

# Coromandel Great Walks update

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**TO** Thames-Coromandel District Council  
**FROM** Garry Towler - Area Manager Whangamata/Tairua-Pauanui  
**DATE** 28 August 2015  
**SUBJECT** **Coromandel Great Walks - Cathedral Coast Walk**

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## **1 Purpose of Report**

To provide an update to elected members on the current status of the Cathedral Coast Walk project and related activities.

## **2 Background**

The Coromandel Great Walks project began in September 2012 and its progress to date is well documented in previous reports to Council including the Project Identification Document. This report is an update to Elected Members on the current position of the project.

## **3 Issue**

### Funding

The 'Cathedral Coast Walks' project has sufficient funding available (Lotteries, DOC and TCDC) to fully complete the walkway from the 'Blowhole' to Whitianga (Stage One). This includes all structures, viewing platforms, fencing and safety measures.

Stage Two - from the Blowhole to Hot Water Beach is a separate project requiring additional funding. Giblin Group, who have been responsible for all funding to date on the Walks project have been commissioned to work with Ngati Hei and the Project Managers to explore funding options.

### Track Construction

TCDC has commissioned a Traffic Management Assessment to look at a high level traffic impact, parking and road maintenance assessment of the Communities of Hot Water Beach, Hahei, Cooks Beach and Ferry Landing. This assessment seeks to address three key issues:

1. The ability of the roading network to accommodate an increasing number of visitors.
2. The impact of peak season traffic, and
3. The impact of the Great Walks.

The purpose of the report was to gain an understanding of current traffic issues and the projected increase in traffic by 2020, and to identify what is needed to address or mitigate these issues. The report will separate out those measures needed specifically for the Coromandel Great Walks project.

A period of time is needed for Council staff, Hahei and neighbouring communities to review the report and its recommendations. This is likely to be undertaken through September.

Until this work is completed, no significant track construction of the Coromandel Great Walks - Cathedral Coast Walk will be undertaken to ensure the concerns raised by the Hahei Stakeholders Group regarding additional parking and management of the increased visitor numbers are addressed by Council, DOC and the "Walks" Governance Directors.

Stand-alone projects

There are four discrete minor projects that can proceed (that are linked to the Great Walks), which have community benefits and need to be scheduled earlier due to a number of factors covered further in the report. These projects have been endorsed by the Coromandel Great Walks - Cathedral Coast Walk Governance Group, as well as the Hahei Stakeholders and will have no additional visitor impact on the Hahei community.

The four stand-alone projects are:

1. Safety signage and planting around the Blowhole
2. Andlinger/McCanns Bay Cathedral Cove Extension
3. Stella Evered track construction (subject to resource consent)
4. Hereheretaura Pa track reconfiguration

Project Plan

A high level, indicative programme of works for the Coromandel Great Walks - Cathedral Coast Walk is set out below. Please note that this is indicative and the schedule is subject to change. The outcomes of the Traffic Assessment as it relates to the "Walks" project will require approval of the Governance Directors, and reported to Council. Also of note is the consenting requirements for Pa Road and Lees Road carparks. These are anticipated to take at least 7 months to secure and an estimate that could well change.

Phase	Sep 15	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 16	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Stella Evered															
Blowhole Safety/planting															
Cathedral Cove Extension															
Hereheretaura Pa															
Pa Rd Car Park *															
Lees Rd Car Park *															
Lees Rd improvements															
Shuttle service															
Stage 1a Hahei to Blow Hole															
Stage 1b Cathedral Cove to Purangi															
Stage 1c Purangi to Ferry landing															
Stage 2 Blow Hole to HWB															
Traffic Management Report															
Hahei Stakeholders consultation															
Lees Road Residents consultation															
Legal Entity - Walks															

Legend:

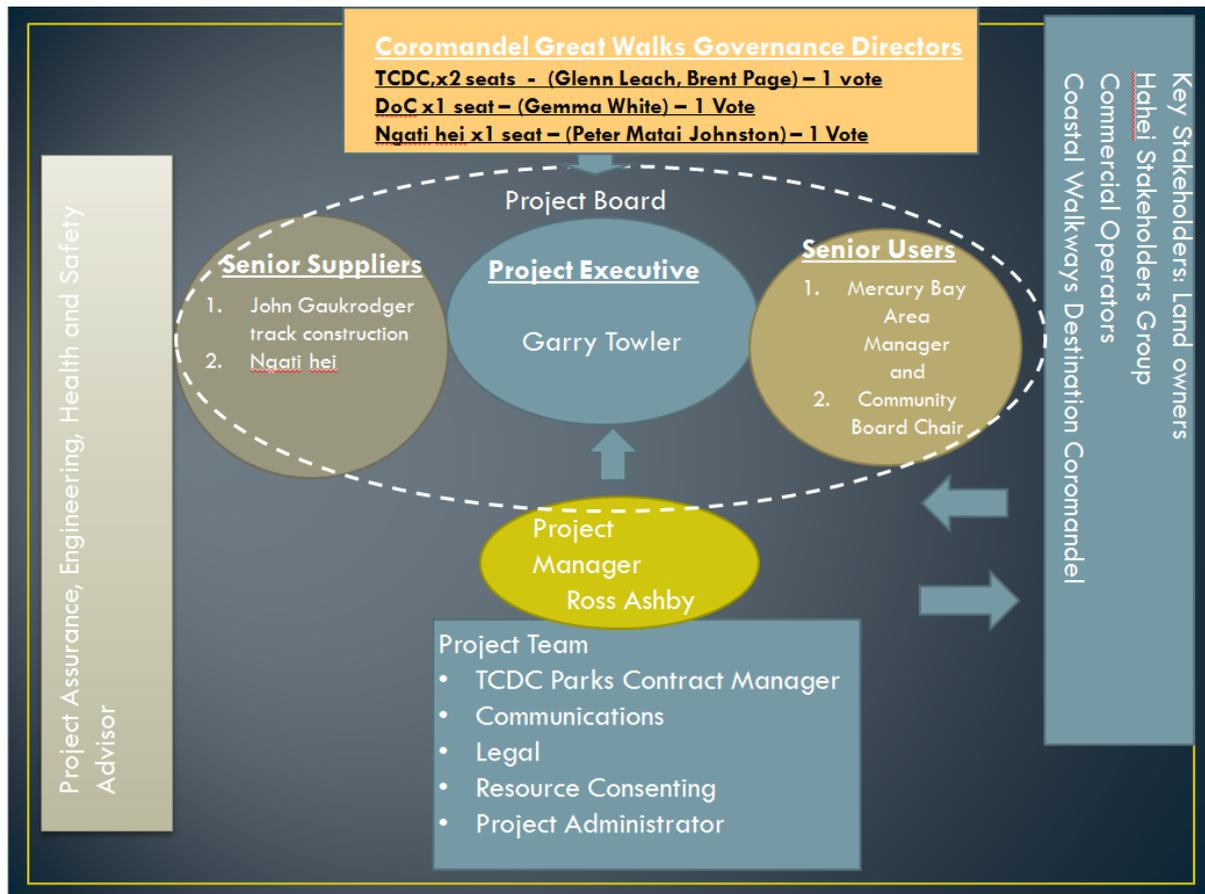
Construction	Community Consultation	Consenting	Project Specific consultation
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## 4 Discussion

### Current situation:

#### Governance

The Coromandel Great Walks Project Board has been established and Terms of Reference drafted. The structure comprises of Governance Directors made up of TCDC, DOC and Ngati Hei; Project Executive, Project Manager, Key Stakeholders and Key Users. This structure is based on the Council project management system Prince2. Meetings will be held regularly, and will include the Hahei Stakeholders Group as key stakeholders (and other key stakeholders when appropriate will be included as the project develops).



At their first meeting on 6 August, the Governance Directors approved the four discrete work components outlined above. This was reconfirmed with the Hahei Stakeholders at the Project Board meeting held on 27 August, sitting that each had little or no impact on the concerns of the Hahei Ratepayers Association regarding additional visitor numbers and traffic congestion.

#### Safety and planting around the Blowhole

The "Blow hole" is surrounded by TCDC owned land, and accessible via esplanade reserve (administered by DOC). An informal track is already in existence and does provide access to the blowhole by the general public. Over recent times, gorse has encroached on the 'track' making route finding difficult and raises issues with adjoining land owners around property boundaries and trespassing. Additionally there is a public liability issue for TCDC if appropriate signage is not erected. This project includes warning signage as well as some gorse removal and native planting along the track edges to allow sufficient time for these plants to establish before summer.

### Andlinger/McCanns Bay Cathedral Cove Extension

This provides an opportunity to complete a long standing community expectation to complete an extension to the existing Cathedral Cove walk. This section will provide a 45 minute round trip for those already on the Cathedral Cove walk, with parking accommodated as part of the existing Cathedral Cove walk via Grange and Pa Roads.

DOC has identified this track extension in their Integrated Management Plan, and was required as part of adjoining land ownership property sales via the Overseas Investment Office. The extension provides for views over McCann's Bay and the Te Whanganui a Hei marine reserve. The track extension also includes some significant cultural and historic interests as well as future proofing access to Cathedral Cove long term should the arch collapse.

### Stella Evered

The Stella Evered Memorial Park is a private reserve, administered as a publicly accessible area of land via a Deed of Trust by the Perpetual Guardian. This 37 hectare area of land is best described as a farm park offering a variety of commercial, recreational and conservation based land management opportunities.

Over the past 6 months the Coromandel Great Walks project team has been working with the Perpetual Guardian and farm managers. Work is able to be undertaken for construction of approximately 500m of the track at Stella Evered (resource consent required). Additionally the outcomes of the Traffic Assessment may also indicate some additional works that may be required and this would be addressed once this report has been reviewed.

### Hereheretaura Pa

Some minor works will be undertaken to the existing track to Hereheretaura Pa, which re-aligns the track more appropriately through the terraced section of the Pa, as recommended by Ngati Hei. This will be supported by interpretive signage.

The Governance Group agreed on this work provided that no additional work will be undertaken that could result in a perception that there is an easy route to the blowhole. The Hahei Stakeholders representatives have supported this.

### Resource Consenting

A resource consent consultant, Phil Mitchell, has been engaged to advise and prepare a consent application for the construction of the Lees Road car park and walking track from the car park to Cathedral Cove track (Carter property). Mr Mitchell believes the consent may take six months or more. (This report does not cover Pa Road or Grange Road car parks as these, while vitally important to the Walks project, are managed and funded by the Mercury Bay Community Board).

TCDC legal staff are working with Mr Carter's lawyer on a perpetual access and financial agreement. This document will need to be in place before a consent application is lodged.

### Traffic Assessment

A draft traffic management assessment of the area from Whenuakite to Ferry Landing, taking in Hot Water Beach, Hahei and Purangi has recently been completed by MWH consultancy. The study was commissioned by TCDC and supported by Ngati Hei and Hahei Stakeholders Group to provide a long term overview of future visitor growth management.

The draft report supports the construction of Lees Road car park and sought assurance from the land owner (Mr Carter) that some 2 hectares would be available by 2019/2020 to accommodate up to 500 vehicles during peak periods. Mr Carter has provided that assurance.

The report also includes additional car parks and temporary parking options as well as the other two key car parks of Grange Road and Pa Road and shuttle services. A key aspect to the Great Walks programme is to discuss the implications of the traffic assessment with the communities identified; this is likely to be undertaken during September and October.

#### Funding Implications

Lotteries funding does not include the construction of the Lees Rd car park but does include track construction from the car park to Cathedral Cove track.

#### Hahei Stakeholders

The Hahei Stakeholders Group is fully operational and focussed on TCDC, DOC and the Walks project staff addressing the issues and impacts around peak visitor numbers. The Group's main concerns centre on peak visitor growth that is at capacity for the community now. With the Walks project likely to attract between 17,000 and 35,000 visitors annually to the area within the next three to five years, management of this growth needs to be addressed with additional parking, efficient shuttle services and tighter management of associated bylaws. Consultation is ongoing with the Stakeholders Group, private land owners and Lees Road residents.

Representatives from the Hahei Stakeholders Group and Coastal Walkways attended the Governance Group meeting on 27 August. A number of issues and concerns were discussed and many resolved. Both the Stakeholders Group and Coastal Walkways will be attending Governance Group meetings from now on, as will other key stakeholders as the project develops.

#### Funding/Delegations

The Coromandel Great Walks project for the 2015/2016/2017 financial years currently has four funding streams totalling \$3.77million, three within TCDC's LTP, one external being Lotteries (Trust Waikato funding to be announced).

TCDC:	\$175,000 per annum (\$525,000) operational. Consultancy, Project Manager expenses, design, consents, legal.
TCDC:	\$1.25 million capital - Walks Capital Council contribution
TCDC:	\$1 million - capital Lees road seal extension/Lees Road car park construction
Lotteries:	\$1 million capital - Walks capital/operational

Lotteries advanced \$500,000 on 6 July 2015 and subject to approved reports will advance the remaining \$500,000 on 15 July 2016.

Expenditure of external funds will occur before Council funding is sought, however it is probable that a request to Council to release some of the \$1.25 million will be made in October/ November 2015 pending construction progress.

#### Lees Road car park

A budget of \$1 million was set aside in the 2015- 2025 LTP to extend the seal of Lees Road and construct the car park. Developments since the budget was signed off indicate this figure may be insufficient to complete works, scheduled for 2016/2017.

A full re-assessment of the project and Project Identification Document is currently being undertaken and a report will be prepared for Council in November 2015.

#### Delegations

Operational and capital expenditure is managed by Project Executive Garry Towler. The Governance Directors approve/decline staged project expenditure.

This process is in line with the Prince2 project management model and provides for staged approval of funds to the project, effectively a gatekeeping activity to ensure sound accountability.

The Project Executive Garry Towler has TCDC approved financial delegation to \$300,000 and delegation from Lotteries and Trust Waikato. If an expenditure request exceeds the delegation the Chief Executive will approve/decline.

#### Coromandel Great Walks Trust/legal entity

Work has begun on establishing a trust/legal entity to provide governance and management of the 'Walks' project, possibly for the next ten years.

The trust/legal entity will manage commercial activities such as car parks and certain concessions, maintenance, fundraising and future direction. Legal advice is currently being sought as to the most appropriate structure. It is envisaged that once established the trust/legal entity will 'quietly' build its capacity over a two year period to ensure it is sound and fully functional. In the interim TCDC will take responsibility for the project.

An updated report on the Coromandel Great Walks project will be presented at the November Council meeting.

### **5 Suggested Resolution(s)**

That the Thames-Coromandel District Council receives the 'Coromandel Great Walks update' report, dated 28 August 2015.