

New Zealand World War 1 Memorial Forests

Te Wao Whakamaumaharatanga

TO	Thames-Coromandel District Council
FROM	Ben Dunbar-Smith - Economic Development Programme Manager
DATE	15 January 2015
SUBJECT	New Zealand World War 1 Memorial Forests - Te Wao Whakamaumaharatanga

1 Purpose of Report

This report is to brief Councillors on the progress of the proposed New Zealand World War One Memorial Forests project, and to seek Council approval to proceed. If approved, it is estimated that the project will cost between \$232,500 to \$566,000 over the life of the project - depending on which planting option is chosen. However it is anticipated that a portion of this expenditure is expected to be recouped by either support from external agencies, or through the purchase of trees by the public.

As the project, if approved, is required to commence on Anzac Day 2015, this report also seeks Council support for the first tranche of expenditure totalling \$65,000 in the 2014/15 year.

2 Background

The World War 1 Memorial Forests project has arisen as part of the Government's call for projects to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of World War 1. Other districts around New Zealand are marking the anniversary with a range of activities such as art works, museum exhibits, or memorials to specific battles, or to those soldiers from the specific district who died (such as Rotorua's field of crosses for the Rotorua war dead). In Wellington, the Government is creating a National War Memorial Park.

For the Coromandel, marketing consultant Chris Adams put forward a paper in late 2014 suggesting that TCDC provide a national memorial through the planting of forests to commemorate all the New Zealand soldiers who died in WW1.

Mayor Glenn Leach floated this idea with Community Boards and some schools in September 2014, and received a positive response. This meeting has been followed up with a second meeting of community groups, schools, RSA, Forest and Bird, Waikato Regional Council and Department of Conservation on the 8th December 2014 - which agreed to progress with the development of the project.

The Project Manager has been tasked with finding five (or more) sites for the forests - one for each Community Board area in order to take account of the 18,166 trees that need to be planted to represent the fallen soldiers. The proposal is to plant each site with two signature trees on 25th April 2015 to mark Anzac Day, and then work with schools and community groups for the initial planting throughout the following autumn months. The aim is to have all 18,166 trees planted by Armistice Day 2018. This means on average 6,000 trees will need to be planted each year.

3 Issue

The Memorial Forests project is seen as a project which will bring national attention to the

Coromandel. The cost is estimated to range between be \$232,518 to \$566,678 over the life of the project - depending on which option is selected in terms of planting (volunteers or contractors doing the work). These options are set out below (and are also described in more detail in the attached Project Initiation Document). Some of this cost will be offset by applications for funding to external agencies, and/or by payment for trees by members of the public. Some funds (\$65,000) have been set aside in the current 2014/15 year to initiate the project on 25 April 2015, subject to Council approving the project.

As part of the approval process, Council is requested to make a decision on the manner in which the forests are to be planted - whether by volunteers or by contractors, and determine who is to undertake the task of long-term maintenance - as this decision impacts significantly on costs and viability.

Analysis of the requirements for ensuring the longevity of the Memorial Forests indicate that initial site preparation is an important factor in viability, as is the issue of long-term maintenance over the first 10 years of the tree's life (in terms of releasing the tree and removing noxious weeds). This is deemed important as the trees, which will represent a range of native trees suitable for the Peninsula, are to be purchased as PB3s - which stand only about knee height. This size is in order to minimise costs, and because the smaller trees tend to have greater survivability. The five options presented range from Option A whereby volunteers undertake all the work from initial site preparation and planting through to long-term maintenance over the next 10 years, or Option E which sees contractors undertaking all the work.

The five different options considered by this report range from:

- **Option A: Using volunteers for all work:** Using volunteers for all work for 10 years - site preparation and planting, first year spraying and long-term maintenance (**\$232,518**).
- **Option B: Using contractors for site preparation, but volunteers for all subsequent work:** Using contractors for site spraying and preparation - but volunteers for planting and all other work over the 10 years - including first year spraying, and 10-year maintenance (**\$271,390**).
- **Option C: Using volunteers for initial planting and first year maintenance, but contractors for long-term maintenance:** Using volunteers for planting, and first year releasing - but contractors for site spraying and preparation, and 10-year maintenance (**\$452,556**).
- **Option D: Using volunteers for initial planting, but contractors for all subsequent work:** Using volunteers for initial planting - but contractors for all other work including site spraying and preparation, first year releasing and spraying, and 10-year maintenance (**\$520,678**).
- **Option E: Using contractors for all work:** Employing contractors for whole project (except initial signature tree planting of 10 trees with volunteers) - ground preparation and planting, initial spraying in 1st year, and long-term maintenance over 10 years (**\$566,093**).

Note that these costings, which have been peer reviewed by TCDC parks staff, are estimates only. It is proposed that a 10% contingency figure be added to these figures to allow for lost trees, vandalism etc. The costings also do not include projected staff time on the project.

At an informal meeting of some of the key stakeholders in the Memorial Forests project in Whitianga on Friday 9 January, the elected members on the Project Board expressed a

preference for Option C - namely using contractors to do the initial preparation, with volunteers to do the planting and first year's clearance. The long-term maintenance would be undertaken by contractors.

4 Discussion

Costing assumptions:

The costings for the project are based on the following assumptions:

- The budget for purchasing 18,166 specimen trees (based on a PB3 size) is estimated at an average of \$5. It is estimated to cost an additional \$2.50 per tree to clear foliage and spray each site prior to the initial planting using a contractor. Staking (with H4 treated 50x50 stakes) is \$3.75, plus number tags at approximately \$1.50 and fertiliser pellets (10c) brings the staking cost to \$5.35 per tree. If the trees are planted by a contractor this is estimated to cost an additional \$2.50 per tree. This brings the total cost to \$15.35.
- In addition, on Anzac Day 2015, there are two signature trees to be planted per site. These trees are estimated to cost \$150 each, plus \$50 on-going planting care. This represents \$2000 on Day 1 of the project on 25th April 2015.
- At the opening ceremony, there are six Memorial Forest signs (two for the Thames War Memorial site at the top and bottom of the track) that need to be erected. These signs are estimated to cost \$2000 each. This represents a cost of \$12,000.
- It is important that the trees are maintained in the first year. This is estimated to involve releasing from weeds three times in the first year, plus spraying if required. The need for spraying will be site dependent, and this must be undertaken by GroSafe accredited operators.
- Cost of GPS and mapping sites for the first 100 trees for each site - \$100 per site (depending on access to GPS equipment) = \$500. If all trees are to be GPSed at approx \$1 per tree, then this is estimated to cost approximately \$20,000, including registration processes. The register of GPS sites will need to be maintained by TCDC staff on a spreadsheet with plots marked for sale.
- Long-term maintenance costs: Note that the specimen trees (especially those paid for by donation) must be maintained for the life of the tree. The on-going costs of clearing, spraying and maintaining trees every year for the first 9 years using contractors is estimated at \$10 per tree (excluding the first year's intensive spraying and maintenance).

Funding

- The budget sets aside \$25,000 a year over three years from the Economic Development budget (due to the perceived tourism and local spend benefits from the project).
- In addition four community boards have nominally set aside \$5000 each in the 2014/15 year. Mercury Bay have \$10,000 from parks, and \$10,000 from the cemeteries budget in 2014/15. This funding is subject to Council and Community Board endorsement for the 2014/15 year.
- It is assumed that additional funding in future years will be subject to a yearly bid to each community board from the parks and reserves fund.
- TCDC is applying to the Waikato Regional Council's Environmental Initiatives Fund for assistance on a one-off basis. The maximum available under this fund is \$40,000, and availability of this funding will be determined prior to April 2015.
- In the 2015/16 year Council should be able to apply to the Lotteries Board WW1, Environment and Heritage fund, which closes in September 2015 for assistance towards the Memorial Forests project.

Funds derived from tree purchase

One of the aims of the Memorial Forests project is to encourage members of the public to purchase a tree in memory of their deceased relatives. This is why each tree is to be

GPSed, and staked with a number tag so that the purchaser can identify their tree. In addition it is proposed that the GPSed sites will be available in council offices or on-line so that people can select their tree.

The number of purchasers required to offset the shortfall in funding between current capital allocated to the project, and the cost of the forest will depend on both the Option chosen, and also the purchase price set per tree.

The Mayor has indicated that he believes that a purchase price of \$100 per tree is appropriate for members of the public who select a tree which has already been planted by volunteers. If the purchaser wishes to plant their own tree, this is likely to require supervision, and so he suggests the purchase price in this instance should be \$150.

Council is asked at the end of this document to indicate their recommendation for the appropriate price per tree so that staff can set up the website and purchasing facility ready for 25 April 2015.

The Project Initiation Document (attached) sets out a range of potential prices for a tree, and then compares this with the number of purchasers required to meet the shortfall. At \$100 per tree, 925 purchasers would be required for Option A, 3125 for Option C, and 4160 for Option E.

Potential sites for planting

The Project Manager has been looking for sites to situate the 18,166 trees. To date sites have been found in four out of the five Community Board areas, and these sites will take approximately 6757 trees. Sites for the remaining 11,409 trees are still being assessed. The sites confirmed to date are:

- **Thames:** Thames War Memorial (DOC site). Originally this was proposed for honouring the Gallipoli battle (2,779 trees), but the decision to only plant specimen trees for soldiers (and not count the understorey) means that the current cleared section of this site will only accommodate 740 trees. With further clearing this site might hold 1300 trees (which would account for the Battles of Messines Ridge). Members of the Thames organising committee are also interested in a separate planting on the entrance to the town to honour the 206 soldiers from the Thames area who died in WW1.
- **Mercury Bay:** Whitianga Cemetery (TCDC site) to mark Passchendaele (2,000 trees)
- **Tairua-Pauanui:** Tangitarori Lane (TCDC walkway in Pauanui) to mark the Palestine campaign (640 trees)
- **Whangamata:** Durrants Drive reserve (TCDC reserve in Whangamata) to mark Le Quesnoy (177 trees)
- **Coromandel:** A potential site in Coromandel town has been identified at Long Bay, but not yet confirmed (1,000 trees).
- **Additional sites:** The area with the largest number of potential sites is Mercury Bay. DOC have indicated informally that they are willing to allow planting on "The Paddock" site above Cathedral Cove (which could contain the 2,779 trees for Gallipoli, as well as additional planting along the track of approximately 1,200 trees). In addition, negotiations are underway regarding the Stella Evered Reserve in Purangi (which might contain up to 7,000 trees).

Given that the intention is to plant two signature trees on each site on Anzac Day 2015 and to unveil signage, there is time to find additional sites, as the remainder of the planting is to occur over the next 3.5 years. Completion date is proposed for November 11, 2018 (Armistice Day).

Risks and Opportunities

The assumptions underlying the report, and the potential risks and mitigation strategies are

detailed in the attached Project Initiation Document.

The Project Initiation Document also raised a number of other decision points in the process. In the informal discussions with the elected members on the Project Board, a strong preference for having a specimen tree for each soldier was indicated (as opposed to a symbolic planting which would include the understorey). The preferred price per tree was \$100. As most of the land is either TCDC owned or DOC land under TCDC management agreement, it was considered logical to continue with council managing the project, rather than setting up a trust. In order for the trees to be sold to purchasers, each tree is to be staked, numbered and GPSed which adds costs, but are necessary in order to be able to sell trees to be public.

5 Suggested Resolution(s)

That the Thames-Coromandel District Council:

1. Receives the 'New Zealand World War 1 Memorial Forest - Te Wao Whakamaumaharatanga' report, dated 15 January 2015.
2. Proceeds with the project; and
3. Selects Option....as its preferred option for site preparation, planting and long-term maintenance of the Memorial Forest sites; and
4. Endorses the expenditure of \$65,000 from existing Council funds in the 2014/15 year so that the project may commence on Anzac Day 2015.

References-Tabled/Agenda Attachments

Attachment A Project Initiation Document - NZ WW1 Memorial Forests (ECM 33693785).

Attachment A
[Attachment A - WW1 Memorial project initiation document](#)