

Te Whare Manaaki o Mauao — One-Pager

Te Whare Manaaki o Mauao is a new, permanent base for the Mauao Kaitiaki at the foot of Mauao. For the past few years our Kaitiaki have worked out of a temporary pod. This whare marks a long-term commitment to caring for our tūpuna maunga, strengthening visitor safety and understanding, and upholding the tikanga that protects Mauao.

Why it matters

Mauao is not only a place people climb — it is a living ancestor, rich with kōrero tuku iho and cultural significance. With nearly 1.4 million visitors each year, a permanent Kaitiaki base is essential to ensure the maunga is protected, respected, and well-understood now and into the future.

Te Whare Manaaki o Mauao

Two contemporary pod-style buildings nestled at the base of Mauao, designed as welcoming spaces that harmonize with the natural landscape. Their organic form and modern design reflect a strong connection to the maunga, offering a place of manaaki (care and hospitality) for visitors and the community. Positioned to frame views of Mauao, the pods embody simplicity, warmth, and cultural significance.

“Te Whare Manaaki o Mauao has been purposefully designed to accommodate the needs of the Mauao Trust, providing a functional and culturally significant space at the base of Mauao. The two pod-style buildings offer areas for administration, hui, and community engagement, ensuring the Trust can operate in a setting that reflects its values and connection to the maunga.”

The Whare Manaaki is made up of two pods:

1. Meeting / Wānanga Pod

A dedicated space for kaupapa that support learning, connection, and community wellbeing.

Intended uses include:

- wānanga, hui, and community gatherings
- kura/school group lessons and education visits
- Trust or partner workshops
- environmental and cultural programmes

2. Kaitiaki Operations Pod

A dedicated base for the Mauao Kaitiaki to work from daily.

Key functions include:

- visitor engagement and information
- Kaitiaki briefings and day-to-day operations
- equipment and resource storage
- monitoring and response for maunga protection
- coordination with Trust and Council mahi

The mahi of Mauao Kaitiaki

The Kaitiaki uphold Mauao through three pou, guided by: Whakahono, Tiaki, Whakaako — Connect, Protect, Educate.

Manaaki tangata — Visitor care and guidance

- welcoming manuhiri at the base
- helping visitors choose tracks that suit different fitness levels
- supporting safe, respectful access

Kōrero tuku iho — Sharing local history and iwi narratives

- sharing Mauao’s cultural stories and significance
- strengthening visitor understanding that Mauao is a sacred tūpuna maunga
- ensuring people connect with Mauao beyond recreation

Kaitiakitanga — Protection, conservation, and care of the maunga

- reinforcing tikanga and rules: no fires, smoking, camping, dogs/pets, and respectful track use
- monitoring conservation threats such as myrtle rust, particularly on pōhutukawa
- supporting protection of kororā / little blue penguins and their habitat
- providing guidance and security during maintenance closures or rāhui
- working under s 7(2)(f)(ii) - Protection of public officials, assisting with planting, maintenance, monitoring, and enforcement across the maunga

Proven value

Last summer’s Mauao activation showed the impact of having Kaitiaki based at the foot of the maunga. Visitors appreciated face-to-face guidance on tracks and safety, and many valued learning local kōrero tuku iho before heading up. A permanent Whare Manaaki allows this manaaki and protection to continue year-round.

The benefits

For Mauao:

- stronger daily guardianship and faster response to issues
- better conservation outcomes through consistent monitoring and restoration mahi
- improved respect for closures, rāhui, and tikanga

For Kaitiaki:

- a fit-for-purpose, year-round base
- stronger ability to deliver activations, wānanga, and conservation kaupapa
- better coordination with the § 7(2)(f)(ii) - Protection of and Trust priorities

For visitors and community:

- clear guidance on tracks, safety, and expectations
- deeper understanding of Mauao's cultural significance
- a welcoming place to ask questions, learn, and engage respectfully

§ 7(2)(a) - Privacy