

John Sandford
Destination Hauraki Coromandel
johns@thecoromandel.com

26 April 2024

FUTURE OF MAUTAHOE CATHEDRAL COVE

Dear John

I am writing on behalf of the Hahei Residents and Ratepayers Association (HRRA) in regard to the future of Mautahoe Cathedral Cove (MCC) Hahei. The HRRA committee, which represents the community of Hahei, met on Sunday 21 April 2024 to agree and ratify our position on the repair / reconstruction of the access to MCC.

Cultural History and Recognition of Kaitiaki

We acknowledge the significance of Ngati Hei's cultural history and their role as Kaitiaki of the area.

Various Hahei volunteer service groups provide pest and weed control, planting and first responders' services on the land and as such also play a significant role in protecting and conserving the land. Additionally, we recognise the history of the past 150 years and the contributions of Te Maare Florence Harsant to Hahei and the gift of MCC by Vaughan and Dawn Harsant to the Crown. Therefore moving forward it is important that the local community of Hahei are also recognised as Kaitiaki.

Visitor Numbers

To regulate visitor numbers to the MCC during the height of the season, we would like to see realistic alternatives offered for tourists; such as walks to the Hereheretau and Te Pare Pa's and a coastal walk to the blowhole and Hot Water Beach. Further tracks could be developed that would provide a round trip walk partially across private land that would link up Lees Road and Grange Road and the MCC itself.

Weather Impacts and Management

Severe weather events are now not uncommon. To mitigate risk it is noted that DoC has the ability to close the track to MCC pre any event occurring (as has been done in the recent past pre the current situation). Only once any damage had been assessed and repairs undertaken would the track be re-opened.

Proposed Staged Approach

In relation to the repairs and re-opening of MCC HRRA proposes a three-stage approach as follows:

Stage One

- Repair / reconstruct of the track to Mares Leg and MCC with foot access prior to Christmas 2024
- Track access to be restored to MCC close to or nearby the old access point recognising of the significant cultural and heritage location with Ngati Hei approval.
- Incorporation of the track access via shuttles from the Thames Coromandel District Council (TCDC) carpark on Hahei Beach Road to both Lees Road and Grange Road.
- Remove parking from the Grange Road access zone to a drop off and pick up point only. (temporary solution – fenced off as is currently)
- Restore the toilet facilities at the MCC.
- Build a viewing platform above the waterfall that overlooks the MCC.
- Restore access to Gemstone Bay via the track to allow school marine education to continue. Note numerous schools use this area as promoted by the Te Whanganui_A-Hei Marine Reserve Trust
- Explore the potential for a visitor guided walk incorporating the cultural, geological and botanical history of the area.

Stage Two

- Upgrade / reconfigure permanently the Grange Road access zone to a drop off and pick up zone only (no parking).
- Build a permanent kiosk at the Grange Road access zone showcasing Iwi and local history.
- Repair the track from Hahei beach up to the Grange Road lookout.

Stage Three.

- Restore access to Stingray Bay from the MCC track.
- Further develop links between the Te Whanganui_A-Hei Marine Reserve Trust to incorporate the land reserves and MCC, whereby increasing educational awareness.

Funding

Funding for the development, maintenance and repair of the DoC estate has always been problematic. We believe a viable option for funding is to increase the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy for New Zealand. The current levy of \$35 per tourist visitor is minimal compared to other countries. It is suggested that the levy be increased to \$100 for a tourist.

We would like this letter to be tabled at the next key stakeholders meeting for discussion. To be successful it is essential that local representatives from the community, Iwi, TCDC and DoC are represented in any decisions made on the future of MCC

Can you please distribute this letter to the key stakeholders

Yours faithfully



John Jonassen
Chair Hahei Residents and Ratepayers Association

cc Henry Weston	Deputy Director General Regional Operations DoC
Cat Wilson	Heritage and Visitors Director Doc
Shelley Balsom	Interim Chair Ngati Hei Trust