

**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 MARK RAYMOND WARD (ECONOMICS AND
TOURISM) ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICANT**

Dated: 19 September 2022

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INTRODUCTION

1. My name is **Mark Raymond Ward**.
2. I am the Economic Development Manager at Kāpiti Coast District Council (**Council**).
3. I am authorised by the Council, in its role as applicant for resource consent, to give evidence on its behalf 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) Master of Business Administration;
 - (b) Master of Science; and
 - (c) experience working in regional economic development roles and projects.

Background and role

5. I have been involved with the Project since July 2021 as the business unit manager at Council responsible for the operating model and realising the economic benefits of the Project.
6. I am familiar with the proposed site of the Project¹, having specifically visited it four or five times.
7. In preparing my evidence I have:
 - (a) familiarised myself with the resource consent application, the Assessment of Effects on the Environment (**AEE**), and the technical reports and other documents that were either appended to, or lodged subsequent to, the application;
 - (b) met with tourism operators including the Kāpiti Island tour operator numerous times, and have visited the island recently;
 - (c) read in draft the evidence of **Alison Law** and **Angus Hulme-Moir**; and

¹ The Project site is the northern end of Maclean Park, Paraparaumu Beach, directly south of Tikotu Stream, as well as the southern end of Maclean Park (partly within the road reserve), where one existing carpark is being extended south and a second existing carpark is being modified to provide more parks; AEE, page 5 (Introduction).

- (d) read the submissions as relevant to my evidence.

Purpose and scope of the evidence

- 8. My evidence:
 - (a) addresses the economic and tourism benefits of the Project; and
 - (b) comments briefly on issues raised in submissions in relation to economics and tourism.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 9. To help achieve the Toitū Kāpiti vision for "*a vibrant and thriving Kāpiti*", the Council has developed plans and strategies aimed at promoting the Kāpiti Coast as an exciting and attractive tourist destination and boosting Kāpiti's economy.
- 10. Tourism and hospitality are an important part of the Kāpiti Coast region, with tourism accounting for approximately 4% of Kāpiti's economy. Kāpiti's economy has benefitted from its role as Wellingtonians' 'playground', including its offerings in terms of nature, hospitality, scenery and wellbeing.
- 11. Kāpiti Island, in particular, is an important conservation and tourism destination, however there is currently no dedicated tourism centre, nor specific facilities for departures to the Island.
- 12. The Project will provide a high-quality departure point for visitors to Kāpiti Island and bring the community, cultural values and visitors together.
- 13. Te Uruhi will provide mana whenua with an opportunity to share their stories, history and culture, and the display and exhibition space can also be used to encourage visitors to experience local events and attractions and support community retail, accommodation and hospitality venues.
- 14. The Project is estimated to generate up to 16 skilled jobs during the construction period, and up to eight additional jobs in the tourism and supporting sectors in its first year of operation (expected to increase to up to 22 additional jobs by 2030).
- 15. There will also be indirect economic benefits once the Project is in operation from increased visitors to the Kāpiti Coast district, extended visitor stays, enhanced visitor experience, encouraging repeat visitation and encouraging

visitors to experience local attractions and support retail, hospitality and accommodation venues in the district.

ECONOMIC AND TOURISM BENEFITS

The Council's vision and strategies

16. As addressed in more detail in the evidence of **Ms Law**, the Toitū Kāpiti vision strives for "*a vibrant and thriving Kāpiti, while also incorporating our aspiration for strong, safe communities and our deep connection to the natural environment.*"²
17. To help achieve that vision, the Council has developed plans and strategies aimed at promoting the Kāpiti Coast as an exciting and attractive tourist destination and boosting Kāpiti's economy; these include the Destination Management Plan July 2021 (the **DMP**)³ and the Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan 2020-2023 (the **Strategy**).⁴ These are discussed in the evidence of **Ms Law**.
18. The DMP outlines the value visitors associate with the Kāpiti Coast and which visitor experiences need to be enhanced and developed. The Strategy is the framework for enabling various sectors to benefit from multiple initiatives in the destination marketing and workforce areas. The overarching priority of the Strategy is the enhancement of the economic well-being for all on the Kāpiti Coast.

Economic and tourism benefits

19. Tourism and hospitality are an important part of the Kāpiti Coast region, with tourism accounting for approximately 4% of Kāpiti's economy. In the year to June 2021, tourism expenditure grew 8% to \$108 million. It declined 0.9% in the year to June 2022, however this should be viewed in the context of a nation-wide 6.6% decline. Kāpiti's economy has benefitted from its role as Wellingtonians' 'playground', including its offerings in terms of nature, hospitality, scenery and wellbeing. Te Uruhi is a focal point for local visitors starting their leisure day-trip or holiday.
20. Kāpiti Island, in particular, is an important conservation and tourism destination. Visitor numbers were increasingly steadily year on year since 2014 until the COVID pandemic (which affected all of New Zealand, including

² [Our vision and direction - Kāpiti Coast District Council \(kapiticoast.govt.nz\)](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/our-vision-and-direction)

³ [kapiti-destination-management-plan.pdf \(kapiticoast.govt.nz\)](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/kapiti-destination-management-plan.pdf)

⁴ [eds-implementation-plan-2020-2023.pdf \(kapiticoast.govt.nz\)](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/eds-implementation-plan-2020-2023.pdf)

– naturally – visitation to the Island). However, despite Kāpiti Island's key role as a visitor destination, there is currently no dedicated tourism centre, nor specific facilities for departures to the Island.

21. The Project will provide a high-quality departure point for visitors to Kāpiti Island and bring the community, cultural values and visitors together. It will include areas for passengers to meet tour operators, ticket sales and provide shelter and dedicated biosecurity facilities for visitors to Kāpiti Island, alongside a display and exhibition space to inform visitors more generally about Kāpiti Island and the wider district.
22. The Project will improve the quality of the Kāpiti Island visitor experience by providing a space for current and future operators of tours to Kāpiti Island to professionally welcome, process and manage the visitor experience. Kāpiti falls within the WellingtonNZ destination marketing umbrella, and WellingtonNZ view the Kāpiti Island as the key attraction for the district. Therefore, it is important that the visitor experience is a quality one, to meet current and future visitor expectations.
23. Te Uruhi will also improve the accessibility for, and the safety of, visitors, as they are getting on and off the boats. As discussed in the evidence of **Mr Hulme-Moir**, the dedicated biosecurity facilities will ensure the biosecurity screening is efficient and effective. As further noted in the evidence of **Mr Hulme-Moir**, the Kāpiti Island tour operator currently runs below capacity, partially constrained by the current facilities. Te Uruhi will enable increased visitor numbers for the current tour operator and may allow for new tourism operators or new tourism product development.
24. Te Uruhi will also act as an important destination for locals and visitors, when orientating themselves in the Kāpiti Coast district. Importantly, Te Uruhi will provide mana whenua with an opportunity to share their stories and culture, and tell visitors about their history, as well as the history of the island, Te Uruhi pā, and the wider Kāpiti Coast area. The display and exhibition space can also be used to encourage visitors to experience local events, visit local attractions and support community retail, accommodation and hospitality venues.
25. Increasing visitor knowledge of the district, its people and its history, and encouraging repeat visitation and increased length of stay will be of economic benefit to the community. Te Uruhi can also provide a space for temporary events, which will be of further benefit to the community.

26. Collectively, Te Uruhi will attract more domestic and international visitors, including Wellingtonians, to Kāpiti and enhance the visitor experience of those visiting Kāpiti Island and the wider district.
27. The construction and operation of the Project itself will generate further economic benefits, including from additional expenditure, employment and incomes generated by the Project's construction.
28. In particular, during the construction phase we have conservatively estimated that up to 16 skilled jobs will be created. These additional jobs will help buffer against loss of job opportunities in the ongoing COVID recovery phases. There may also be indirect economic benefits during this phase, including in the hospitality, accommodation and retail sectors.
29. In terms of operational benefits, it is anticipated that there will be additional visitors, expenditure, employment and incomes from the Project's operation. It is estimated that in 2024 (the first year of operating), the Project will create up to eight additional jobs in the tourism and supporting sectors. This is expected to increase to up to 22 additional jobs by 2030.
30. As discussed above, there will also be indirect economic benefits once the Project is in operation from increased visitors to the Kāpiti Coast district, extended visitor stays, enhanced visitor experience, encouraging repeat visitation and encouraging visitors to experience local attractions and to support retail, hospitality and accommodation venues in the district. It is important to recognise Te Uruhi as one piece of a bigger puzzle; it should not be viewed in isolation. For example, there is likely to be a hotel constructed at the same time as Te Uruhi, and I am aware of several other developments planned for the Kāpiti Coast district. All of these projects will, both individually and collectively, boost Kāpiti's economy and promote its reputation as a central mecca for visitors to come and enjoy what is on offer.
31. Operating a visitor discovery centre of the calibre planned for Te Uruhi helps to lift the professional standards of other visitor experiences and venues on the Kāpiti Coast by setting a benchmark for eco-cultural tourism facilities. Other examples of such facilities exist or are being developed in other parts of regional New Zealand (for instance Te Puia Arts and Crafts centre in Rotorua). These types of facilities are used to tell the unique stories of those areas in a way that national and international visitors find compelling.

RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

Visitor numbers

32. Two submitters, Mr Barnett and Ms Knight, have raised questions about the impact of the Project on visitor numbers. In particular, their submissions refer to the role Te Uruhi will play in bringing additional visitors to the area, and the Island, and what this may mean for traffic movements and car parking.
33. As discussed above, the Project will support visitor numbers to increase within the capacity of existing concessions, through the dedicated visitor centre and purpose-built biosecurity facilities. This will be of significant economic benefit to the district. It will also support and encourage increased visitor numbers to the Kāpiti Coast district more generally, acting as a destination for locals and visitors, to orientate themselves in the area, and to encourage visitors to experience local events, visit local attractions and support community retail, accommodation and hospitality venues.
34. In terms of the Project's effects on traffic and parking, this is beyond the scope of my evidence and is dealt with in the evidence of **Megan Taylor**.

Mark Raymond Ward

19 September 2022