

Media release

Mauao Base Track repairs underway

[Date]

Work has begun on fixing the Mauao Base Track, with the aim of opening it for the public by Christmas.

Contractors and Tauranga City Council staff have started pruning trees and preparing the site for major works to begin early next week as they look to repair damage caused by ex-cyclone Debbie in April 2017.

The project has proceeded rapidly since a new council was elected in October, with frequent meetings between Mayor Tenby Powell, staff, the Mauao Trust, Heritage New Zealand and contractors to plan the works and get them underway as soon as possible.

Mayor Powell said it was time to get moving and fix the track so it could be enjoyed by everyone.

“Mauao is a special place that is unique to Tauranga, and people have been waiting a long time for the track to be restored,” he said.

“We intend to repair the track quickly, and to come in at a fraction of the original budget.”

The quick action is part of a shift on the part of Council to work more closely with communities to meet their needs and desires, and the mayor stressed that it could not have happened without close collaboration with iwi.

He said the new mantra at Council was one of ‘active governance’.

“This means that intervention will take place if agreed plans go off track – including building and maintaining relationships with key partners in an environment of transparency and trust.”

After the cyclone, steps were installed to let people walk a loop around Mauao. This was considered a short-term fix because people with wheelchairs, prams and other mobility issues were unable to use the steps.

The new plan involves minor excavations, clearing away the slip, re-aligning the track along the slope, installing a hand-rail and improving drainage.

The slope will be stabilised with landscaping, geotextile cloth and a method called ‘soil nailing’.

The Mauao Trust has guided council staff in their engagement with external experts to ensure that Mauao is safe and accessible for wheelchairs and prams. The Trust represents the three iwi of Tauranga Moana, who collectively own Mauao.

The repairs replace an earlier plan to build a new 350m section of track and boardwalks along the beach. This would have been highly resilient to erosion and future slips, but would have cost more than the \$4.65 million budget that was approved by the last Council.

The new section of track will be less resilient to future slips, but is resilient enough to be acceptable to the Trust, the mayor and Ngā Poutiriao ō Mauao (Mauao Joint Administration Board). It is also expected to cost much less than the approved budget.

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