



**Outdoor Access
Commission**
Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa

Enhanced Access Fund

Opening Up Aotearoa – Connecting People, Connecting Places

**Factsheet
May 2026**

Who we are

The Outdoor Access Commission, Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, is a Crown agency with the simple yet important purpose of ensuring that all New Zealanders can get to and enjoy the outdoors. We work with communities, landholders, mana whenua, and local government to create, protect, and improve public access to rivers, lakes, the coast, and the wider landscape – free for everyone, now and into the future.

We believe that access should be:

- **Free** – cost should never stop anyone from enjoying the outdoors
- **Certain** – so people know where they can go and feel confident doing so
- **Enduring** – protected for future generations
- **Practical** – usable by as many people as possible

Empowering communities

Local community groups are the driving force behind public access in Aotearoa. From volunteer track builders to regional trail trusts, these groups are passionate, committed, and deeply connected to the land.

They navigate complex challenges – land access agreements, environmental protection, safety, and long-term stewardship – to keep access open and sustainable.

What they often lack is money for the unglamorous essentials – surveying, legal fees, and registration costs – that are needed before the first spade hits the ground.

The commission can provide guidance and expertise. But turning a community's good idea into a legally secured, publicly accessible trail still needs dedicated funding. That's where the Enhanced Access Fund comes in.

A proven model that works

Our Enhanced Access Fund provides targeted grants to community groups and organisations working to create or improve public access. Since 2010, we have supported more than 100 projects across Aotearoa. The results speak for themselves: modest investments, carefully placed at the right moment, consistently unlock public access that would otherwise remain out of reach.

With philanthropic and business support, we can scale this proven model – reaching more communities faster and securing public access at the national level.



New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

Our track record: Projects we have supported

Every dollar of funding is targeted. The following examples show what small, well-timed grants can achieve.



Photo credit: Matakana Coastal Trails Trust

Pūhoi to Matakana (Auckland)

We have been a long-term partner in developing a connected trail network across the Rodney district, from Pūhoi to Matakana and beyond. Our funding helped place a trail advisor within Auckland Council to develop a network of trails that has an estimated 390,000 uses per year and supports 250 long-term jobs. Working with the Matakana Coast Trail Trust, Ngāti Manuhiri, the Department of Conservation, and NZ Transport Agency, we have helped secure easements and public access across this fast-growing peri-urban corridor. Our funding has seeded the trails into reality, one access agreement at a time.



Photo credit: Ashley Gorge Tracks Group

Ashley Gorge Skyline Trail (Canterbury)

After five years of planning and negotiating, the volunteer-led Ashley Gorge Tracks Group used EAF funding to cover survey and legal costs for a short but critical easement across private land. That final piece unlocked a spectacular 4–5-hour loop reaching nearly 800 metres, with 360-degree views of Pegasus Bay and the Southern Alps. Without the grant, the loop would have remained just out of reach.

Maungatautari Crossing (Waikato)

A \$50,000 grant to Ngāti Korokī Kahukura Trust funded the last 4.5 kilometres, of a 12 kilometre walkway, to and across the Maungatautari Scenic Reserve. The crossing provides a family-friendly full-day walking experience for over 20,000 visitors per year and opens up a nationally significant ecological area. It supports the physical, mental and economic wellbeing of the Waipā region.

Kawatiri Coastal Trail (West Coast)

In 2018 and 2021, grants of \$17,000 and \$15,000 helped the Charleston Westport Coastal Trail Trust secure access agreements and easements for what became a 40km family-friendly walking and cycling trail from Westport to Charleston. The trail passes through gold-rush heritage sites and areas of significance to Ngāti Waewae, providing a safer route for local people and attracting thousands of visitors to the West Coast.

Around the Mountains Cycle Trail (Southland)

A \$23,000 grant in 2015 helped Southland District Council secure the legal access agreements needed to bring together this multi-day cycle trail through some of the most spectacular high-country scenery in the south of Aotearoa. The trail now attracts cycle tourists from across New Zealand and beyond, delivering economic benefits to rural towns along the route.



Photo credit: Great South

The opportunity: the Enhanced Access Fund

Proven model

The Enhanced Access Fund takes this proven model and expands it – enabling impact at a national scale.

With philanthropic investment, we can:

- Multiply our impact significantly
- Support more communities and projects, faster
- Secure lasting public access across Aotearoa
- Enable innovative, large-scale solutions

This is not untested – it is a successful approach, ready to grow.

What your support delivers

We use the funding people invest for the foundational costs that make access legally secure and lasting:

- Surveying and engineering reports
- Legal fees and access agreement registration
- Paying for the legal access so that people can then start to build a path on the land
- Signage and wayfinding for trail users
- Fencing, gates, and stiles that allow safe, practical use

Why partner with us

The Outdoor Access Commission is uniquely positioned to put your investment to work:

- We are legislated to provide national leadership in outdoor access
- Proven track record of delivering results since 2010
- We are a Crown Agency with strong governance and transparency
- Trusted relationships across communities, councils, government agencies, landholders and mana whenua.
- Registered charity status

We already have the financial systems, expertise, and credibility in place – ensuring that every dollar invested directly enhances public access with no overhead costs.

Support us

By partnering with the Outdoor Access Commission, you become part of something enduring. Together – with our expertise, local ambition, and your generosity – the opportunity to open more places, for more people, for generations to come is remarkable.

We welcome conversations with philanthropists and businesses who share our commitment to connecting New Zealanders with the outdoors. To find out more about supporting the Enhanced Access Fund, contact us at:

info@herengaanuku.govt.nz

