or 2 tests, get feedback from Toni and then ride the test(s) on Clinic 2.

Choose 1 or 2 tests from A, 1A and 2A

Dressage Clinic 1: Ride test, feedback from Toni

Dressage Clinic 2: Then ride test again

Show Jumping Clinics with Jo Bullock

OPEN TO ALL RIDERS

Fridays 1st Nov, 22nd Nov & 13th Dec
Matakana Pony Club, Diamond Jubilee Park

Book direct with Jo on messenger or ph/text 021 116 7251

FOR MORE DETAILS:
www.matakanaponyclub.co.nz
f MatakanaPonyClub

Twilight Show Jumping

Wednesday 29th Jan from 5.30pm at MATAKANA PONY CLUB
Diamond Jubilee Park
OPEN TO ALL RIDERS

Matakana Branch Pony Club is excited to present our Twilight SJ event. This is a fun event for all levels to attend.

Masters Ribbon Day

SUNDAY 8TH DECEMBER

Join us for the Matakana Pony Club Fundraiser - a day of fun and games for riders 25 years and over, with some FABULOUS prizes up for grabs!

3 Rings:

- Not too Serious Wannabes
- Kind of Serious Try Hards
- Serious Smart Asses

Date: Sunday 8th December
Start Time: 10am (Registration 8.30 - 9.45am)
Entry Fee: \$40 per horse - cash on the day
Register Entries: mhpcpevents@gmail.com (specify your name, horse/s name and ring /s)
Address: Matakana Pony Club, Diamond Jubilee Park, 207 Matakana Valley Road, Matakana

BBQ will be fired up and sausages available for lunch along with home baked goods, bring cash!

Sorry, no dogs!

End of Season Ribbon Day

OPEN EVENT

SUNDAY 30TH MARCH

5 Rings

- Lead Rein
- First Season
- 12 Yrs & Under
- 13 Yrs to 16 Yrs
- 17 Yrs & Over

Pony Club Uniform or Jackets to be worn.

Date: Sunday 30th March
Start Time: 10am (Registration 8.30 - 9.45am)
Entry Fee: \$30 per day, \$25 Half Day
Includes: (non refundable) \$5 Admin Fee, Late entry Fee \$10
Register Entries: Google Forms (Link on our website)
Entries close: Friday 28th March
Address: Matakana Pony Club, Diamond Jubilee Park, 207 Matakana Valley Road, Matakana

BBQ will be fired up and sausages available for lunch along with home baked goods, bring cash! Sorry, no dogs!

Adult Pony Camp

Saturday 15th - Sunday 16th March
Glenbrook Farm

- Day 1: Trek with lunch stop, dinner & fire pit
- Day 2: Trek & mini fun ribbon day in the 50 x 60 sand arena
- Shared bach with shower & toilet, cooking facilities
- BYO food and drink to share
- Electric tape paddocking

Come for one day or two.

www.matakanaponyclub.co.nz
f MatakanaPonyClub

Nag n' Wag Treks

Adult Ride & Friends of Matakana PC (Financial Members)

Sunday 20th October - Te Arai
Sunday 24th November - Glenbrook Farm
Sunday 2nd February - Aitua Creek Regional Park
Sunday 13th April - Lake Tomarata

FOR MORE DETAILS:
www.matakanaponyclub.co.nz
f MatakanaPonyClub

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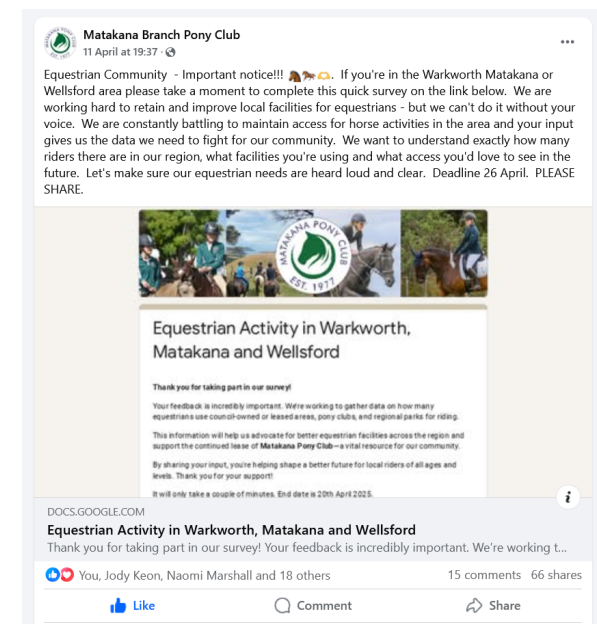
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Introduction



- The Warkworth, Matakana and Wellsford equestrian community has concerns that its needs are not being heard in our area and the access to facilities and safe places to ride are becoming limited
- Existing equestrian facilities on Council green space land are being reduced or eliminated due to the rapid development of rural towns in favour for other sports
 - The existence of Matakana Branch Pony Club remaining at Jubilee Park is under consistent threat despite its 50 year heritage and community support for it to remain an open green space. The reduced area to occupy the non profit organisation in 2025 will have a significant impact on its ability to survive and continue serving community.
 - Warkworth Branch Pony Club, founded in 1949, is significantly reduced in the Mahurangi Sports and Recreation Collective Showgrounds 10-Year Plan
- We seek to safeguard the equestrian community in this area
- We seek to retain our rural identity whilst embracing new residents - afterall, that is why they are moving here!
- To argue our case, we looked in to statistics:
 - There are many equestrian databases across different disciplines, however the recent Equestrian Facility Strategy 2023 is limited to only 2, both of which are competitive, so the numbers may be conservative:
 - Equestrian Sports New Zealand (ESNZ): for competitive equestrians above a certain level
 - Nominate: New Zealand Pony Club Association (NZPCA): for Pony Club members only
 - Some riders obtain a Auckland Regional Horse Riding Pass
- These databases do not provide a complete picture of the various disciplines equestrians are involved in. Therefore, we distributed an online questionnaire through local community pages to better determine the number of people involved, the activities they participate in, and their concerns and wishes
 - Conducted 11th April 2025 – 26th April 2025 via Facebook & email: 261 responses

NB: This is a sample of our community. To collect more data, we could open it up to other social platforms, press etc.

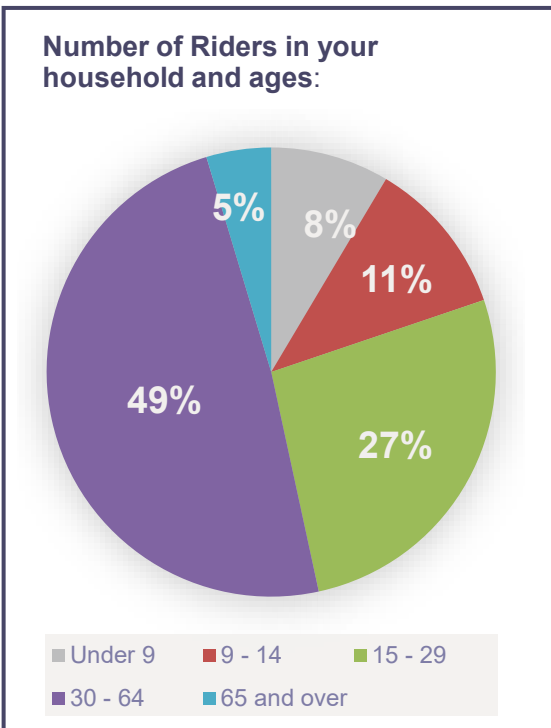
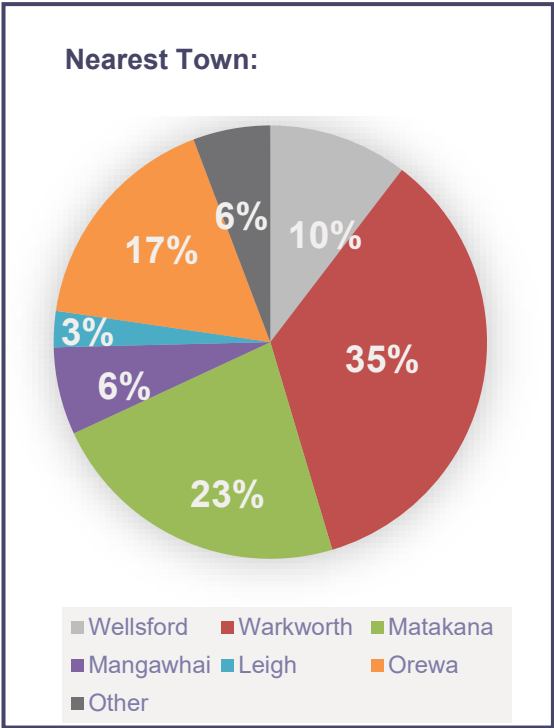


Our findings in summary

- Of the 515 riders in total, 58% live nearest Warkworth and Matakana
- Riders are multi-generational; kids, mothers and grandmothers
- Riders are primarily female¹

MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION 2
The overall membership profile for ESNZ and NZPCA is summarised below:

ESNZ	33%	44%	92% FEMALE
	AGED UNDER 18	AGED 19-50	
NZPCA	45%	44%	93% FEMALE
	AGED UNDER 18	AGED 26+	



New Zealand Government

Women and girls' participation

"We know that women and girls are underrepresented in decision-making roles within sport and active recreation, there are clear participation differences, and opportunities for females in sport and active recreation are not always fair and equal"
PETER MISKIMMIN, CEO SPORT NZ, OCTOBER 2018

Our aim is to see more women and girls physically active through play, active recreation and sport.

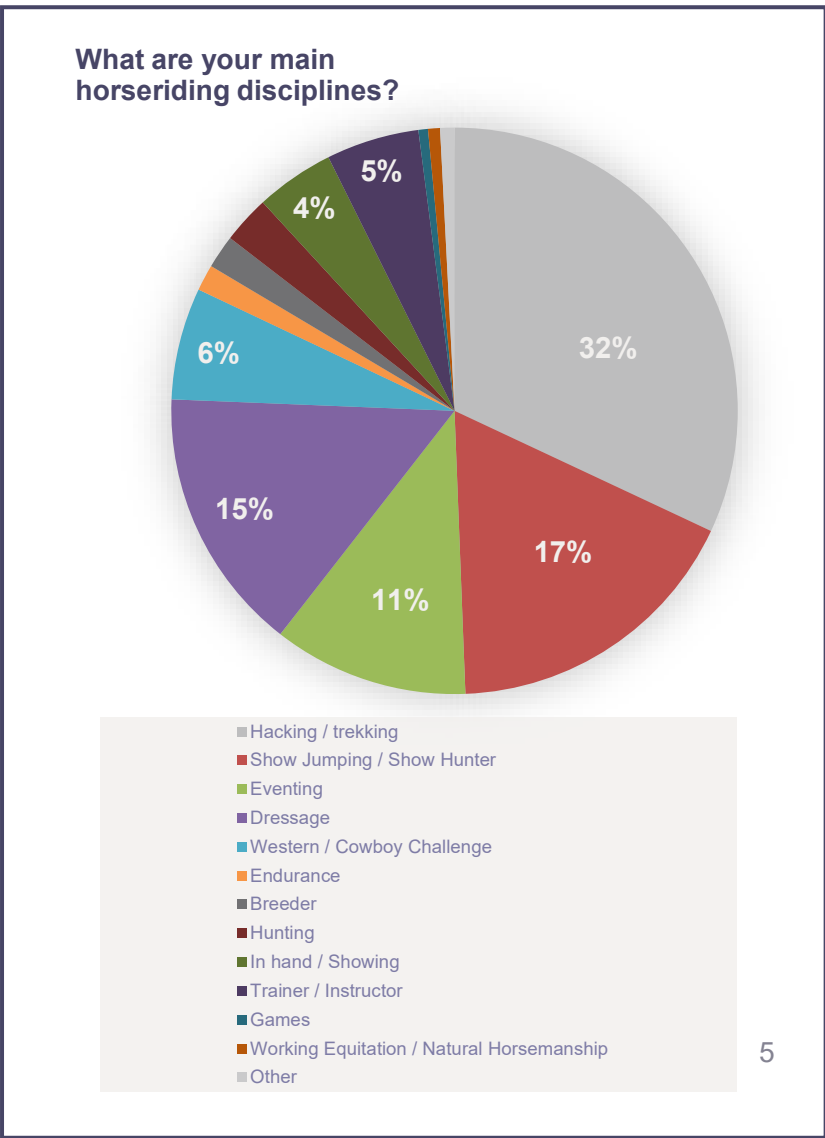
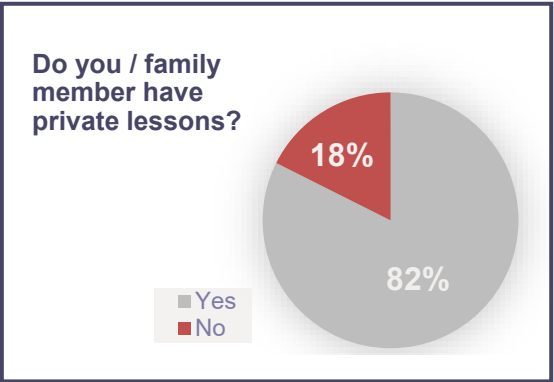
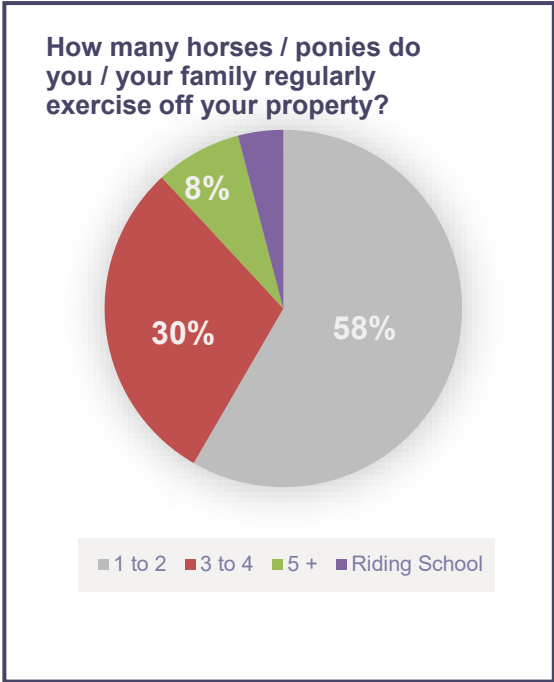
- Vision – "Enabling women and girls to realise their potential in and through sport and active recreation."
- Three key priority areas that underpin the strategy:
 1. Leadership – more women and girls are leading, working, coaching and volunteering at all levels.
 2. Participation – more women and girls are physically active.
 3. Value and Visibility – women and girls in sport and active recreation are valued and visible.

1: 100% of Matakana PC members are female / 98.5% of questionnaire respondents are female

2: National Equestrian Facilities Strategy 2023

Our findings in summary

- Around 739 horses in this area are exercised OFF the property
 - NB: This is not a total number of horses owned by responders. There will be horses on properties that are young, retired, brood mares etc. that are not included in this number – we are trying to ascertain shared, public access, not horse ownership.
- Of the large list of riding disciplines, around 455 require an all weather equestrian facility to conduct their sport
- 82% invest in private lessons, requiring an all weather equestrian facility

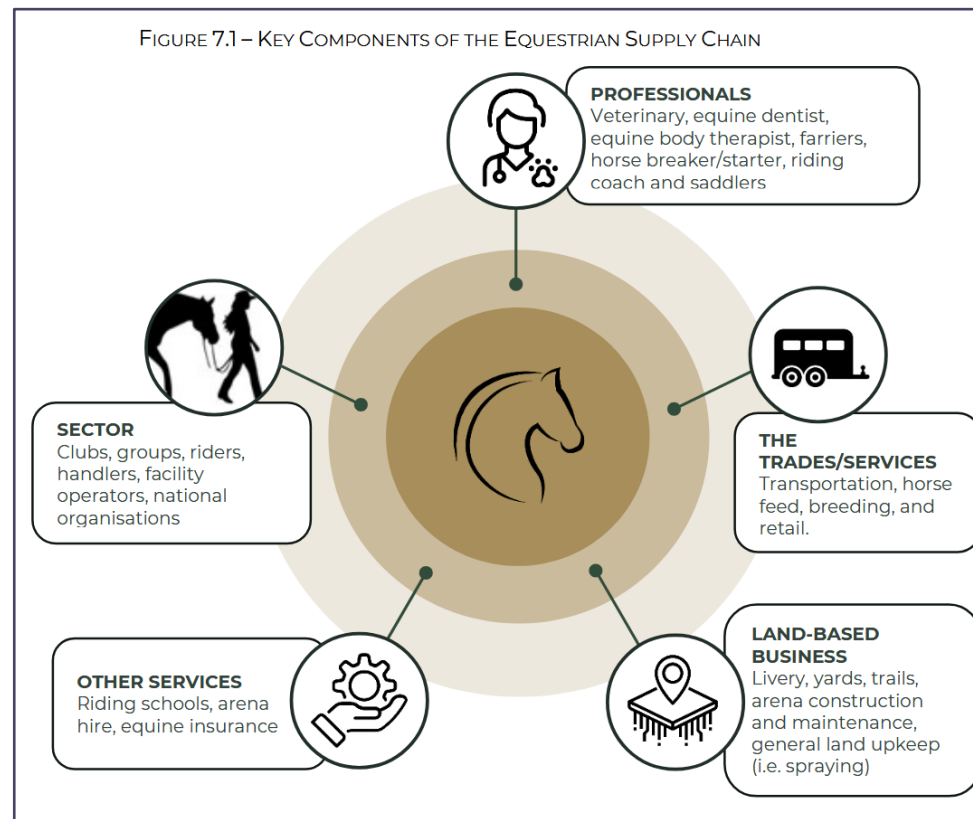


Our findings in summary

- Equestrians make a substantial economic contribution at the local, regional, and national levels, distinguishing them from many other sports and recreational activities. Key components of the equestrian supply chain are outlined in Figure 7.1¹
- Some of the key findings in a 2012 University of Waikato research [document](#)² (13 years ago so these numbers will be considerably higher now):
 - Estimated 80,000 sport horses in New Zealand
 - \$12,500 average total annual spend per horse
 - Contributes over \$1 billion to the New Zealand economy annually, this is greater than 0.5% of GDP
 - Directly sustains the equivalent of 12,000 full time equivalent (FTE's) jobs
 - Sport horse owning land owners spent an additional \$5 billion on land purchases to support their interests

1: National Equestrian Facilities Strategy 2023

2: Economic Impact Report on the New Zealand Sport Horse Industry July, 2012



Total Spend = \$17,231 per horse pa

Chat GPT: To adjust \$12,500 NZD from 2012 to its equivalent value in 2025, we can consider the cumulative inflation over that period. According to data from the World Bank and OECD, the New Zealand dollar has experienced a cumulative inflation of approximately 23.12% from 2012 to 2022. Assuming an average annual inflation rate of around 2.5% for the subsequent years, we can estimate the 2025 equivalent [Official Data](#). Using this approach, \$12,500 in 2012 would be approximately equivalent to \$17,231.39 NZD in 2025.



Total Spend = Recreational rider: \$600–\$1,200
= Enthusiastic/competitive rider: \$1,500–\$3,000+

Chat GPT

Our findings in summary

- Existing statistics do not represent full equestrian activity in our area and this questionnaire helps to fill the gaps:

- 55% of respondents do not have a family member belonging to NZPCA
- 60% of respondents do not have a family member belonging to ESNZ
- 92% of people said 'yes' to riding in Regional Parks or public spaces but only 49% have a permit

- In this area, the only Regional Park with a dedicated parking and marked horse tracks is Āturi Creek
- Other public spaces identified do not have horse parking or designated areas
- Rodney is under resourced and opportunities exist¹:

- There are a high number of sites to overall land mass in Auckland comparative to the rest of country (with higher membership per site).

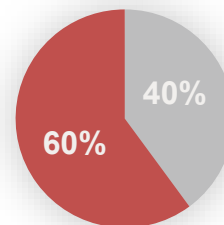
Recommendation 1: some opportunities appear to exist for exploring the possible consolidation of sites across wider Rodney. Short drive times/overlapping catchment areas and varying levels of membership exist. This will require more detailed analysis and stakeholder engagement.

Recommendation 2: Future provision should be explored within Rodney to reduce travel barriers (with focus placed on both day-to-day use and events to provide continuity of use) – this should be completed alongside Recommendation 1.

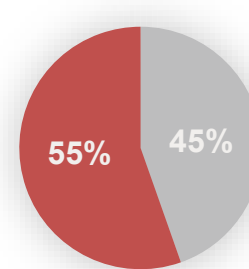
1: National Equestrian Facilities Strategy 2023

Do you / family member attend a Pony Club?
If yes, to Pony Club which one(s)?

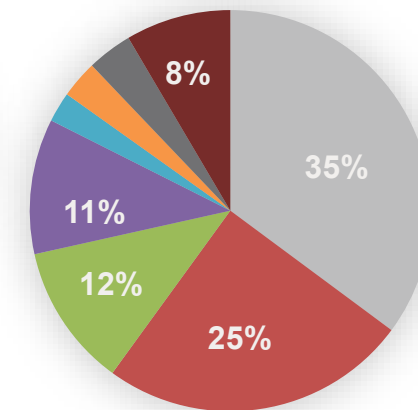
Are you registered with ESNZ?



■ Yes ■ No

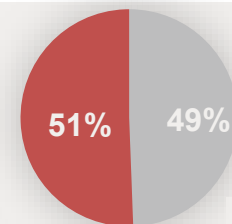


■ Yes ■ No



■ Matakana ■ Warkworth ■ Albertland
■ Hakeru ■ Silverdale ■ Kaukapakapa

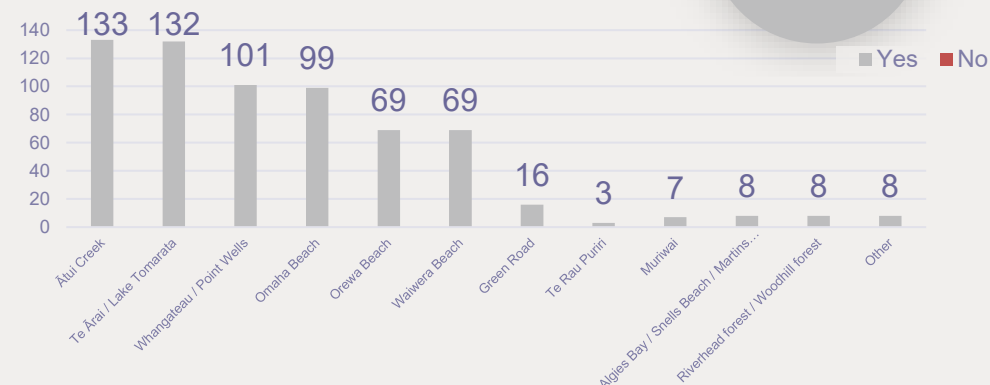
Do you / family member own a Auckland Regional Council Horse Riding Pass?



■ Yes ■ No

Do you / family member ride in any of the Regional Parks or Public spaces?

If yes, which ones?



Our findings in summary

- The 'Wish List' clearly shows a need for all weather facilities in our area and hacking facilities:
 - Riding / Pony Club Facility:
 - 110 would use 1 to 3 times a week,
 - 32 would 3 to 5 times a week
 - Full Equestrian Facility:
 - 90 would use 1 to 3 times a week,
 - 48 would 3 to 5 times a week
 - Hacking Facilities:
 - 129 would use 1 to 3 times a week,
 - 67 would 3 to 5 times a week
- 53% of respondents travel over 50km to attend an event in an all weather facility (22% over 76km!)
 - The cost and time of travel prohibits involvement in competitive sport
 - Health & Safety / environmental / sustainability concerns of traveling that distance for both horses and families



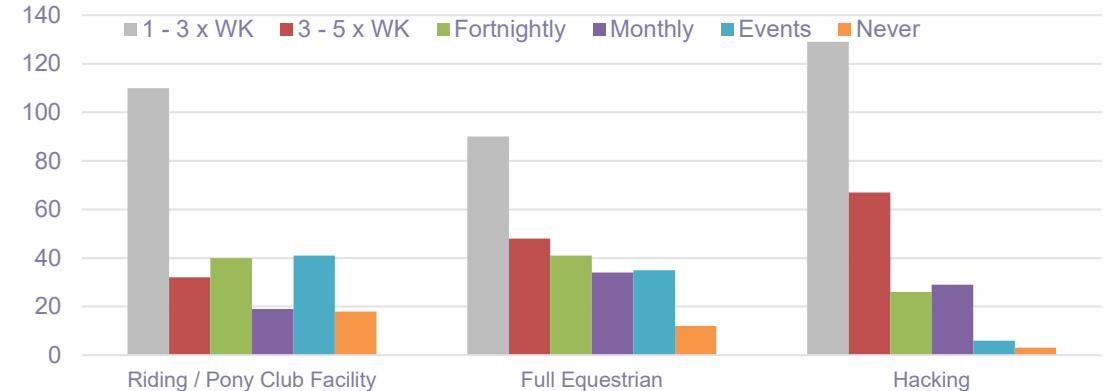
The following is a 'wish list' for our area
(Matakana, Warkworth, Wellsford):

1. Riding / Pony Club Facility: includes all weather sand arena, x country jumps, yards and a club house eg. Coatesville PC

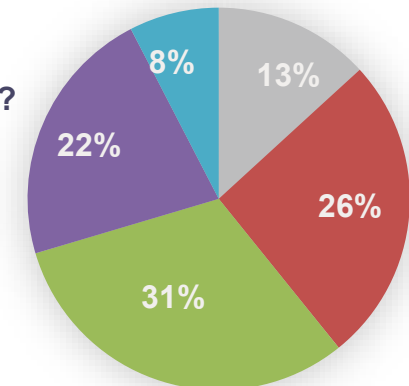
2. Full Equestrian Facility: suitable for large events and competitions. For the purpose of multiple equestrian and educational groups including and not limited to; Dressage, Show Jumping, Eventing, Equitation, Showing, and the Pony Clubs Association. These facilities include a minimum of one 20 x 60m all weather dressage arena, one all weather 80 x 50m show jumping arena, riding and grazing paddocks that include a 4-6km cross country course. A club house and teaching facilities. Storage facilities, covered yards and wash bay. eg. Papatoetoe PC.

3. Hacking Facilities: riding tracks through park lands, farmland and forest with adequate parking. eg. Green Park

Please rate each according to how much you / your family would use them:



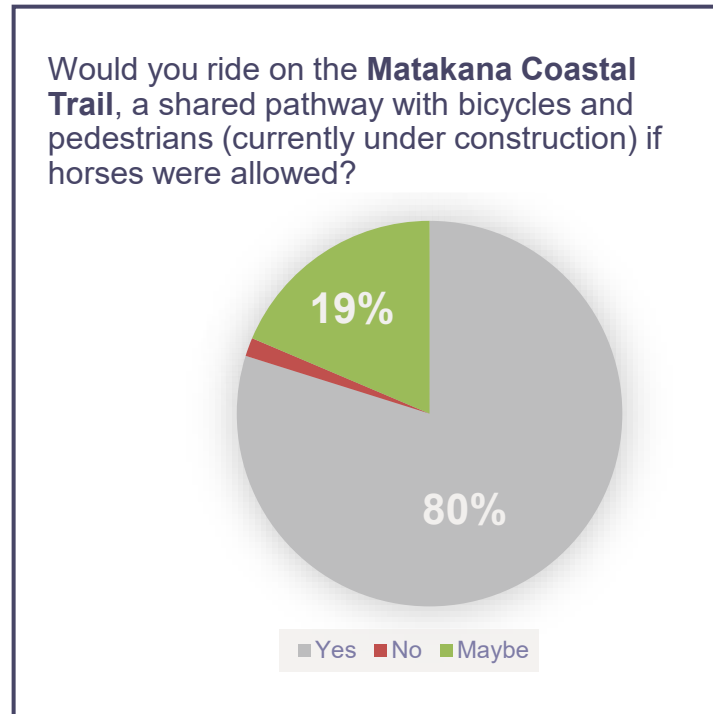
How far do you / family member have to travel for all weather event facilities?
eg. Woodhill Sands



Our findings in summary

- 80% of respondents would use the Matakana Coastal Trail
 - NB: We will be following up with the 19% 'Maybe' for their reasons. We suspect reasons will be because their horses are unsuitable to mix with cyclists – equestrians won't put themselves or others at risk.
- A combined **Cycleways, Walkways and Bridleways Strategy** is successfully being used in Kāpiti Coast District, endorsed by the council and other agencies.

*"This strategy takes a broad view of walking so that people with physical or cognitive disabilities, limited or no vision or hearing and those in wheelchairs or on mobility scooters are included. Walking, cycling and horse riding are vital for healthy, happy individuals and safe, vibrant and sustainable communities. Providing facilities and support for these activities is a priority for the Kāpiti Coast District Council"*¹.
- As with Kāpiti Coast, these bridleways become a visitor destination, bringing more to the community



And now we have your attention, a quick comparison of a kid competing at a Ribbon / Dressage /SJ Day and a kid competing at a Ball / Bike competition in our area

Sport	No. of brains involved	Daily Maintenance	1+ to 8 weeks equipment requirements	Prepare for a competition	Equipment goes wrong - implications
Equestrian	2	<p>HORSE(S): Feed horse(s) 1 to 2 x, hay nets, check water / salt or mineral block. Groom / pick feet 1 x, check for any cuts, lameness, bot flies / ticks – deal with them if they are there. Is horse healthy? (a whole list to think of if symptoms). Too much grass or too little – check behaviour and how they are standing ... colic?!</p> <p>Fly spray in summer, mud fever in winter – lots in between. Treat.</p> <p>Change rugs – fly sheet / waterproof / in-betweenie / wet weather.</p> <p>Exercise as often as possible, at least 1 hour 4 times a week. Pony Club Rally 1 x week in season plus private lessons with coach – often requires all weather facility. Vary exercise so horse has hacking as well as schooling to keep healthy and happy. Factor in transport.</p>	<p>HORSE(S): Farrier (every 5 weeks) unless lose a shoe in between. Physio (every 8 weeks unless treatment requires more). Regular Worming.</p> <p>TACK: Clean after each use: bridle and saddle leather cream / wax, rinse girths, wash saddle blankets. Regularly wash saddle blanket, leg wraps, sweat blankets, fly sheets etc.</p> <p>LAND: Regularly poo pick, check fencing (is the electric tape working?), top paddock, weed control, clean water troughs.</p>	<p>Prepare the day before: Clean uniform / tack, wash & groom horse and stable if poss, etc., Load up car / float with cleaned saddle(s), girth(s), saddle pad(s), other specialist equipment, bridle(s), sweat blanket, food, electrolytes, water, sweat / sponge and bucket, poo picker etc ready for early departure.</p> <p>In the morning: Have breakfast if time. Feed, groom, plait horse. Attach horse trailer to car. Float boots if necessary. Load horse, drive up to 76 km to all weather event facility.</p> <p>When you get there: Unload horse and poo scrape float. Hay net, water, groom, tack up, warm horse up in exercise area, compete.</p> <p>After competing: Cool horse down, wash, groom, cover, feed. Load on to float and drive home.</p> <p>When home: Unload horse. Regroom and cover, feed, put in paddock. Clean saddle, girth, saddle pad, other specialist equipment, bridle, sweat blanket, food buckets, dispose of poo. Shower – parent washes kit.</p>	<p>HORSE(S): : Farrier, Vet & medications, physios, stabling, rehabilitation, specialist food, extra care ...</p> <p>TACK: Tack Shop, Saddle fitter ...</p> <p>FLOAT: Specialist garage, organise lease float, insurance ...</p>
Other ball / bike sport	1	Train 1- 2 x week then match once a week	Check bike / racquet / ball / bat is ok	<p>Prepare the day before: Clean uniform / kit, make sure bike / racquet /ball / bat ok.</p> <p>In the morning: Have breakfast, get in the car and go.</p> <p>When you get there: Warm up. Compete.</p> <p>After competing: Cool down. Drive home. Shower – parent washes kit.</p>	Repair or buy another bike / racquet / ball / bat

“Equestrian activities /grounds being pc's ect are as important as any sports/sport fields, it is a sport that brings kids and parents together and makes it a family sport as the level of parents are involvement required is high, horses need to be transported, clubs need help setting up jumps, rings ect, ect the list goes on. The show prep is usually a combined effort of mums/dads and the rider/riders & there is alot of quality time you spend with your children when involved with horses along with some valuable life lessons the humble horse teaches you, In an age where we are trying to encourage more outdoor activities within families it would seem counter-intuitive to restrict such a sport or move it to far out of reach for alot.”

“Horse riding and caring for/ owning our own horses have given my children grounding, learning responsibilities and resilience, focus, kindness, patience, connection to and caring for the land they are riding on and the connection to the wider community, sharing their passion with younger members of the wider community and so so much more.

And last but not least it keeps them off the streets and getting into trouble.”

Conclusions

○ Community

- Equestrians clearly financially support the local, regional national economy!
- Our questionnaire indicates there is a need for more equestrian facilities in the community, including:
 - All weather event facility
 - Enhanced facilities at existing public spaces
 - Further bridlepaths added to Regional Parks and Coastal Paths in our area
- Preserve the rural character of our existing Pony Club green spaces, and require new developments to allocate separate green areas for other sport

○ Women and Children in Sport

- Unlike other sports, equestrians are predominantly multi-generational female (kids, mothers and grand mothers)
- We run a 'Riders without Horses' - *This structured course is for new members who do not have their own pony, but are enthusiastic and bursting with desire to learn everything about horse management and care. It's for kids from any walk of life from the age of 6 years and up... you just need to be interested in horses and want to learn more.*

"Ponies are our family love always had them through three generations. My husband and I support our other generations with the care, maintenance and exercise and competing. It's a fabulous sport and the love how it comes back to us all through a caring community. It is rain, hail and shine as a sport commitment and that is holistic strength building for our younger family members too. The animals are amazing and give back so much."

"With a young daughter in pony club and having grown up attending pony club and related events myself it is so important to preserve access to these clubs and facilities for community, instruction and the safe enjoyment of our sport. It feels like equestrians are always having to defend the use of land for their sport to a disproportionate extent than any other sports in this country, which is unfair.

As more and more rural blocks are divided up into lifestyle blocks, having a variety of public options for horse riding is more important than ever.

We find that people are largely very receptive to seeing us and our horses out riding enjoying local beaches respectfully; people often stopping us to comment how nice it is to see me and my daughter out with our horses. With the drive to improve cycle ways access in the area with the Matakana coastal trail, it would be great to see equestrians also able to enjoy these same (or similar) facilities/opportunities.

We love Atui Creek but it is quite a drive away; I wondered if there was possibility horse riding may be considered for the newer regional park in Mahurangi East area - that would be amazing!"

"It is so important to have safe facilities and places for horseriders, Warkworth pony club showgrounds is such a lovely place to go to horse events and competitions. If there was a place to go hacking and have events with overnight facilities in Warkworth, Matakana or even elsewhere I would consider driving out there for a clinic or an event. We have had so many pony clubs closed on the North Shore over the years, horseriders just don't seem to have as much of a voice as the predominantly men's sports do with Councils."



Responses - We have around 90 additional comments from passionate equestrians



I used to own four horses and both my girls were talented and passionate riders. Sadly, they have given up competing due to time restricts and lack of facilities in the local public area, meaning that they were unable to fulfill their passion within the available time that they had before, and after school (They travel to a Catholic school on the North Shore Which was over one hour commute) as it meant, floating the horses out to use all weather facilities in winter often up to and over an hour away. Both local pony clubs are only usable in the very dry month due to water logging and the need to maintain a shared park to a good level. In the early days, we were able to ride to Matakana jubilee park from our Property in the village. After several accidents on the road, it is no longer safe to do so, Riding freely and safely in and around the Matakana and warkworth area is no longer viable due to the increase in traffic and population And development. Riding near by is restricted to tidal beaches, all other facilities are private or over 1hr drive. As the largest rider group in New Zealand, Rodney are the most under facilitated according to the latest facilities study undertaken by equestrian sport, New Zealand, and the New Zealand ponyclub association. I believe equestrian sport is vital to our youths Development for many reasons but primarily as it teaches about respect, responsibility, resilience and humility - it's not just something you don't have to do if you don't feel like it. It also gets children outdoors and emotionally connected, which was so important for my oldest autistic child who struggles with anxiety and social settings. The council should be advocating the importance of this hidden educational curriculum with horses in an increasingly Pressured environment for kids. Providing safe spaces to learn, Develop an exercise in the outdoors should be available for all individuals Without prejudice.

This area is very under resourced for public equestrian facilities. Losing pony club grounds compounds the problem of finding safe, local places to travel to in order to enjoy our sport.

Horses add a unique element to a community. It is vital to keep facilities available for our future generations
We have been a member of Auckland Region Council Horse Riding Pass when we used to ride at Woodhill Forestry Sand arena!

Please consider how effectively other countries have included horse riding in their communities
Having been members of Coatsville, Huapai, Wainoni, Whenuapai, Rosedale pony clubs it is vital in this economic and decreasing land availability for councils to support pony clubs as part of the other codes they provide / support for within the community.
"For a rural area we have very limited safe hacking areas close by other than beaches where tides and summer hours limited riding times. Local horse riders would love to be accommodated for on the Matakana Coastal Trail and would probably appreciate and use it more than cyclists who already have many more options than horse riders."

"I have been involved with Matakana and Warkworth Pony Club for over 35 years. 5 of my children went through the pony club system. Teaching them life long skills around animal welfare and comradeship. I now coach riders privately using the grounds, plus step in to help both branches as needed.
With branches have been based on their grounds for over 50 years, yet there seems to be no support for them, one of the countries biggest youth organizations."
It would be nice to have options local so we don't have to travel so far! I feel like our options are getting less and less at the moment!
"If you make the jumping arena 80 x 60m you might be able to hold larger dressage shows with 3 arenas on a good surface."

The long term viability of Woodhill sands in in question. If Auckland loses the woodhill facility, then the nearest and only other comparable facility would be papatoetoe pony club.

Eventing Waitemata doesn't currently have a venue and have been looking for somewhere to hold horse trials for years. That's a decent length of xc tracks so could potentially be an option.

With the extension of the northern corridor, this area will be very accessible to the northland riders, many of who regularly travel to woodhill sands to compete and train.

It could also an ideal stopover location for either schooling or staying the night for the northland riders when they're travelling long distances to the Waikato, bay of plenty and Hawkes bay, or the southern riders when they're heading north. At the moment these riders often just push through to Taupo. "
Auckland Waitemata area has the largest number of registered & pleasure riders in NEW ZEALAND. For our youth & children this is a wonderful sport to participate in, as it is for the older /mature riders. I have ridden all my life & its sad to see equestrian sports being phased out of this area."

I love riding horses 🐾
a sand arena would be awesome to ride in winter!

Please include horses for the Matakana Coastal trail. The Greens road horse park has been a huge hit!

Horse riding road signs to be placed along main roads from Warkworth

We are 3rd generation riders on both sides of the family, horses are in our blood and both our children have had horses since they were 5yrs old, as did I and as did my parents and mother in law. My sons compete individually, for their Pony Club, for their District and for their school. This area with the increased population is losing its country charm and the types of facilities that help promote this thriving sport - there are some exceptionally talented equestrians in this area which is something as a community we can feel incredibly proud of, especially when these kids are out representing the area. Please, please, please help keep this wonderful sport alive in our country town for my children's generation and generations to come. This support has provided my sons an outlet for energy, a way to connect with animals and I can't imagine many other sports that teaches resilience quite like this.

Protect Pony Club Grounds and save Woodhill Sands

Currently dont use pony club as much as I want to because of personal circumstances but definitely need it in the area for many reasons. You cannot live where we live and not have horses as a ful integtal part of the community!

There is a need for equestrian facilities here, being "rural" to the bone and still so little to offer for horse riders is a disgrace.
Please give us more space for riding.
Horse riding facilities everywhere are under pressure from expanding urban boundaries. Please don't let our young people lose the connection to the land and country that gives NZ it's special character.
"Quite literally printed the regional pass off to fill out last night! Normally ride with friends so am only just discovering these places even though iv lived in the area 20years!
We ride everywhere, not afraid to travel to ride & would love more places to be able to explore!"
New people to the areas are asking about places for them to ride, pony clubs, and learning skills. If there the clubs are taken away and riding places to use taken away that's another sport wiped out. Which is disgusting I'm in my mid 70s ex rider can't ride now but Really enjoy going to watch events. DONT LET BUROCRATS TAKE AWAY ANOTHER PLEASURE OF LOTS OF PEOPLE

Am returning to riding so would be purchasing a horse riding pass for regional parks

Horse riding is so important in our rural community. We need to be able to do so safely. We need space.

Green spaces and Horses contribute to the health of a community. Look at the places that have become a desert of houses and unused footpaths and compare them to places like Matakana that have so far managed a balance of Home and Country. Please consult with experienced successful developers who include beauty and balance in the design of these spaces.

Save our spaces and create ones as it is very hard to ride around here with limited farm access etc and any trails

It would be amazing to have better parking and access to the dome forest

Please don't exclude horse riders from your local and regional planning. It's one sport the NZ's are really good at and we need to make spaces accessible for our children and up and coming competitive riders.

If a shared space is being considered (continued) then the questions here should include anyone who would like to keep the grounds for general use and other purposes like dog walking or just having a green space surrounding their homes to look into. Also Outside visitors who like to see the pony club & grounds on market days or when they visit as part of the matakana rural tourist 'features'. This way more support & signatures are likely from the general community and further afar.
Difficult parking and the distance can put me off

Please could council accomodate horses on all trails along with walkers, cycle tracks these are able to be shared tracks and crossings should be made horse safe.



Equestrian is a big part of our community and to have it taken away would affect families to no end. Also to take away our green pony clubs for developers is abhorrent. It's so important to have access to these facilities for our mental health, animal wellbeing with variety for them and fun, promotion of events is crucial for clubs and our gorgeous region should be enjoyed on horseback more.

"With Woodhill sands potentially not being available in the future, north auckland is in desperate need of an all weather riding and training facility. A place where a full competition can be held with 100-200 horses entered for eventing, show jumping and dressage competitions, as well as pony club events. full length xc tracks with all levels catered for from 65cm thru to 3* level. Having a dressage arena large enough to fit at least 3 20x60 arenas in ensure year round use, and the same goes for the sj arena, having one large enough that 2 rings can be set up to run along side each other, with a warm up area, would ensure year round use. Having the sj arena also means during winter when ground is too wet, arena xc can be set up with portable jumps to allow training over solid jumps during the off season. Yarding and associated buildings such as toilets/showers need to be considered as well, along with wash down facilities for horses, and dedicated muck heaps. "

"The lack of planning for equestrians is terrible. All local councils need to step up

It's so important for horse riders to have places to ride in the area we are very underserved .

I am writing to express my strong support for retaining and protecting horse-riding facilities in the Matakana–Warkworth area.

These facilities are far more than recreational venues—they are powerful learning environments that play a critical role in the development of young people in our community. Through riding and caring for horses, children and teenagers gain discipline, responsibility, resilience, and empathy. They build confidence, learn to commit to something beyond themselves, and connect meaningfully with nature and animals.

In an increasingly fast-paced and digital world, these experiences are becoming rare—but they are more important than ever. Horse-riding facilities offer a safe, structured space for personal growth, physical health, and emotional development. Many young people consider them a second home and a vital part of their upbringing.

To lose access to these spaces would be a significant loss not only to those who ride, but to the wider community. I urge you to recognize the long-term educational and social value of these facilities and to ensure they remain protected for current and future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration."

We need more facilities closer to us we can't lose anything
Thanks for undertaking this much needed advocacy

Equestrian is a much needed sport with much needed accessibility for all people.

Ponies are our family love always had them through three generations. My husband and I support our other generations with the care, maintenance and exercise and competing. It's a fabulous sport and the love how it comes back to us all through a caring community. It is rain, hail and shine as a sport commitment and that is holistic strength building for our younger family members too. The animals are amazing and give back so much. Please keep riding facilities for horse riders... The regional parks are fantastic... We just need more!

Please faucitis please provide equestrian facilities in our area it is desperately needed there are so many horse riders in our area who will use it!
All weather arena & facilities is a fantastic idea! Having a float available for hire would also be another great asset utilized
I have a daughter (8 yrs old) that is dead keen on horses and is taking weekly lessons through Ti Point Equestrian. She would love to ride or even just be around horses more. However, we don't own a horse (and don't have the ability to own one). Would there be options through the pony club for her to get involved anyway? Or would you have any suggestions of how to get in touch with people that may be open to her helping out with caretaking of a pony in the area (we are in Point Wells).

Horse riding is incredibly important for neurodiverse children, helping their left/right brain and balance and we need more facilities in the area to cater for these children and give them the opportunity to better their life outcomes

Please keep horses happily in our community. They add a softness to our ever increasing fast lane of our world today .

It is important to our area to secure such a facility before infill housing prevents this from happening. Woodhill Sands is a great facility but it's future is concerning.

It's safer for riders to have access to facilities as riding the roads even country roads is dangerous. Riding horses is a sport and other sports have facilities provided so it should be the same for the equestrian community

We are rapidly been pushed or priced out of riding areas

More horse friendly tracks & pathways would be fantastic.

Horse riding is still a must do in our Area. Please do not take away our spaces to ride on. thank you.
There's very few places for riders and non riding horse owners to take horses. Years ago the waitemata/rodney area had the highest number of recreational riders in the Southern Hemisphere. We need places to ride and lead our horses, the roads are not safe, we also need places to train and compete. If there was other dedicated trails I'd use them. I've had horses for 50 years and it's getting harder and harder for horse owners to enjoy their sport due to few facilities available.
Removing access for horses is so detrimental to all involved, people love seeing horses on the beaches, always stopping us to pat or take photos of our horses, is such a precious, special thing to be able to do. I truly do not understand why there seems to be such a drive from council to stop this activity. Sincerely hope this is very carefully considered as I believe there will be more people negatively affected by this than realized.

More bridleways and riding facilities need to be available in the region.
Very limited competition up here as not many clubs and so far from other clubs. It's getting very busy and limited places to ride on weekends as so many people come up this way

We love having these wonderful riding locations would be devastating to lose them

The Lake Tomarata riding area needs to have safer access. It is too dangerous to be sharing the space with boaties and jet skiers. You can arrive early in the morning when the car park is empty but when you return it is likely to be full of boats and trailers, boats and jet skis being revved onto trailers, cars parked around your loading ramp so you have to weave in and out of expensive cars to load and keep your fingers crossed your horse won't spook and slam into someone's car. I have written to the council to request a separate car park be considered for horse floats but never heard back. Possibly more voices might elicit a response.



We use Green Rd almost every weekend - you only have to look at the carpark full of horse trucks and floats to see how well used any riding facilities will be... more places to ride would be amazing!
Can we please have a portfolio and more parking at green road. It's really bowties busy there now and limited parking

Toilet facilities at Green Road car park would be good.

Previous club member of Warkworth for many years. Now living in the South Island. Would hate to see the facilities go!!

Equestrian activities /grounds being pc's ect are as important as any sports/sport fields, it is a sport that brings kids and parents together and makes it a family sport as the level of parents are involvement required is high, horses need to be transported, clubs need help setting up jumps, rings ect, ect the list goes on. The show prep is usually a combined effort of mums/dads and the rider/riders & there is alot of quality time you spend with your children when involved with horses along with some valuable life lessons the humble horse teaches you, In an age where we are trying to encourage more outdoor activities within families it would seem counter-intuitive to restrict such a sport or move it to far out of reach for alot.

Reducing facilities for equestrian sports where the majority of riders are female teenagers is ludicrous and short sighted.

A toilet at Green Road please
Have toilets at these locations please

Put the pump track at matakana somewhere with contour instead of making hills on scarce flat land!
Please keep as many facilities as possible open

"Horse riding and caring for/ owning our own horses have given my children grounding, learning responsibilities and resilience, focus, kindness, patience, connection to and caring for the land they are riding on and the connection to the wider community, sharing their passion with younger members of the wider community and so Please much more.
And last but not least it keeps them off the streets and getting into trouble. "

I'd love to have other options for hacking and camping over night with my horse
We need more Bridle Paths and Equestrian facilities please.

We desperately need more safe, horse trails locally to give riders better riding opportunities as road riding has become so dangerous as our roads no longer have accessible grass berms and drivers have no awareness or knowledge of how to pass wide and slow.
Horses need variety and places to hack out

Matakana PC is a long established member of the Matakana rural community and is part of Brand Matakana.
"With a young daughter in pony club and having grown up attending pony club and related events myself it is so important to preserve access to these clubs and facilities for community, instruction and the safe enjoyment of our sport. It feels like equestrians are always having to defend the use of land for their sport to a disproportionate extent than any other sports in this country, which is unfair.
As more and more rural blocks are divided up into lifestyle blocks, having a variety of public options for horse riding is more important than ever.
We find that people are largely very receptive to seeing us and our horses out riding enjoying local beaches respectfully; people often stopping us to comment how nice it is to see me and my daughter out with our horses. With the drive to improve cycle ways access in the area with the Matakana coastal trail, it would be great to see equestrians also able to enjoy these same (or similar) facilities/opportunities.
We love Atui Creek but it is quite a drive away; I wondered if there was possibility horse riding may be considered for the newer regional park in Mahurangi East area - that would be amazing!
We love Atui Creek but it is quite a drive away; I wondered if there was possibility horse riding may be considered for the newer regional park in Mahurangi East area - that would be amazing!
Many thanks!
Nikki Matthews "

We desperately need to keep our access to Matakana Pony Club grounds as currently there is no where else for me to ride off my property which doesn't have an arena.

We've recently co-hosted a National title championship for Individuals Mounted Games at the Warkworth A&P show. The grounds and yards rode well and the yards are a nice size for the ponies, and the A&P show committee great to work with. We had a few international riders attending and a large number of South Island based riders as well.

We are in desperate need of safe off road riding spaces and all weather arenas on the eastern side of North Auckland and our family would fully support a facility and tracks
Big yes to facilities and safe places to hack that don't involve a huge drive each time

It is now too dangerous for horses to be safely out on the roads as this area have become more developed, so access to safe riding places is very important. Horse riding is enjoyed by young and old and brings much pleasure to many people. World wide cyclists, horse riders and walkers enjoy the same tracks and I would like this to be considered in future planning.
It is so important to have safe facilities and places for horseriders, Warkworth pony club showgrounds is such a lovely place to go to horse events and competitions. If there was a place to go hacking and have events with overnight facilities in Warkworth, Matakana or even elsewhere I would consider driving out there for a clinic or an event. We have had so many pony clubs closed on the North Shore over the years, horseriders just dont seem to have as much of a voice as the predominantly mens sports do with Councils.
Horse riding is an important part of Please our lives, we want to build on this not lose any areas.

Also do cowboy challenge based at Warkworth showgrounds.

Please consider build it and they will come. There are lots of people that would love to move closer to equestrian facilities if they existed. More usage means more investment opportunities if there was a hirage fee associated with it.

Great work, thank you
Please provide more facilities for equestrian hacking. We are frequently prohibited whereas cyclists and walkers are accommodated.

Can't wait for an equestrian facility 🐾

"Although my involvement with pony club was several years ago and now we generally stay home to ride as we are lucky to have some land of our own a good neighbor with an arena now so we can keep and exercise our ponies on site I always hoped that there would be some sort of combined pony club with good safe horse only facilities that were local and not exclusive to non members with public access riding to more trails bridleways locally plus access to a well maintained all weather all year arenas for a small charge . Alas this was not easily available unless you paid privately.

At times we have used the rodeo arena at warkworth grounds during winter but this also had issues with maintenance and rideability when wet and the inclusion of more pedestrians and dogs bikes etc to the warkworth showground area and herbage matakana pony riding areas meant that it was less easy for an inexperienced rider or more excitable pony to be ridden there safely during the spring and summer so I can admit that we have stopped going out with our ponies as time went by and admit our focus changed (had to answer Q3 the question to submit non other available). We enjoyed the Omaha estuary frequently but that is now not available and parking was always hit and miss there . There are three things required for public riding access - plenty of parking - well maintained trails/ facilities that make riding safer ,enjoyable and achievable for anyone who would like to become involved and low cost all year access."
Would get a horse riding pass if there were more facilities closer to wellsford

Our next steps

- Mahurangi Equestrian Advocate Group
- Equestrian 5 year Plan, aligning with the local Rodney Board Plan¹
- Please guide us to the right people and hear our voices

1	
Local Activities	Level of service statements
Local Community Services	
We support strong, diverse, and vibrant communities through libraries and literacy, arts and culture, parks, sport and recreation, and events delivered by a mix of council services, community group partnerships and volunteers	<p>Provide safe, reliable, and accessible social infrastructure for Aucklanders that contributes to placemaking and thriving communities</p> <p>Utilising the Empowered Communities Approach, we support Aucklanders to create thriving, connected and inclusive communities</p> <p>We provide safe and accessible parks, reserves, beaches, recreation programmes, opportunities and facilitates to get Aucklanders more active, more often</p>

1: Rodney Local Board Plan 2023



Thank you!