



2 December 2021

██████████  
Via email: ██████████

**Request for information: Taranaki Strategy**

Tēna koe ██████,

Thank you for your request for information dated 17 November 2021 relating to the Commission's Taranaki Tracks and Trails Strategy 2040.

Specifically, you requested:

- a. The actual cost of development of the Taranaki Tracks and Trails Strategy 2040
- b. The business case for the development of the Strategy
- c. Any board papers considering or approving the business case or funding for the project.
- d. The funding arrangements entered in to with local authorities
- e. Value and procurement of the contract with DesignLab.
- f. Cost of production, including associated costs such as photography
- g. Estimated staff hours and costs of time for the WAC staff engaged.
- h. Any evaluation or benefits realisation assessment of the Strategy

A summary of the actual cost of the development of the Taranaki Tracks and Trails Strategy 2040 is provided below at Table 1. This includes; (e.) the value and procurement of the contract with DesignLab (Lincoln University Contract), (f.) the cost of production, including associated costs such as photography, and (g.) the estimated staff hours and costs of time for the WAC staff engaged.

Cost type	Description	\$ (excl. GST)
Lincoln University Contract	Development of Taranaki Trails concept	18,000
Travel and costs	M Abbott and team; NZWAC staff	7,746
Accommodation	M Abbott and team; NZWAC staff	3,860
Other costs	Taxis, meals, rental cars etc	3,433
		<b>33,040</b>
<b><u>Plus, staff time</u></b>		
Jo McCabe	6 days	2,020
CEO	10 days	6,770
Incidentals/staff support	Logistics, Reports, copying, meetings.	7,500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>49,330</b>

Table 1.

We have no record of (d.) [any] funding arrangements entered in to with local authorities.

A business case for the development of the Strategy (b.), was not developed.

An evaluation of the of the strategy addressing benefits, outcomes and costs has not yet been completed.

Board papers addressing the Taranaki Tracks and Trails Strategy 2040 for board meetings of November 2017, February 2018, April 2018 and July 2018 are attached at Appendix 1.

Meeting minutes are available online at <https://www.walkingaccess.govt.nz/about-us/disclosure/board-meetings/>

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ric Cullinane', with a small dot at the end.

Ric Cullinane  
Chief Executive | Tumuaki

## **Appendix 1: Board papers addressing the Taranaki Tracks and Trails Strategy 2040 for board meetings of November 2017, February 2018, April 2018 and July 2018**

November 2017

### **NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION BOARD REPORT**

22 November 2017

#### **Regional tracks and trails planning**

##### **Strategic context**

1. A number of trails groups, territorial authorities and iwi are planning significant trails initiatives at a regional scale. The Commission could assist these by providing a methodology for trails planning and lifting New Zealand's expertise in this area. Regional trails planning is an important part of the Commission's project work, for example, the South Island High Country project and the Rodney Trails Project.

##### **Purpose**

2. The purpose of this paper is to propose how the Commission could assist in enhancing New Zealand's tracks and trails planning at the regional level.

##### **Background**

3. Regional trails planning is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the Commission's work. For example:
  - It was clear from the Hamilton Trail Leaders workshop (late 2016) that a number of groups had plans for trail projects but that these were not being linked up, and there was no effective means for collating the initiatives in an overall framework.
  - The next stage of the South Island High Country work will likely involve landscape-level planning for a network of tracks and trails and associated infrastructure.
  - The Rodney Trails Plan needs to be reviewed and possibly a more effective trails framework developed.
  - Sport Taranaki and councils in Taranaki are considering tracks and trails in the Taranaki region but have no overall framework for integrating the sport, health, tourism and connectivity aspects. Each council is focused on tracks and trails in their district but are not considering regional-level trails planning. Sport Taranaki has asked the Commission to help develop a trails framework for the region.
  - Iwi in parts of New Zealand are developing trails strategies and a methodology would be of assistance. For example, iwi in the East Cape area are exploring a

trail from Ohiwa Harbour along the coast, over the ranges and down to Gisborne – a landscape-level trails planning approach may be useful.

## Proposal

4. My proposal is to build expertise at Lincoln University in landscape-level tracks and trails planning. Lincoln has skills in landscape-level design and recreation. The design group is headed by Associate Professor Dr Mick Abbott, who is keen to work with the Commission on landscape-level tracks and trails planning.

## A pilot in Taranaki

5. As a pilot I propose to engage the design group at Lincoln University to lead a design process for tracks and trails in the Taranaki Region. Sport Taranaki's CEO Howie Tamati has approached the Commission seeking our help in developing a comprehensive trails plan for the region. Howie wishes to ensure that sport, health, tourism, connectivity and Iwi aspirations are integrated in tracks and trails planning. The Mayor of New Plymouth District supports this initiative, as does the Department of Conservation (DOC) in Taranaki. According to Howie at the political level the other two district councils in Taranaki will also be supportive, as will iwi in Taranaki.
6. This project will help provide a context for the Whitecliffs Walkway and options for its development. DOC, Ngāti Tama and the District Council are considering the future of the Whitecliffs Walkway including options for the historic Te Horo Stock Tunnel. Currently there is no regional context for the Whitecliffs Walkway. A tourism consultant who previously worked for Vision Taranaki has suggested that Whitecliffs should be developed in parallel with the Pouakai Crossing as part of a package of tracks and trails in Taranaki. DOC received money in Budget 2017 to further develop the Pouakai Crossing.
7. Mick Abbott estimates it will cost around \$20,000 to develop a trails plan for Taranaki via a workshopping approach. DOC has offered \$3000 to support this initiative. I have not yet discussed details of this initiative with staff at New Plymouth District or other councils in Taranaki, but as noted above the mayor of New Plymouth District is supportive and Howie Tamati considers that the other mayors are likely to be supportive.

## Recommendation:

8. It is recommended that the Board:
  - a) **note** that landscape level tracks and trails planning is important for the Commission's project work.
  - b) **note** that New Zealand's expertise in landscape-tracks and trails planning is limited and needs developing to meet the challenges that the Commission has identified in its work.
  - c) **agree** that the Commission has a role in supporting the development of landscape-level tracks and trails expertise as part of its national leadership role.

- d) **note** that Lincoln University has the relevant skill sets and some experience in landscape level tracks and planning design.
- e) **agree** to pilot a project in Taranaki costing up to \$20,000.
- f) **note** that DOC has committed \$3000 to this proposal.
- g) **note** that management will approach other agencies in Taranaki for funding, including Sport Taranaki and the four councils.
- h) **note** that the Taranaki pilot will be a partnership between the Commission, Sport Taranaki, DOC and that management will propose the partnership will involve the 4 councils and Iwi.

**Eric Pyle**  
**Chief Executive**

February 2018

## **NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION BOARD REPORT**

22 February 2018

### **Taranaki Tracks and Trails Initiative**

#### **Purpose**

9. The purpose of this paper is to update the board on a pilot project management has launched with Sport Taranaki and DOC. If this pilot is successful, Management will look to apply the approach to the South Island High Country and potentially on other projects. The pilot project aims to develop a tracks and trails strategy for the Taranaki Region that gains strong buy-in from key agencies; Councils, the Department of Conservation (DOC), Sport Taranaki, iwi, and recreation groups.

#### **Background**

10. In mid-2017 Sport New Zealand suggested that the Walking Access Commission should meet with Sport Taranaki and discuss a tracks and trails strategy. The CEO of Sport Taranaki, Howie Tamati, was very keen to develop a tracks and trails strategy. Sport Taranaki is interested in both formal sport and active recreation.
11. The Commission's Chief Executive met with Howie when he was in New Plymouth for a conference in October. The two agreed to work together, and the Commission's CE proposed involving the Design Lab at Lincoln University. Howie offered to fully support this project and agreed to provide his networks, bring councils to the table and the like. DOC also agreed to become involved and offered limited funding for this initiative.
12. Howie has significant standing in Taranaki in the sporting, council and Māori worlds. He has been a New Plymouth District Councillor for 15 years and CEO of Sport Taranaki since 1994. He is of Te Atiawa descent. Howie chairs the selection panel for the New Zealand Rugby League and is President of the League. Howie has put his full weight behind this project and has made available staff resources from Sport Taranaki.
13. In early December Howie organised a meeting of council staff in Taranaki. This meeting exceeded expectations in terms of attendees and their enthusiasm. In addition to senior staff a number of politicians also attended, including two Mayors and the Chair of the regional council. All councils expressed strong support for the initiative and welcomed Sport Taranaki's and the Commission's leadership.

#### **Why this project?**

14. From the Commission's work in the South Island High Country, Rodney, on kauri dieback and the like, it is clear that there is a need in New Zealand for tracks and trails strategy expertise. The best examples of tracks and trails strategy Management have seen are the Greenways Plans developed by Auckland Council. The Greenways methodology is a starting point to develop from.

15. The Design Lab at Lincoln operates at the landscape level. The group has developed landscape-level plans for a range of activities in the Mackenzie Basin, Christchurch, Canterbury Plains, Arthur's Pass, and at Punakaiki. In all its work the Design Lab seeks to integrate a range of activities, such as access, urban form, agricultural activities, tourism development, recreation.
16. The reason management has chosen Taranaki to run a pilot with the Design Lab are as follows:
  - The Taranaki Region is physically constrained and there are clear geographic boundaries to the project.
  - DOC and councils are currently considering tracks and trails management and development in the Taranaki Region; i.e. the timing is good.
  - Sport Taranaki offered to partner with the Commission and put considerable effort into this initiative, both resources and leadership.

### **Progress to date and initial observations**

17. Commission staff have met with council and iwi representatives in partnership with Sport Taranaki. From 31 January to 2 February, Commission staff and Lincoln University visited the region, met with agencies and groups. Sport Taranaki organised the programme for the visit.
18. Observations from the visit are as follows:
  - The New Plymouth District Council has done an excellent job in creating a waterfront trail (mixed walking and cycling) that connects communities and links to trails across New Plymouth. This trail is heavily used.
  - Councils and recreation groups have a range of plans and ideas for tracks and trails.
  - Coordination and discussion on the various ideas for tracks and trails is limited – to date there has been no vehicle for a Taranaki-wide conversation.
  - Different organisations have considered particular aspects, for example, the Taranaki Regional Council has focused on transport aspects, mountain bikers on potential biking trails, DOC has focused on tracks and trails on public conservation land.
  - A tracks and trails strategy has not been pulled together for the whole of the Taranaki Region.
  - Apart from tracks and trails development in New Plymouth, most of the tracks and trails in Taranaki are a legacy from the days of the Walkways Commission and the investment made by Lands and Survey prior to the formation of DOC.
  - In the National Park the tracks and trails network may not meet current needs, including the need to link with tracks and trails planning across Taranaki.

- Iwi have only just started to engage in formal natural resource management in Taranaki.
  - There is a rich history in Taranaki and a tracks and trails network could increase connectivity between the people and the landscape.
19. The issues identified in the Taranaki Region are similar to those we have identified in the South Island High Country work, in Rodney and are likely in the Kauri Dieback issue. Taranaki thus makes a good case study and pilot for a new approach to tracks and trails strategy in New Zealand.

#### **Next steps**

20. In early March the Design Lab will present its initial thinking to Sport Taranaki, DOC and the Commission. Following feedback, the Design Lab will develop a draft strategy. The Commission will look to Sport Taranaki to provide guidance on working with councils, iwi and recreation groups.
21. Management proposes that the Design Lab presents its draft strategy to the board at the April meeting this year.

#### **Recommendation**

22. It is recommended that the Board:
- a. **discuss** this paper.

**Eric Pyle**  
**Chief Executive**



April 2018

## **NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION BOARD REPORT**

12 April 2018

### **Update on the Taranaki outdoor access strategy pilot and learnings to date**

#### **Purpose**

23. The purpose of this paper is to update the Board on the Commission's work with Sport Taranaki piloting an approach to developing an outdoor access strategy. This pilot could form a basis for a methodology that the Commission may wish to use elsewhere, for example, in the South Island High Country. This work fits with the Commission's regional leadership role under the *Walking Access Act 2008*.

#### **Background**

24. Sport Taranaki approached the Commission about working together to develop an outdoor access strategy for Taranaki. The Commission suggested using the Design Group (TDG) at Lincoln University who take a landscape approach to outdoor access design.
25. TDG spent three days in Taranaki in early February, presented their initial findings to Sport Taranaki and councils in late February and to the Taranaki Mayoral Forum in mid-March. A presentation to the Taranaki Iwi Leaders is being organised for June.
26. To date the TDG's work has been very well received by Sport Taranaki, iwi and councils.

#### **The TDG work**

27. A summary of TDG's work is attached as Appendix 1. Mick Abbott, head of TDG, will present at the Board meeting. The key ideas Mick and his team have developed are:
  - Drawing on the battle between Tongariro and Taranaki, the movement of Taranaki across the landscape and the linking of the Tongariro Crossing (part of a Great Walk) and the Whanganui River Great Walk. A Great Walk across Mt Taranaki would link Taranaki with the central North Island and adds to the rationale for a Great Walk in Taranaki.
  - Extending the concept of the Maunga from beyond the national park boundary to the sea. This extension means that being on the mountain is much more than being in the national park. Currently most people perceive the Maunga as stopping at the national park boundary.

- Develop a network of trails that operate at a range of altitudes around the Maunga, largely outside of the national park. The network of trails should connect to key landmarks and cultural sites.
  - Build the network off the tracks and trails that have already been developed, for example, the coastal trail that starts in New Plymouth and is slated to be extended to Waitara. This approach requires the Department of Conservation (DOC) and councils to clearly identify and document all the tracks and trails in their areas.
  - Developing a programme for every school child in Taranaki to travel around the mountain over the course of their schooling, for example, in year 1 students would do a local segment near their school.
28. A strength of the Lincoln approach is that it creates a framework that enables many aspects to be brought together and organised creating a coherent framework. What Commission staff found in Taranaki were a plethora of existing tracks/trails, ideas for creating and closing tracks/trails but no overall conceptual framework. This work has taken a “soup” of ideas and initiatives and started to develop a coherent framework.

### **Using the Lincoln work**

29. Already we can see how the Lincoln work can assist the Commission’s work. Examples include:
- We can better understand where the Whitecliffs Walkway sits in the Taranaki outdoor recreation landscape.
  - We are investigating the tenure of a railway line closed some decades ago to see if it can form the basis for a trail.
  - The South Taranaki District Council (STDC) will ensure it retains public access on a railway line slated for closure, potentially seeking the Commission’s support to maintain access.
  - The STDC will seek access along a railway line for a trail. The Commission may be asked to support the development of access arrangements, and if so, we will fully understand the context for this work.
  - Maintaining access along the coast and increasing the amount of access displayed on WAMS. Some areas (around 10-20%) of public access along the coast are not showing on WAMS and these could be important for a coastal trail that has emerged as a priority through this work.
  - An OIO property in eastern Taranaki where staff may wish to renegotiate the proposed access to better reflect the framework and priorities that Lincoln has developed.
  - New access opportunities in the eastern Taranaki hill country that would support tourism and were not previously on the Commission’s agenda.

30. Essentially this work has provided an opportunity to improve the structure of the Commission's work – from somewhat randomly tackling issues, such as locked gates, as staff become aware of them, to developing a long-term agenda.

### **Lessons learned so far – from both this Taranaki project and Matakana**

31. Having a regional framework for the Commission's work that has wide buy-in across councils and iwi has real advantages for work planning. Management can start to see where the Commission can add value and what its role might be in comparison to the roles of various other agencies. Importantly, this work has substantially lifted the Commission's interactions and relationships with key players in the Taranaki region.
32. A key lesson staff have learned from this project and the Rodney/Matakana project is that the Commission needs a strong local partner. Without the heavy lifting that Sport Taranaki provided in terms of relationships and meetings with key players, this project would not have got off the ground. The Commission does not have the resources to undertake this kind of work by itself.
33. What is interesting in both the Taranaki and Matakana projects is that while councils are very supportive, the drive and initiative came from outside of councils. In Taranaki that drive is provided by Sport Taranaki and in Matakana via the Matakana Coast Trails Trust.
34. Another key point is that individuals are very important. Howie Tamati is critical to the Taranaki project; Allison Roe is critical to Matakana project.
35. The implications for the Commission are that we will struggle where:
  - There is no agency to partner with.
  - There is no iconic personality who can drive the process.
36. When starting new projects, such as looking at access in the South Island High Country, the Commission needs to be cognisant of these points.

### **Recommendation**

37. It is recommended that the Board:
  - i) **note** that the Commission's work on access, tracks and trails in Taranaki has been well received by councils.

**Eric Pyle**  
**Chief Executive**

**Appendix 1** – Presentation on the Taranaki access, tracks and trails work presented to the Taranaki Mayoral Forum, March 2018

July 2018

## **NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION BOARD REPORT**

5 July 2018

### **Update on central North Island Project - Taranaki**

#### **Purpose**

38. This paper updates the Board on work that Commission staff have done to meet the commitment in the *Statement of Performance Expectations 2017-18* to “work with iwi, Department of Conservation, local government and others to explore new access opportunities” in the Central North Island area.

#### **Background – development of the Taranaki project**

39. Originally the Commission was focused on the Tongariro Area and started conversations with Ngāti Tūwharetoa and iwi around Mt Tarawera. It became clear to Commission staff that conversations about tracks and trails in these two areas would take some time to progress.
40. Sport Taranaki approached the Commission and proposed the two organisations work together to develop a tracks and trails strategy for Taranaki. The Commission then shifted its central North Island focus to the Taranaki Region.

#### **The project**

41. The Commission contracted the Design Group at Lincoln University to develop a tracks and trails strategy for Taranaki (Appendix 1). This project became a pilot for how the Commission may want to go about developing tracks and trails strategies.
42. Key to the project was the high-profile Chief Executive of Sport Taranaki, Howie Tamati. Howie and his team organised consultation meetings with councils, community and iwi.
43. Staff from the Design Group and staff from the Commission met with councils, iwi and community over a two-month period. Commission staff and the local regional field advisor participated in these meetings.
44. Currently the Design Group is working on detailed tracks and trails planning in the South Taranaki area.

#### **Learnings**

45. The learnings the Commission has gained from this project are as follows:

- There were lots of ideas for tracks and trails in Taranaki, but there was no strategy that provided a coherent framework within which all the ideas could be located – both conceptually and physically.
  - Councils, community and iwi responded well to a framework within which they could see where their project fitted.
  - As well as a high-level narrative, specific projects, such as a coastal trail from New Plymouth to Opunake, were important for making the proposals tangible.
  - Partnering with a local agency, Sport Taranaki, was an essential element of this project. Without a local partner that could do a lot of the heavy lifting in terms of logistics, this project would have struggled.
46. The Commission will apply the learnings from this project to other areas, such as the potential South Island and Northland projects.

#### **Next steps**

47. Commission staff are in discussions with Sport Taranaki, councils, Sport NZ and Heritage NZ on next steps and will discuss these at a future board meeting.

#### **Recommendations**

48. It is recommended that the Board:
- j) **note** that this Taranaki project meets the commitment made in the Commission's *Statement of Performance Expectations 2017-18*.

**Eric Pyle**  
**Chief Executive**

**Appendix 1: Tracks and Trails Strategy Prepared by the Design Group at Lincoln University**