



Aotearoa Retreat Centre Project Update

The Aotearoa Retreat Centre Project is now entering an exciting phase, with a potential site for the Retreat Centre having been identified in Golden Bay - at the North West tip of the South Island in New Zealand. The next phase of the project will involve developing concept plans with our Planning Team (yet to be formed - see below for more info), for discussion with Tasman District Council (TDC). This will be a major milestone for the project and will take 6-9 months to complete.

Once this initial meeting (technically called a "pre-application meeting") with TDC is completed and assuming the discussion goes well, we will proceed onto developing plans for both Resource Consent and Building Consent (this will take another 12-18 months to complete). Only when these plans are approved by TDC, and all relevant community consultation and associated hearings have been completed, will we be able to start building - obviously, this will be another major milestone!

So, overall we expect it will take approximately two years before we can get construction underway, with construction expected to take 9-12 months, depending on the construction method we choose. Yes, good things take significant effort and time - much like working on patterns :-)

In summary, we're a couple of years away from making it happen, but there is plenty to be getting on with right now. With this in mind, Ollie Clifton (based in Christchurch, New Zealand) has been bought on as the Project Coordinator in a paid capacity (approximately 10 hours per week), to help the Steering Group (and other working groups we envisage) guide the project to fruition.



"It's wonderful to have the opportunity to bring different strands of my life together with this project. I'm intrigued and excited about how Project Management and Construction can be done in a REN XUE way. Looking forward to working with many of the REN XUE community on this".

Right now, there are several aspects of the project where we would love to have some help with:

1. **The Planning Team** - as mentioned above, we are about to embark on the planning process for this project, which requires input from a number of different professions - architecture, engineering (structural, civil, water), and planning, to name a few. If you have skills in these areas and would like to contribute to the project in some way, please [get in touch](#).
2. **Working Groups** - we envisage establishing working groups for the key aspects of the project. Whilst these have not been defined precisely yet, they will most likely be (a) Retreat Centre, (b) Community/Village, (c) Farm activity, and (d) Local community and environmental activities. If you would like to be part of a working group, please [get in touch](#).

All questions/thoughts/realisations relating to the project can be directed to Ollie Clifton, Project Coordinator - ollieclifton@gmail.com.

In the meantime, to keep up to date with everything we're working on, we have set up a blog for the project (link below). The blog currently details the background info on the project. In the future, the site will hold all the plans and other documents we will develop for the various stages of TDC approval. The other key function of this blog will be to consult with the REN XUE community, as we continue to shape the project around our collective dreams. Very exciting!

Whilst we are in the formative stages of the project, with key relationships just becoming established (landowners, local community, TDC, etc.), we are very mindful of how we communicate the vision and intent of the project.

We respectfully ask that all REN XUE teachers exercise discretion with the information on the project blog - at this stage. This site is intended for REN XUE teachers only, and as such, we have applied a password to the site:

www.aotearoaretreatcentre.org

Password: RenXue2020

Lastly, and most importantly, on the blog, we also invite you to read the [project vision and background story](#) from the donor and REN XUE teacher, Catherine Alker.

Catherine, thank you for sharing your personal story with us and for your incredibly generous gift to the REN XUE community.



With Wu Xin

The Aotearoa Retreat Centre Project Team