

Submission to Waikato District Council on General Policies Reserve Management Plan

Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa – the Outdoor Access Commission

Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa – The Outdoor Access Commission is the Crown agent responsible for providing leadership on outdoor access issues. Our role is to advise on and advocate for free, certain, enduring and practical access to the outdoors.

We administer a national strategy on outdoor access, including tracks and trails. We map outdoor access, provide information to the public, oversee a code of responsible conduct in the outdoors, help resolve access issues and negotiate new access.

Summary of key points

In Herenga ā Nuku's submission on the Reserve Management Plan, we:

- encourage a view of landscape connectivity that regards reserves as recreational assets as well as green space corridors for active transport
- encourage Waikato District Council (WDC) to identify what role the Reserves Management plan plays in meeting WDC Climate Response and Resilience Action Plan Framework November 2020.

Key considerations

In compiling our submission, we considered the following:

- The importance of reserves in providing recreational spaces and green corridors for connectivity.
- Significant population growth predicted for the Waikato District Council area and how population growth and housing densification affects the availability and quality of outdoor public access within the Waikato District.

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- The evolving uses for outdoor spaces and how people recreate. This includes a decline in organised sport and an increase in self-directed physical activity.
- Distinctions between transport and exercise are blurring as more people choose to use active transport modes.

Local Government NZ's position statement on climate change, which identified three key areas requiring action. The first point, actions to reduce emissions (mitigation), is particularly relevant.

Herenga ā Nuku's role as the Crown agency responsible for advocacy on public outdoor access and the statutory underpinnings of public access in Aotearoa. Our work with groups and individuals in the region with outdoor access interests and aspirations

Our submission

With respect to the above considerations, we offer the following submission points:

Feedback on the General Policies Reserve Management Plan

Note: where parts of the draft strategy are quoted, the phrases appear in italics

Page 10 1.4.1 Climate Change, Fire Risk and Natural Hazards

Herenga ā Nuku notes that it is WDC policy to minimise and mitigate the impact of climate change and encourages WDC to consider how the use and future planning of reserves can contribute to reducing carbon emissions from transport. This could be achieved by promoting and enabling active transport to and within reserves, creating new active transport routes (especially green corridors) and providing bike parking facilities within reserves.

Page 13 1.4.2 Biodiversity Policies

2. Any plantings undertaken on reserves will:

Herenga ā Nuku encourages WDC to consider the impact of plantings on paths and trails created within a reserve to ensure that plantings facilitate access along trails within reserves.

Page 14 1.4.3 Sustainable Practices

Herenga ā Nuku supports the sustainable practices approach taken in this plan and is heartened to note the recognition of the need for bike parking facilities.

Council can also encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport by including infrastructure such as bike parking into reserve designs. This technology will evolve over time and Council needs to

keep abreast of new innovations in this space.

Herenga ā Nuku encourages WDC to look beyond just creating bike parking to actively incorporating bike/walking/bridal paths within reserves and utilising reserves and other linking public spaces to create active transport corridors.

Page 15 **2.1 General Reserve Development**

Herenga ā Nuku encourages WDC to consider adding to the policies:

Identifying how reserves can encourage the community to be physically active **and** recognising the opportunities for green space corridors for active transport

Objective A.

Development is aligned with the reserve's purpose and the communities' needs without significant or ongoing adverse effects on other reserve users, adjoining property owners or the reserve itself

Reserves are established and managed for an array of public benefits. Adjoining property owners are already considered in that they are members of the public. We propose that this objective is amended to remove "adjoining property owners" - their rights as neighbours are prescribed in existing appropriate legislation.

Page 16 **2.2 Access and Parking Objectives**

- A.** To provide safe, logical, and adequate access to and through reserves and car parks for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians whilst minimising impact on users, facilities, amenity values, and the general character of the reserve

Herenga ā Nuku supports providing adequate access to and through reserves for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

Herenga ā Nuku encourages WDC to add 'supporting active transport' as a reserves management objective. By actively seeking opportunities for active transport, reserve management helps the council to meet climate change objectives.

Herenga ā Nuku encourages WDC to allow the widest possible array of active recreational pursuits within reserves.

Page 23 **2.8 Signage**

Objectives A.

To provide sufficient signs to facilitate public use, heritage and site appreciation, and enjoyment of the outdoor recreational environment.

Herenga ā Nuku encourages WDC to ensure that all reserves have some signage that enables the public to identify that the area is a public space (reserve). The absence of signs means some people don't use public space while others treat it as unauthorised private space.

Concluding comments

We support WDC's intention in the General Policies Reserve Management Plan, particularly the recognition of sustainable modes of transport within reserves. We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plan.

We submit that the plan would benefit from referencing the WDC Climate Response and Resilience Action Plan Framework so that the benefits and actions to facilitate active transport are written into the plan.

The contact person regarding this submission is:

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