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Butterflies next door?

TORIKA TOKALAU

A west Auckland reserve has been identified as a potential site for a national butterfly centre.

The Moths and Butterfly New Zealand Trust told the Henderson-Massey Local Board the Tui Glen Reserve would be an ideal location for its proposed wing-shaped education centre.

Trustee Mark Bateman said the \$2 million project would help conserve New Zealand's biodiversity, protecting butterflies and moths and enhancing their habitats for the benefit of New Zealanders.

"For some time we have been looking for a place to build an educational centre ... call it chance, fate whatever you like but it led us to Tui Glen Reserve," Bateman said.

The centre, with a solar panel roof shaped like a butterfly's wings, would have an enclosed butterfly and moths' room, lab and training room.

A teaching garden for members of the public to use would also be available.

The trust also had plans to refurbish a playground to have a butterfly and caterpillar theme.

It had looked at other sites in central Auckland and Onehunga, but both lacked accessibility.

Architect Carolyn Smith said the under-utilised Tui Glen Reserve, in Henderson, presented a perfect fit for the project as it was a flat space with a lot of shelter.

It had ample parking and two existing children's playgrounds.

During the presentation, Henderson-Massey Local Board chairman Shane Henderson asked how the centre would contribute to their plans in establishing Henderson as an urban-eco centre.

Smith said the centre would be "perfect in every way" with the butterflies, and a diverse native garden.

She said the building itself was an example of eco awareness and sustainability because it would be "completely self-sustaining".

The board thanked the trust for its presentation and received its deputation on the proposed establishment of the National Butterfly Centre at Tui Glen Reserve.

Bateman said the next steps were to continue examining Tui Glen Reserve as a potential site, seek further consultation with Auckland Council - and relevant stakeholders - and to gather funds for the project.

The Integrated Neurological Rehabilitation Foundation, which sits right next to the proposed site in Tui Glen Reserve, was behind the idea.

Manager Inna Chochina said the outcomes of a butterfly centre would only be positive for her foundation, which provides rehabilitation services for adults with neurological conditions.

"We would love to have neighbours like that," Chochina said.

"You can't really say anything bad about butterflies."

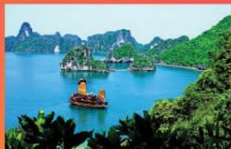
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