

# GRASSLEES RESERVE: HELP US SHAPE THE FUTURE PARK



**Absolutely**  
**POSITIVELY**  
ME HEKE KI PŌNEKE  
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL **Wellington**

## Grasslees Reserve will be getting a makeover next year and we would like to hear your ideas for the park.

To get you started, we have come up with a concept plan (see next page) and outlined some of our ideas below. You'll find the areas described below marked on the plan.

We'd like your thoughts on our suggestions, and most importantly, your own ideas on how to improve the park, by Friday 14 December.

You can give us feedback online at [Wellington.govt.nz](http://Wellington.govt.nz) in the 'Have your say' section, by emailing [grasslees@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:grasslees@wcc.govt.nz) or fill out and send us the attached Freepost form (attach extra pages if you need to).

In early 2013, we will consider all the feedback and come up with a revised landscape plan, including details on the proposed play equipment. There will then be another opportunity to comment before the plan is finalised.

### Suggested concepts

- A.** More car parking and better access could be created by making Luckie Street two-way.
- B.** A new entrance could lead to the play areas and new paths.
- C.** Existing play equipment could be replaced by new equipment for ages six to 14 years.
- D.** We wondered if younger children might like a more 'natural' play area featuring materials like large rocks and timber, in addition to more traditional play equipment.
- E.** We've noticed the old skating rink is popular with kids on bikes, trikes and scooters. How could it be improved?
- F.** Would a new picnic area with a shelter and coin-operated barbecue be useful?
- G.** There are a few options here – a new entrance to match the one at Luckie Street (B). There are also options around where the toilets go, for example, at this entrance, or on the edge, closer to the play area.
- H.** Would a new basketball half-court be a good option here?
- I.** We are thinking that a new bridge could help link the two sides of the park and also allow people to enjoy watching the stream.
- J.** Could we redevelop the existing small picnic area with a contoured slope leading down into it from a relocated path? This could provide an alternative picnic area and possibly another barbecue. New steps could even provide access to a landing next to Porirua Stream.
- K.** We could expand the Brian Webb Memorial Rose Garden to provide more roses and put in some seats and shrubs to complete this more formal area of the park. The Elsdon Best Memorial could be re-paved and have steps leading up to the existing path.
- L.** How about new car parking off Main Road and a more obvious entrance with wider paths, new signs, brick pillars and new seating?

## HISTORY

---

Grasslees Reserve is named after a farm that originally encompassed not just this reserve but Oxford Street, Tawa Intermediate School, Tawa College, Greenacres School and Wilf Mexted Reserve (see map).

It was owned by William and Hannah Best, who emigrated from England to New Zealand in 1851 in search of a healthier climate for their children.

The couple began farming 108 acres of local land in 1856, naming it Grasslees after the Best family farm in Elsdon, Northumberland. They sold it in 1866 and moved to Thorndon.

The land continued to be farmed until the mid-1920s when it was sold to the Government to further develop the main trunk railway line. Twenty six acres of this land was later set aside for educational purposes and 46 acres sold to Wilfred Mexted.

In 1958, Tawa Borough Council purchased the remainder of the land to establish the park.

## ELSDON BEST 1856–1931

---

Elsdon Best was an ethnographer and one of New Zealand's foremost writers on pre-European Māori life. He was also at different times a farm worker, soldier, sawmiller and health inspector.

He was born at Grasslees farm in 1856, the sixth child of William and Hannah Best, and though he left Tawa at the age of 10 when the farm was sold, he never forgot his early years there. Elsdon was fluent in Māori and spent much time recording information and developing theories on early Māori history. He published many books and bulletins on Māori life and later in life wrote about Tawa, including the early settlement of the area along old Porirua Road.

He married Mary Wylie in 1903 and died on 9 September 1931, aged 75. The couple had no children. The Memorial to Elsdon Best, unveiled in 1960, is close to the original site of the family cottage where he was born and it contains his ashes.



*The original Grasslees farmhouse in Elsdon, England, 2006. Photo: Bruce Murray.*



*Aerial photo of Tawa showing the original boundaries of the Grasslees farm.*



*Elsdon and Mary Best, 1930. Photo: Alexander Turnbull Library PAColl-3739 1/2-043389-F.*

# FEEDBACK FORM

First name/last name	
Street address	
Phone/mobile	
Email address	

## I am providing feedback

As an individual       On behalf of an organisation

Name of organisation

### Privacy statement

Your feedback will be used to assist Council staff planning the upgrade of Grasslees Reserve. All feedback (including name and contact details) will be made available to the public if requested. Personal information supplied will be used for administration purposes and so we can contact you if we want to discuss your ideas further or update you on the project. All information collected will be held by Wellington City Council, 101 Wakefield Street, Wellington. You have the right to access and correct personal information.

## Your comments


Fold here

FreePost Authority Number 2199



Wellington City Council (SEPG06)  
Grasslees Reserve Upgrade  
PO Box 2199  
Wellington 6140