

Poppy Places - Alf Simpson Drive, Whitianga

TO Mercury Bay Community Board
FROM Heather Bruce - Community Manager
DATE 9 October 2018
SUBJECT **Poppy Places - Alf Simpson Drive, Whitianga**

1 Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is for the Mercury Bay Community Board to consider supporting a request by the Mercury Bay Returned and Services' Association (RSA) for Alf Simpson Drive to be featured as a 'Poppy Place'.

2 Background

The New Zealand Returned and Services' Association in conjunction with local Councils has initiated a public push to have street signs with historic military links sign posted with a red poppy.

The process for the addition of a red poppy to an identified site of remembrance is dealt with in conjunction with the New Zealand Poppy Places Trust. <http://poppyplaces.nz/> The poppy is the property of the New Zealand Returned and Service's Association and New Zealand Poppy Places Trust is acting for the New Zealand Returned and Service's Association in releasing the use of the poppy to places of remembrance.

The New Zealand Poppy Places Trust (Poppy Places) believes there are perhaps 3000 places which, if left to history, may disappear from our collective consciousness. Their aim is to provide a "place" where these stories are captured and forever stored.

In addition to streets, a Poppy Place could also be a memorial hall, bridge, cycleway, tree, cenotaph. The project covers all overseas service from the Boer War onwards including the latest conflicts such as Timor and Afghanistan.

Max Thomas, representative of the Mercury Bay RSA Committee, contacted Council to ascertain the level of support from Thames-Coromandel District Council. The RSA proposed, if supported by Council, to identify streets with military history and investigate the story behind the names for possible inclusion as a Poppy Place.

The RSA put forward Alf Simpson Drive for consideration as the street was named after Alf Simpson. Mr Simpson was born and raised in Kuaotunu. He enlisted in the Navy when he was 16 years old and served for two years on the HMNZS Gambia during World War II - further information is available in **Attachment A**.

The original road report requesting approval for the naming of Alf Simpson Drive was considered at the 11 February 2014 Mercury Bay Community Board meeting with the background of the report referring to "many years and personal input from the developer".

At that meeting the Community Board resolved:

1. Received the report.
2. Agreed to name the road which services the final stages of the Pacific Estates subdivision at the end of Cook Drive, "Alf Simpson Drive".

Moved/Seconded By: MK McLean/Connell

Mr Simpson passed away on 15 August 2018 aged 89 years and the RSA would like to continue with their request to have the poppy added to the Alf Simpson Drive street sign.

Mr Simpson was aware that the RSA were investigating the option to include a poppy on the sign and he and his family were fully supportive of this happening.

3 Issue

The Mercury Bay Community Board is asked to consider supporting a request to Poppy Places to include Alf Simpson Drive as a Poppy Place in remembrance of Mr Simpson's war time service.

4 Discussion

Poppy Places have indicated that for Alf Simpson Drive to be considered a Poppy Place the minutes of the Community Board or Council would need to reflect that the road was named in memory of Mr Simpson's time as a NZ serviceman rather than for an alternative reason.

As the road name report to the 11 February 2014 Mercury Bay Community Board refers specifically to Mr Simpson's role as a developer and the minuted resolution was passed based on that report, the street name would not currently meet the Poppy Places criteria.

A formal resolution from the Board requesting that Poppy Places consider accepting Alf Simpson Drive as a Poppy Place in recognition of his war service would allow this request to be considered in more detail.

If approved by Poppy Places, Council would be responsible for replacement of the street sign(s) to include the poppy symbol. Alf Simpson Drive has two street signs so the cost of replacement signage would be between \$400.00 and \$800.00.

Council's Roading Manager has been consulted and has no objection to the proposal. He is aware of the budget implications if the request is approved and advises that as the replacement of the signs is not an operational requirement, funding would be from a local Mercury Bay roading budget. There are sufficient funds available in the Street Beautification budget.

It should be noted that there are other street signs and possible sites throughout the District, which could in time be added to Poppy Places, which would have further cost implications.

Given the level of support from the RSA and Mr Simpson's family, the inclusion of the poppy symbol on the street sign could be seen as a fitting tribute to a well-known member of our community for his time spent in service to his country at a time of war.

5 Suggested resolution(s)

That the Mercury Bay Community Board:

1. Receives the 'Poppy Places – Alf Simpson Drive, Whitianga' report, dated 9 October 2018.
2. Requests that Poppy Places include Alf Simpson Drive, Whitianga as a Poppy Place in recognition of Mr Simpson's service on the HMNZS Gambia during World War II.

References-tabled/Agenda attachments

Attachment A *Alf Simpson NZ9139 R.N.Z.N.*

Attachment A
Attachment A - Alf Simpson NZ9139 R.N.Z.N.