

Te Mahere Whakamahinga o Mauao Report

Purpose of the Report

This report provides a comprehensive summary of key progress, operational activities, and governance decisions related to the implementation of Te Mahere Whakamahinga o Mauao (Mauao Implementation Plan). It is intended to inform Ngā Poutiriao o Mauao, the Mauao Trust, and Tauranga City Council of achievements, challenges, and next steps in the stewardship of Mauao.

Background

Ngā Poutiriao o Mauao is the Joint Administration Board established under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mauao Trust and Tauranga City Council. The Board's purpose is to protect and preserve the mauri of Mauao, ensuring its natural, physical, and cultural integrity is maintained. The Mauao Implementation Plan (2018–2028) guides the delivery of strategic projects aligned with the Mauao Historic Reserve Management Plan.

Summary of Meetings (2022–2025)

Ngā Poutiriao o Mauao met regularly across the reporting period, with key meetings held on:

- 3 August 2022: Focused on lizard release, Oi colony monitoring, and placemaking updates.
- 9 November 2022: Covered operational achievements, event planning, and archaeological research.
- 3 May 2023: Included updates on cultural heritage sites, pest control, and walkway maintenance.

Each meeting featured joint discussions with the Mauao Trust, operational reports, and strategic planning aligned with the Long-Term Plan.

Projects and Achievements for the Year

Funded through the 2021–31 Long-Term Plan, the following projects were advanced:

| Ref | Project Name | Status |

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| F1 | Archaeological Research | Strategy finalized; fieldwork initiated |

| F2 | Placemaking & Interpretation | Wayfinding signage installed; compass unveiled |

| F3 | Te Korowai o Mauao Restoration | 13,000+ native plants planted; exotic tree removal completed |

| F12 | Sponsorship Framework | Development underway |

| S3 | Walkway & Seating Plan | Renewals completed; new seating planned |

| S5 | Waka Launching Site | Investigation initiated |

| S6 | Cultural/Visitor Centre | Feasibility pending funding |

| S7 | Digital Storytelling | Concept development ongoing |

| T1 | Stone Steps Research | Archaeological mapping planned |

| T2 | Stone Jetty Repair | Research and planning initiated

Te Mahere Whakamahinga o Mauao – Key Progress and Achievements

- Archaeological Research: Non-invasive geophysical surveys began in August 2022 to map subsurface cultural features.

- Placemaking: Te Tapu Ātea a Mauao (summit compass) was unveiled during Matariki. Wayfinding signage was installed, though some signs were vandalized.

- Restoration Planting: Over 13,000 native plants were planted. Exotic tree removal (286 tonnes) was completed using helicopters to protect archaeological sites.

- Kaitiaki Programme: Planning for a co-designed kaitiaki programme is underway.

- Pest Control: Rabbit and rat populations were successfully managed through shooting and baiting pulses.

- Visitor Monitoring: Over 1 million visits recorded annually; new counters planned.

Mauao Events Summary

Events were managed under a developing framework that balances cultural values with public use. Highlights include:

- Confirmed Events: NZ Mountain Running Championships, Ultimate Athlete NZ, Matariki ceremonies, and multiple weddings.
- Event Planning: A draft framework was developed to guide event approvals, including stipulations on scale, type, and cultural sensitivity.
- Community Engagement: Koha contributions and guided tours were proposed to enhance cultural education and support maintenance.

Operational Summary

Operations from 2022 to 2023 focused on maintenance, safety, and ecological health:

- Track Maintenance: 15 km of tracks maintained; Te Ara Tūtanga and Oruahine tracks renewed.
- Safety Measures: Handrails installed; rock stability monitored; machinery recovered after incident.
- Pest Management: Pulsed baiting reduced rat presence to 0%; rabbit control sustained.
- Myrtle Rust Response: Infected plants removed from high-traffic areas; long-term plan in development.
- Volunteer Support: Forest & Bird, WBWT, and PiPS programme contributed to planting and pest control.