

12.5 Mauao Annual Report

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide an overview of project delivery for financial year 2021/22.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:

- (a) Receives the report "Mauao Annual Report".

BACKGROUND

2. The Mauao Trust and Tauranga City Council have partnered to deliver the Mauao Implementation Plan 2018 – 2028. The Mauao Trust are the owners of Mauao, and Tauranga City Council is working alongside the Mauao Trust to jointly manage the reserve for everyone to enjoy. The Implementation Plan reflects a shared vision for Mauao. Funding for the implementation of Placemaking and Interpretation projects was successfully obtained through the 2021-31 Long Term Plan (LTP).
3. The Implementation Plan is underpinned by the principle of integrated management and is an adaptive and holistic tool which recognises the environment as complex, interconnected, and ever changing. The Implementation Plan sets out priorities for actions and provides guidance to the timing and costing of projects which are consistent with the vision to protect, conserve and enhance Mauao as a Taonga of exceptional significance.

SUMMARY OF 2021/22 CAPITAL DELIVERIES

4. Placemaking and Interpretation is identified as project F2 in the Mauao Implementation Plan. This project has multiple aspects and elements which are being delivered in parallel.
5. The Placemaking and Interpretation programme of works has an extended delivery phase, with some smaller and simpler elements able to be fully completed early on, while other more complex aspects require appropriate consents from statutory authorities and input from technical experts likely to extend project delivery over multiple financial years. A total of \$558,152.25 was spent on Placemaking and Interpretation projects across FY21/22.
6. The first placemaking project to be completed was at te tihi o Mauao (summit). The first phase of te kapehu (compass) was unveiled at dawn on Matariki, 24 June. A second phase of this project, involving the installation of the outer rings, is due to be completed in early to mid-2023.
7. Installation of wayfinding signage commenced following the first phase of summit works, te kapehu (compass). The wayfinding signage was designed to enhance navigation of the various routes up and around the maunga, and have been designed with a bespoke aesthetic which reflects cultural heritage of Mauao.

SUMMARY OF 2021/22 OPERATIONAL DELIVERIES

8. The Operational Fund allocated to Mauao for 2021/22 was \$704,193, and this budget was used to deliver a range of operational projects, detailed below:
9. Maintenance and management of approximately 15km of walking tracks was undertaken to ensure that they are kept to a desired level in order to handle high levels of year-round use. A total of 495,400 visitors completed the base track at Mauao, and 556,300 people climbed to the summit. Combined this represents more than a million journeys on the paths network, and management of the designated tracks helps to preserve heritage features.
10. The Oruahine Track surface was upgraded and renewed, including creating an outer track edge which increases safety and reduces the amount of aggregate being lost due to weathering and erosion.
11. Pest Control is identified as project S2 in the Mauao Implementation Plan. The Pest Control project considers established pest control methods and creates a plan for Mauao that yields the most effective results without unnecessary harm or risk to other species or visitors to the maunga.
12. The priority focus continues to be the rabbit population, as their burrowing activity is a significant threat to the archaeological features on Mauao. A programme of fumigation and monthly shooting is proving to be effective at keeping the population low. Based on recent observations the population of rabbits is estimated to be in the range of 20-50.
13. Restoration planting is ongoing to restore Te Korowai o Mauao, with an estimated 13,000 native plants and grasses being installed across an area of approximately 12,000 square metres. In addition to the planting of native species, the removal of invasive and pest species is another aspect of the restoration programme. A total of 18 large exotic trees were removed from the maunga. Due to the challenging location of these exotic trees, removal of the material required the use of a helicopter to preserve sensitive archaeological features with minimal impact on the ground, or to the adjacent karaka.
14. Myrtle Rust was discovered on Mauao on the Oruahine Track, Waikorire Track, and Te Ara Tutanga. Larger areas of infection were marked and then removed by experienced arboriculture specialists. A management/response plan is being developed by a small working group comprising members of Mauao Trust, TCC, and Scion (Forestry Research Institute).
15. In order to maintain visitor safety with the reserve, cyclical monitoring of potential rockfall hazards is conducted by Avalon, who are specialist contractors. An unstable area of rock was identified and determined to pose a potential risk to visitors. The contractor was deployed to mitigate this risk in a controlled fashion.

UPCOMING CAPEX PROJECTS

16. Delivery of capital projects on Mauao will continue in accordance with the Implementation Plan. A review of budget allocations and anticipated project costs will be conducted to ensure successful delivery of the Implementation Plan.
17. Elements of the Placemaking and Interpretation project will be progressed, including installation of ecological and heritage interpretation signage, phase two of the summit, the Karewa Hairpin, replacement of mid-track seating, Te Puna Waitapu, Karewa/Tuhua (base track).
18. Further details of these project elements can be found within the Placemaking and Interpretation Plan.

UPCOMING OPEX PROJECTS

19. Maintenance and management of Mauao is an ongoing activity to ensure that the reserve is safe, accessible, and able to be enjoyed by visitors now and in the future. The following

items are anticipated to proceed in the near future, with more detailed information available in the report for the financial year in which they take place.

20. Planned work for the upcoming financial year includes:
21. Moving forward with the chosen option to remove the current health and safety risk at Te Kuia Rock/North Rock.
22. Identify another batch of large exotic trees for removal which are on or threatening archaeological features. Due to the success of the previous helicopter removal, this option is being considered again to minimise on-ground impacts.
23. Removal of the remaining memorial seating on Mauao to make space for the new benches and seating which adhere to the coordinated design palette and aesthetic set out in the Placemaking and Interpretation Plan. Every effort will be made to make contact with the families prior to removal of the memorial seats.
24. Creation of a plan to source the three varieties of harakeke for future planting at Waipatukakahu.
25. Renew a section of Te Ara Tūtanga (base track) in order to manage the wear and tear from high levels of use.
26. Sign and structure maintenance will continue to ensure that the operational life of the newly installed wayfinding and heritage signage can be maximised, and to keep facilities in proper working order.
27. Pest plant and animal control regimes will continue in order to protect and enhance the natural environment on Mauao and mitigate any negative impacts from non-native species.
28. Further archaeological work will be undertaken to determine areas for additional exploration and examination, to better understand settlement patterns and sites of significance on Mauao.

ATTACHMENTS

1. **Mauao project images - A14781028**