

**BEFORE THE KĀPITI COAST DISTRICT COUNCIL
TE URUHI TO KĀPITI ISLAND GATEWAY PROJECT**

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of a resource consent application by Kāpiti Coast District Council under section 88 of the Act, to carry out the Te Uruhi to Kāpiti Island Gateway Project

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ANGUS HULME-MOIR (DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION) ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICANT**

Dated: 19 September 2022

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INTRODUCTION

1. My name is **ANGUS HULME-MOIR**.
2. I am the Operations Manager for Kāpiti Wellington at the Department of Conservation (**DOC**). I am authorised to give evidence on behalf of DOC.
3. I have been asked by the applicant, Kāpiti Coast District Council (**applicant**) to provide a brief statement of evidence outlining DOC's position in relation to Te Uruhi – Kāpiti Gateway Project (**Project**).
4. While I am not giving expert evidence, for completeness I have the following qualifications and experience relevant to my evidence:
 - (a) I received a Master's degree in environmental science from Victoria University of Wellington (2010).
 - (b) I have worked for the Kāpiti Wellington office of DOC for nine years and have a good knowledge of our work, our biosecurity requirements and the needs of concessionaires and visitors.

Purpose and scope of the evidence

5. My evidence addresses DOC's involvement in, and overall position on, the Project. This includes a discussion on the Project's biosecurity and educational benefits.

DOC AND THE PROJECT

6. DOC strongly supports Te Uruhi because it will provide a critical link between protecting the values of Kāpiti Island, improving the cultural and educational experience for visitors to the island, and sharing the rich history of Kāpiti Island with those not able to visit.
7. Kāpiti Island is a nationally ranked nature reserve and national treasure. Beyond the enormous significance of Te Waewae-Kāpiti-ō-Tara raua ko Rangitāne to iwi past and present, and to those whānau who still call it home, it is a very important conservation site.
8. It is a site where species, such as kiwi pukupuku, were saved from extinction. It is a site where some of our earliest conservation endeavours were undertaken. It is a site where people can experience the endemic richness of Aotearoa.

9. DOC's involvement in the Project dates back to 2013, when it (together with the applicant) commissioned a study to look at opportunities for a visitor centre/gateway.
10. DOC sat on the governance group that began meeting in around March 2020 for the purpose of overseeing the Project's initial stages (including initial design decisions) through to its green lighting by the Council in 2021.
11. We participated in the process for the applicant to obtain consents from Greater Wellington Regional Council in respect of the Project, with our involvement primarily focussing on in-stream ecology, relating to the Tikotu Stream. Although DOC initially had some concerns about the potential ecological effects of the Project on freshwater fish, these concerns were addressed through the application. In particular, DOC supported the inclusion of a condition requiring the submission of a final Construction Environment Management Plan prior to works commencing. Overall, DOC was comfortable with the application, and the management of potential effects
12. As touched on above, DOC's support for the Project largely centres on its biosecurity benefits, as well as its educational benefits (including for those unable to visit the island itself).

Biosecurity benefits

13. The fit-for-purpose biosecurity facility envisaged for Te Uruhi will ensure that visitors understand the risks associated with exotic pests, and will minimise the chance that pests make it to the island.
14. The key threats to the pest-free status of Kāpiti Island are Argentinian ants, plague skinks, rodents, mustelids, possums and exotic weeds. To ensure Kāpiti Island remains pest free, visitors are required to:
 - (a) shake out and check packs and bags;
 - (b) clean footwear of soil and seeds;
 - (c) check clothing for seeds;
 - (d) if staying overnight, shake out and thoroughly check camping gear and bedding;
 - (e) pack food in sealed containers; and

- (f) check kayaks and boats.
- 15. The Project will include the construction of a biosecurity facility, which will be designed and constructed in accordance with best practice requirements. These facilities will provide space for visitors to thoroughly check their gear, and enable visitors to be processed and board the boats in a dedicated area, while minimising the risk of contamination when travelling to the boat departure point.
- 16. There is currently one tour operator providing tours to Kāpiti Island, under a DOC concession. DOC provides 160 visitor permits per day split between the North end (60) and the Rangatira point (100). Concessionaire(s) close down over winter due to weather and demand so access to the island is limited to shoulder seasons and summer. On average, there are 233 sailing days per year.
- 17. The concession is not currently operating at capacity, with approximately 16,000 visitors per year, and therefore, visitor numbers have the potential to increase within the scope of the existing operations.
- 18. The current facilities for biosecurity are less than ideal in terms of best practice delivery and their ability to cater for increased visitation. The Project will ensure that biosecurity best practice is met while also meeting increased demand for visitation in an efficient and effective way. The dedicated facilities will enable tour operators to process up to 160 visitors in 90 minutes, in line with the current peak commercial operator departures to the island.

Educational benefits

- 19. Te Uruhi will tell rich stories – iwi Māori stories, conservation stories and settler stories. It will be a 'one stop shop' where that richness is captured and brought to life. While visitors can experience the island first-hand when they go to Kāpiti, they do not currently have the opportunity to engage with the island's and mana whenua's stories in a way that Te Uruhi will offer.
- 20. The visitors' centre will provide a display and exhibition space, for the general public and those visiting the island. This will enable Te Uruhi to bring together knowledge and experience about Kāpiti Island and New Zealand's native flora and fauna species on Kāpiti Island, that is otherwise not readily available at a regional or national level. This will provide educational opportunities both to visitors to the island and to visitors and the community more generally, including those who are unable to physically access the

island, but still wish to learn about and participate in the unique cultural and conservation experience offered by Kāpiti Island and Te Uruhi.

21. Significantly, the Project design and surrounding structures will increase the visibility and provide for recognition of the relationship to and presence of Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangatira and Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga as iwi partners. The Project will include the stories and history of those iwi and support the connection of mana whenua with Kāpiti Island and the Project site.

Angus Hulme-Moir

19 September 2022