



WHANGANUI ECO-TOURISM HUB (WORKING TITLE)

Feasibility Study 2021

Abstract

The Feasibility Study 2021 outlines the key features of the proposed Whanganui Eco-Tourism Hub, the likely markets for the Hub, and possible options for location, funding, ownership, and operational structure. The Feasibility Study follows on from the Whanganui Eco-Tourism Hub Scoping Study completed in 2020.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2017, the Whanganui River gained a unique status under New Zealand Parliamentary Law, giving the River its own legal personhood. This status has gained global recognition, yet despite the profile of Te Awa Tupua story, there are few opportunities for visitors to Whanganui to engage with Māori culture, the awa and to learn about this world leading legislation.

In 2020 the Whanganui Māori Regional Tourism Organisation (WMRTO) and Whanganui and Partners commissioned a Scoping Study to determine if there was interest from iwi, hapū, and tourism operators in pursuing the proposal for an Eco-Tourism Hub. There was a positive response from stakeholders and an overall endorsement to continue the development of the Hub concept and to explore in more detail some of the key considerations highlighted through the consultation process.

The Feasibility Study marks the next phase in the progress of the Eco-Tourism Hub proposition.

The key stakeholders identified as critical to the progress of the Hub concept include:

- WMRTO
- Nga Tangata Tiaki o Whanganui
- Te Rūnanga o Tupoho
- Te Rūnanga o Tamaupoko
- Whanganui and Partners

The Hub project, and Project Team, are guided by the values set out in Te Awa Tupua legislation. These values protect the awa, and by embedding the values in the Hub project, the Project Team has aimed to ensure that the purpose and intent of the project remain consistent with Te Awa Tupua.

The Scoping Study identified the core elements expected and needed from the Hub concept. There was clear consensus from stakeholders that the overarching principle for any model should reflect the need to be deeply aspirational and functionally pragmatic.

The current Hub concept considers the initial development of a central Hub in Whanganui as the first key development. Subsequent development of similar Hubs at other locations could occur after the main Hub is operating. This would see a phased approach to the establishment of a network of Hubs.

The Hub could be a centre that delivers several interconnected functions-Eco-Tourism experiences, Education and Training. Additional to the physical presence and experiences operating withing the Hub, there will be innovative digital experiences that open the Hub to App-based visitor experiences, international audiences, educators and students and people with disabilities or accessibility challenges. Importantly, the digital platform will create opportunities for Whanagnui artists to display and promote their digital work to a wide range of audiences and markets.

In all aspects of the Hub operations, promotion of Te Awa Tupua values and narrative, and opportunities for developing local business activity and employment are paramount.

At this stage the key markets anticipated for the Hub include:

- Visiting family and friends
- Domestic visitors new to the area and the experiences available
- Schools
- Iwi and hapū hui and exhibitions

- Small Aotearoa New Zealand conferences and hui (approx. 50 people)
- Researchers, archivists, film industry research (commercial model)
- Retail sales of local artists' work
- Limited international visitors (2021-2023)
- Expanded international visitors' market (2023-)

The project team has explored several visitor experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand that have similar characteristics to the proposed Hub. Online research and visits to some of these experiences by members of the team have helped refine the Hub concept. The project team determined that the sites most closely aligned with the proposed Hub are the Manea Footprints of Kupe visitor centre in Opononi and The All Blacks Experience, Sky City, Auckland.

The project team has explored several potential sites for the Eco-Tourism Hub in Whanganui. At this stage the review of sites has been limited to sites owned by iwi entities. The potential sites itemised in the feasibility Study are presented as options only and not intended to represent any conclusions as to a preferred site.

WMRTO put a request to Whanganui District Council (WDC) to assist with a preliminary, high level site risk assessment for the three site options listed. This early work on site risks was designed to determine any critical risks for the sites that may be material to initial site viability assessments.

The sites options presented are:

1. Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui land-Taupo Quay
2. Whanganui District Council land bank site- corner Taupo and Moutoa Quays
3. Whanganui Court House (adjacent to Pakaitore)-Market Place and Bates Street

For the Hub concept to progress and develop, there are a range of core decisions that need to be approached. As discussed, the purpose of the Feasibility Study is to assist decision-makers by providing currently available information on the Hub model and its risks and opportunities. There are many elements to consider and the following are provided as initial discussion points.

- Location
- Ownership structure
- Funding considerations
- Naming the Hub

The Feasibility Study concludes with a list of recommended next steps needed to advance the Eco-Tourism Hub concept towards its realisation.

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, the Whanganui River gained a unique status under New Zealand Parliamentary Law, giving the River its own legal personhood.

'For more than a century the laws, regulations and actions of the Crown have broken the Whanganui River down into parts. The Te Awa Tupua framework seeks to take a catchment-wide approach to ensure that all of the waterways which together join to form the Whanganui River are viewed and managed, not in isolation, but with reference to the whole River as an interconnected ecosystem. Furthermore, to Whanganui Iwi, the Whanganui River is viewed as a living being, Te Awa Tupua; an indivisible whole incorporating its tributaries and all its physical and metaphysical elements from the mountains to the sea. And therefore the health and wellbeing of one element of the River is intrinsically connected to the health and wellbeing of the whole River, its mouri and its mana.

The enduring concept of Te Awa Tupua – the inseparability of the people and River – underpins the desire of Whanganui Iwi to care for, protect, manage, and use the Whanganui River through the kawa and tikanga maintained by our tūpuna and their descendants.

Te Awa Tupua recognises a set of indigenous values at law that reflect the innate relationship of the River to the people and the people to the River as guardians and sovereign partners in protecting the mana of the river and leading water policy, management, and planning. It also represents a move towards restorative justice and sustainable practices for healthy waterways'.¹

This status has gained global recognition, yet despite the profile of Te Awa Tupua story, there are few opportunities for visitors to Whanganui to engage with Māori culture, the awa and to learn about this world leading legislation.

In 2020 the Whanganui Māori Regional Tourism Organisation (WMRTO) and Whanganui and Partners commissioned a Scoping Study to determine if there was interest from iwi, hapū, and tourism operators in pursuing the proposal for an Eco-Tourism Hub (the Hub). This concept is not new, in early 2000 concept plans were developed to refresh the Whanganui River Trust Board building into a multipurpose Hub. The current Hub proposition aims to move forward with the early vision for a Hub on and about the awa.

A consultation process was conducted to determine if an Eco-Tourism Hub could be a viable and attractive initiative for the Whanganui awa catchment. There was a positive response from stakeholders and an overall endorsement to continue the development of the Hub concept and to explore in more detail some of the key considerations highlighted through the consultation process.

The Feasibility Study marks the next phase in the progress of the Eco-Tourism Hub proposition.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Feasibility Study is to expand on the key considerations for the Hub concept that are described in the Scoping Study. The Scoping Study recommendations have shaped the direction of the Feasibility Study. The Feasibility Study sets out the important decisions and next steps needed for the Hub concept to progress.

¹ <https://www.ngatangatatiaki.co.nz/our-story/tupua-te-kawa>

LIMITATIONS

The Feasibility Study provides possible options for some of the key decisions and directions for the Hub concept. The information provided in the Feasibility Study is proposed to assist key stakeholders in their deliberations and decision-making about the Hub. The information is not intended to reflect any forgone conclusions or final decisions on the part of the Project Team.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

As the project develops and key decisions are now required to further progress the Hub concept, decisions will be required by key stakeholders. Additionally, the expert knowledge of the key stakeholders will be critical to the ongoing development of the Hub, providing essential insight into what is need and what is possible. The key stakeholders identified as critical to the progress of the Hub concept include:

- Whanagnui Māori Regional Tourism Organisation
- Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui
- Te Rūnanga o Tupoho
- Whanganui and Partners

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the project in terms of limiting some group consultation processes. Additionally, the changes in tourism and visitor industries because of the pandemic forced a reshape of the market segments that may engage with the Hub in the initial years of its establishment. The Feasibility Study acknowledges the quantum of unknown factors in the tourism sector in coming years and has included these considerations in the Feasibility Study and the risks associated with the Hub development.

BACKGROUND

The Whanganui Māori Regional Tourism Organisation (WMRTO) was established in 2003 as a Māori Tourism Collective, a similar model to mainstream Regional Tourism Organisations. The WMRTO is formally mandated by five Iwi located on Whanganui River mai te Kahui Maunga ki Tangaroa (mountain to the sea). The purpose of the WMRTO is to promote Te Awa o Whanganui, Whenua and Ngāhere and its authentic, Māori cultural and spiritual experience as a tourism destination.

To move forward with its strategy and objectives, the WMRTO is partnering with Whanganui & Partners to develop a concept centred on an Eco-Tourism Hub. The Hub is a starting point for developing a model for ecological and sustainable tourism balanced with preserving the well-being of the whole Whanganui river catchment. The concept aims to address the cultural needs and expectations of regional Iwi and the commercial realities for awa-based business operators, tourism companies and entrepreneurs.

The project also speaks to the strategic perspective of the WMRTO outlined in their 2021 strategy, that any activities in the awa catchment:

‘must be balanced with meaningful economic prosperity that benefits our Iwi but also applying kaitiakitanga principles of ensuring human behaviour does not impact negatively upon the taonga our people refer to as Te Awa Tupua’².

PROJECT VALUES

The Hub project, and Project Team, are guided by the values set out in Te Awa Tupua legislation. These values protect the awa, and by embedding the values in the Hub project, the Project Team has aimed to ensure that the purpose and intent of the project remain consistent with Te Awa Tupua. The project values are therefore;

- Ko te Awa te mātāpuna o te ora: The river is the source of spiritual and physical sustenance.
- E rere kau mai te Awa nui mai i te Kahui Maunga ki Tangaroa: The great river flows from the mountains to the sea.
- Ko au te Awa, ko to Awa ko au: I am the River and the River is me.
- Ngā manga iti, ngā manga nui e honohono kau ana, kau tupu hei Awa Tupua: The small and large streams that flow into one another and form one River³.

PROJECT TEAM

The Hub Project Team represents a close collaboration between the Whanganui Māori Regional Tourism Organisation (WMRTO) and Whanganui & Partners. The project is facilitated by an independent consultant. The project team includes three people from WMRTO and the Strategic Lead Visitor Industries, W&P. Experts in other fields have been included in project discussions from time to time.

Project Team members:

- Hayden Potaka-Chairperson, Whanganui Māori Regional Tourism Organisation

² Geoffrey Hipango, 2020 – 2040 Intergenerational Living Strategy; Whanganui Māori Regional Tourism Organisation Trust Board (WMRTO)

³ Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement Act) Act 2017

- Soraya Peke-Mason- Secretary, Whanganui Māori Regional Tourism Organisation
- Chris Kumeroa- Whanganui Māori Regional Tourism Organisation
- Paul Chaplow-Strategic Lead Visitor Industries, Whanganui, and Partners
- Lyn McCurdy-Project Manager

GOVERNANCE CONSULTATION AND PROJECT OVERSIGHT

The Project Team acknowledges the guidance and advice provided by the following people in the development of the project concepts.

- Gerrard Albert
- Ken Mair
- John Maihi
- WMRTO Board

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The Project Team acknowledges the guidance and advice provided by the following organisations in the development of the project concepts.

- Whanganui District Council
- Sarjeant Gallery
- Whanganui Regional Museum
- Whanganui and Partners
 - Strategic Lead Creative Industries
- AHI (Arts Hub Innovation)
 - Cecelia Kumeroa

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

As outlined in the Scoping Study, concepts for Eco-Tourism Hub have been assessed against the following criteria.

- Protect and maintain Tupua te Kawa.
- Develop a foundation of quality infrastructure to support growth in eco-tourism and supporting regional businesses
- Increase value add for the region and operators through Eco-Tourism initiatives
- Build local skill & capability to create sustainable change
- Create opportunities for Māori and the wider community to collaborate and innovate on tourism ventures.

DRAFT MODEL FOR THE ECO-TOURISM HUB CONCEPT

FINDINGS FROM THE SCOPING STUDY

The Scoping Study identified the core elements expected and needed from the Hub concept. There was clear consensus from stakeholders that the overarching principle for any model should reflect the need to be deeply aspirational and functionally pragmatic.

In the initial scoping and consultation work, the Hub concept included the following:

1. The Eco-Hub model could be based on 3-4 facilities supporting a network of other locations, operators and providers connected to the Hubs through a common brand. The Hubs could be located in:
 - Whanganui (main centre)
 - Pipiriki
 - Taumarunui/National Park
 - A coastal location
2. The Hubs could tell a wholistic Te Awa Tupua story that encourages visitors to go to specific places to learn more, hear other Te Awa Tupua stories and engage in more informed experiences.
3. The current Hub concept is to develop a central Hub in Whanganui as the first key development. Subsequent development of similar Hubs at other locations could occur after the Whanganui Hub is up and running. This would see a phased approach to the establishment of a network of Hubs. At this stage, the phased approach is desirable and considers constraints on key peoples' time and availability, and the capital resources needed to develop multiple Hubs at the same time. Also, foot traffic and visitor numbers are anticipated to be higher (initially) in Whanganui than other more remote sites and this should provide a solid foundation to test the Hub model to then assist other areas in the development of their own unique Hub approach.
4. The coastal location could involve the Whanganui Port Development and its physical, historical, and operational connections to the awa.

BROADENING THE NETWORK OF CULTURAL FACILITIES AND VISITOR EXPERIENCES

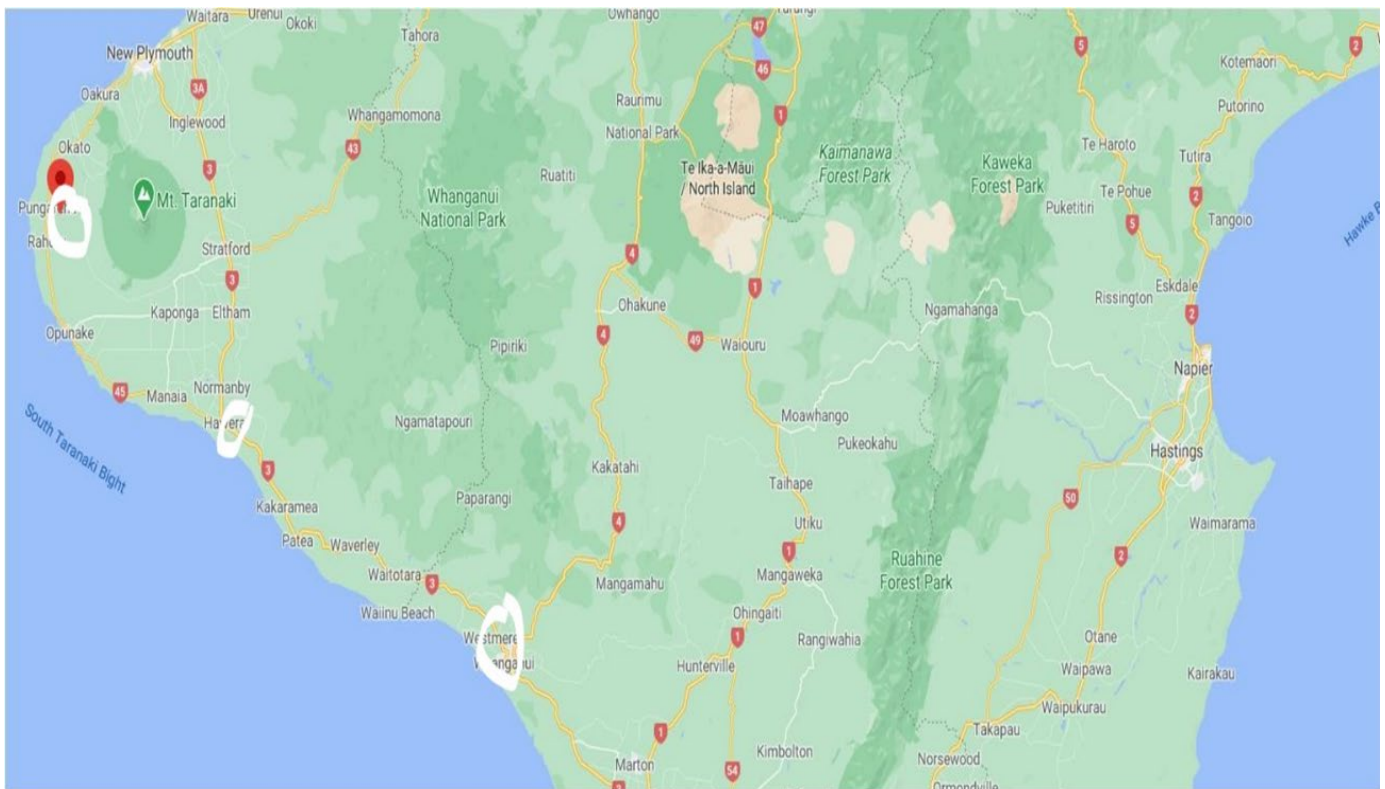
There are other iwi-led visitor experiences under development across the lower central North Island including:

1. Parihaka
 - Located seven kilometres inland from the coast near Pungarehu, Taranaki ⁴
 - In June 2020, the Parihaka Papakāinga Trust was granted \$14 million from the Provincial Growth Fund.
 - It will be used to build a visitor centre and other infrastructure to cope with the increasing number of people coming to the historic site.
2. Te Ramanui o Ruapūtahanga-Hawera multi-purpose civic centre

⁴ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/pou-tiaki/122023364/parihakas-planned-visitor-centre-will-tell-sites-own-story>

- Corner of High and Regent Streets, Hawera
- A government funding announcement coincided with consent being granted for Te Ramanui o Ruapūtahanga, Hāwera's new library, arts, and culture centre last week.
- \$11.5 million project – development funding includes \$3m in government 'shovel-ready' funding, TSB Community Trust granted \$2.8 million with South Taranaki District Council contributing the remaining amount.
- Located on the corner of High and Regent Sts, the new 1605m2 building combines a number of facilities onto one site, including a bigger library, meeting rooms, public toilets, an art gallery and heritage exhibition space, i-SITE visitor centre and cafe.

The Whanganui catchment Hubs could be part of the wider development of a range of new visitor experiences across the Lower Central North Island, with opportunities to work together to draw visitors into the central region



CURRENT MODELLING FOR THE ECO-HUB CONCEPT.

The Eco-Hub/s could:

1. Be an eco-system of interconnected places that deliver a personal, authentic, and interactive experience that explores the many facets of Te Awa Tupua story.
2. Deliver an opportunity for visitors, operators, and marae to engage in Te Awa Tupua story at a level of depth and detail that they choose.
3. Be a catalyst for engaging young people in education, training and employment in tourism, eco-tourism, and cultural/adventure experiences.
4. Be the centre for 'Cultural Navigators' accreditation programmes.
5. Be part of a connected and collaborative programme network, working alongside the Whanganui Regional Museum, Whanganui District Library, and the Sarjeant Gallery.
6. Provide opportunities and spaces for the Arts and Music community to exhibit and perform. The exhibition and gallery spaces could be linked to Te Awa Tupua stories and express these stories and reactions/responses to them in unique and interactive ways.
7. Focus on the visitor and their experience i.e. 'Eco-Visitor' to create an expectation that the visitor can engage with Te Awa Tupua and the awa activities as a participant in an ongoing story. Signals that the visitor has responsibilities relating to their behaviour.
8. Promote the aspiration that Te Awa Tupua is an experience that can influence visitors' behaviours on the awa and inspire them to take the ethos of Te Awa Tupua home with them to consider the well-being of their own environments.
9. Could stimulate links between other world views across the planet.
10. Be home the planned Dubai exhibition on Te Awa Tupua (post 2022)-add explanation.
11. Use technology as the core infrastructure to connect all the locations in any network of Hubs or operators and to connect and drive the brand.
12. Empower iwi and māori businesses and new ventures and networks. Any model needs to avoid the disempowering behaviours experienced through some existing agencies. The model needs to be inclusive and not behave as another compliance driven entity. Collaboration needs to be paramount and any control mechanisms need to be carefully managed.

PROPOSED HUB FUNCTIONS

The Hub could be a centre that delivers several interconnected functions. The Hub concept has been refined through further consultation and reference site analysis. The following is the current model and is seen as both workable and innovative and addresses the needs and aspirations of stakeholders.

In all aspects of the Hub operations, promotion of Te Awa Tupua values and narrative, opportunities for developing local business activity and employment are paramount.

The Hub is seen as a physical place for the operation of three interconnected functions:

- Eco-Tourism experience
- Education
- Training

An integral component of the Hub will be innovative and interactive digital visitor experiences. The digital platform can also open the Hub to App-based visitor interactions attractive to international audiences, educators and students and people who may have difficulties physically engaging with the awa. Importantly, the digital platform will create opportunities for Whanganui artists to display and promote their digital work to a wide range of audiences and markets.

ECO-TOURISM EXPERIENCE

- Te Awa Tupua narratives, values-based experiences
- Storytelling
- Early settler histories and engagement between Māori and Pākehā; stories of diversity
- Virtual/digital/interactive attractions (collaborations with AHI-Arts Hub Innovations⁵)
- Food/hospitality-café promoting awa-based menus, unique to the awa.
- Information/ticket sales for awa-based experiences (processes developed in conjunction with I-Site)
- Gallery and music spaces-indoor and outdoor.
- Visual connection to the awa
- Access to family-friendly awa activities- canoeing, river boats, waka ama
- Retail space for awa-based artists, food and beverage producers, and producers of awa-based products.

EDUCATION

- Te Awa Tupua resources and research
- Archives and documents

⁵ AHI is a new venture directed by Cecelia Kumeroa, designed to develop, and promote digital artists from the Whanganui rohe

- Film and presentations
- School and visitor groups
- Traditional art/music/design
- Te reo Māori in Te Awa Tupua context
- Local Māori history

TRAINING

- Cultural navigators and the iwi and hapū- based Te Awa Tupua narratives.
 - a. Accreditation process; increases employment and remuneration opportunities for accredited navigators
- River navigators/adventure/bush craft/guiding
- Te reo Māori
- Understanding 'Ruruku Whakatupua - Te Mana o Te Awa Tupua' (Whanganui River Deed of Settlement) and applying the principles of Tupua te Kawa -Te Awa Tupua recognises four "intrinsic values" known as Tupua te Kawa which are intended to be considered when decisions are made around the river and catchment.
- Tourism enterprise development
- Career presentations
- Industry accreditation and audit training and support
- Could model programs on international indigenous accreditation programs for guides and operators

WHANGANUI HUB SCENARIO

Given the many and varied things that the Hub could be, the following is a snapshot of the type of visitor experience that could be delivered from the Whanganui Hub.

The visitor arrives at the locally designed and built 'Hub'. The design of the building is integral to Te Awa Tupua narrative, as are the surrounding landscaping, art works, pou and signage. On entering the building, the atmosphere represents te awa, including audio soundscapes (the sound of the river, wind and birds), lighting that changes as the visitor moves through the spaces, interior colours that reflect te awa and floor surfaces that change with different spaces.

The building is carbon-neutral and self-sustaining with water, waste and power facilities reflecting Te Awa Tupua values.

The visitor has a choice of free and entrance fee experiences, some are guided tours and others are self-directed. There are a range of experiences within the interactive spaces including digital theatre-based narratives, performances, and storytelling. Children have areas especially designed for them. The theatre-based experiences are supported by static and interactive displays and exhibitions in the Gallery spaces. School groups have educational resources and skilled guides to support their experience.

There is a café on-site showcasing awa-based produce, local suppliers and innovative food and beverage options. Staff are locals and trained in Whanagnui. The café is connected to a small hui/conference/presentation space that provides opportunities for the Hub to be utilised in the evenings.

The retail space promotes local artists, producers, and products. All products are authenticated.

The visitor can book a variety of awa-based tours, activities, experiences, and accommodation through the Hub in a way that is easy and convenient. Options for tours and activities are displayed on a digital screen in the reception area and presented as brochures. Some awa-based activities can be seen from the Hub and transport options are available for activities further afield.

The Hub houses training and education areas for a range of programmes that support the development of people skilled and informed about Te Awa Tupua and Tupua te Kawa. This includes the training and accreditation of cultural navigators (working title) who operate or staff the awa-based visitor experiences.

As the visitor leaves the Hub, they take with them an experience that has not only informed them about many aspects of Te Awa Tupua and created opportunities for them to actively engage with the awa and its people, but importantly, they take with them an aspiration to better understand their own local environments and their responsibilities to them.

FUNCTIONAL ELEMENTS

1. The model will need to be developed in such a way that it does not become a financial burden on its owners or the community. As much as the Te Awa Tupua story encompasses sustainability, the model itself needs to be financially and environmentally self-sustaining and sustainable as a marketable attraction into the future.
2. There is a fine line between the model generating prosperity (profit) from Te Awa Tupua and Te Awa Tupua being an enabling element for improved prosperity for the people in the awa catchment. Prosperity should be viewed in its widest context, including environmental, social, economic, and cultural perspectives.
3. The Hub and the brand will need to be owned and operated by an appropriate entity. This entity could be a collectively owned venture or a representative-based Charitable Trust or Incorporated Society. An important component of any model should be the commitment to channel any operating profit back into the functions of the Hub and the operators' network to build success.
4. Employment opportunities created through the Hub and collaborative network could include:
 - a. Hub Management
 - b. Front of House/Information
 - c. Staff for awa-based experiences
 - d. Owners of new awa-based ventures
 - e. Hospitality/café/hui and conference activities
 - f. Training and education-tutors, cultural specialists
 - g. Event management
 - h. IT and communications-design/implementation/maintenance/ training
 - i. Design-brand, digital
 - j. Finance
5. Internships could be established to develop a range of skills and capabilities that will be needed to operate the Hub at the level of excellence anticipated for the development. There are current shortages in many of skills that will be needed to operate the Hub. These include exhibition development, development of authentic cultural experiences and interactive digital development capabilities. To address anticipated skills shortages, the development of a Hub intern programme could be considered.
 - a. Ideally, two internships could be established in partnership with the Sarjeant Gallery and the Whanganui Regional Museum to provide in-depth training and development for people involved in the establishment of the Hub. In reciprocation for the time and contribution to the interns' development, the Hub could secure the funding for the interns which would provide the Sarjeant and the Museum with additional funded staff for a period of 1-2 years. When possible, the interns would transition to the Hub, bringing with them both skills and relationships with two of the Hub's significant partners.

6. Governance oversight will be essential in sustaining the awareness of and commitment to the Te Awa Tupua values and core principles. This function could be provided through several entities including Nga Tangata Tiaki or a new entity established for this purpose.

Regional infrastructure will need to be robust and reliable. Regional infrastructure, especially along the Whanganui River Road is patchy and difficult to manage, given, investment, terrain, and weather. Close engagement and consultation will be needed with regional and district councils, contractors, central government, and the Dept. of Conservation to ensure that visitors, and the community, can move safely along the river road and into surrounding areas. The Hub will drive an increase in the number of people experiencing the awa and the overall catchment. Careful planning will be needed in conjunction with other developments along the awa to ensure the safety of the awa as well as its people.

Infrastructure includes;

- a. Roading and bridges
- b. Drainage
- c. IT connectivity
- d. Electrical supply
- e. Public amenities

MARKETS AND AUDIENCES

The current Covid-19 pandemic impacts on tourism, both domestic and international, are being felt across the globe and across Aotearoa New Zealand. The disruptions to international tourism have created opportunities in domestic tourism and visitor experiences and the Hub development aims to optimise these current opportunities whilst preparing for improvements and innovations in international tourism.

Whanganui focuses its efforts on three target markets. Independent Professionals (30 – 50 years, couples with no kids), Active Boomers (60+, couple with no children), and families with school-aged or younger children. Visiting friends and relatives are an important part of the visitor spend but are not an area of focus for marketing.

Up to early 2020 the bulk of international visitors to Whanganui were from Australia (32%), followed by Germany (17%), United Kingdom (13%) and the USA (6%)⁶. Prior to the Covid 19 pandemic International visitors made up around 17% - 18% of Whanganui's visitor spend.

Generally marketing efforts are focussed in the lower North Island, Taranaki, Manawatu, Hawkes Bay and Wellington with occasional focus in Auckland if solid PR opportunities arise. The Covid-19 pandemic generates ongoing uncertainty in tourism and visitor markets and these need to be considered in the detailed modelling for both visitor numbers and anticipated revenues.

At this stage the key markets anticipated for the Hub include:

- Visiting family and friends
- Domestic visitors new to the area and the experiences available
- Schools
- Iwi and hapū hui and exhibitions
- Small Aotearoa New Zealand conferences and hui (approx. 50 people)
- Researchers, archivists, film industry research (commercial model)
- Retail sales of local artists' work
- Limited international visitors (2021-2023)
- Expanded international visitors' market (2023-)

⁶ MBIE International Visitors Survey YE 2018

REFERENCE SITES

The project team has explored several visitor experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand that have similar characteristics to the proposed Hub. Online research and visits to some of these experiences by members of the team have helped refine the Hub concept. Reference sites included:

- The All Blacks Experience, Auckland
- Manea Footprints of Kupe, Opononi (Hokianga)
- Mataatua Whareniui: The House That Came Home, Whakatāne
- Pūkaha Mount Bruce Wildlife Centre, Masterton
- Te Ramanui o Ruapūtahanga-Hawera Multi-Purpose Civic Centre
- Parihaka (Taranaki)

The project team determined that the sites most closely aligned with the proposed Hub are the Manea Footprints of Kupe visitor centre in Opononi and The All Blacks Experience, Sky City, Auckland.

MANEA FOOTPRINTS OF KUPE SITE VISIT REVIEW

On 24 May 2021, members of the project team visited ‘Manea Footprints of Kupe’, a visitors’ centre on the Hokianga Harbour that tells the story of Kupe, from the place where he first arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Location: 41 Hokianga Harbour Drive, Opononi, New Zealand

Manea: Footprints of Kupe is a 75-minute multisensory journey of guided storytelling – through art, taonga (cultural treasures), film, performance, digital interaction, and the splendour of Hokianga’s natural surroundings⁷.

Eco-Hub project team attendees:

- Paul Chaplow,
- Soraya Peke-Mason
- Lyn McCurdy

From Manea Footprints of Kupe:

- Katherine Clarke, CEO
- Max Lloyd, Whakatairanga (Sales & Marketing)

RECOGNITION OF THE MANEA TEAM’S CONTRIBUTION

The Site visit report is available for review. The project team requests that the information contained in the report, and the summary contained in the Feasibility Study, is confidential to the Hub decision-makers. The team at Manea were very generous and frank with their information and perspectives and it is important to acknowledge their assistance and respect their comments. The project team and the Manea team plan to remain in touch and exchange helpful information as appropriate.

⁷ <https://maneafootprints.co.nz/about-us/about/>

With respect to reciprocation, we asked if there was anything that we could share with them that may be of assistance in their own mahi. The CEO was keen to know more about the WMRTO's model as a Māori Regional Tourism Organisation, the background of this model and how to become involved in this approach. Soraya addressed these issues and anticipates an ongoing korero with Katherine about this.

KEY POINTS FROM THE SITE REVIEW

1. The Business Case that we had read (available online) was written for a specific purpose and audience and didn't contain or cover all the issues that were involved in the project. We were advised to make sure we tailor our material to the specific needs of any audience e.g. councils or funders.
2. Look at interns for succession planning and to do the 'grunt' work. Feasibility Study carried out by Far North Inc., as a tourism defined product.
3. Merchandise is important to revenue and promotion. Best sellers are t-shirts, hats, earrings.
4. The Manea experience is spread across three buildings:
 - a. Reception/ whare taonga (house of treasures)
 - b. Theatre (20-minute 4D-digital extravaganza and live performance)
 - c. Interactive Gallery (8 digital audio-visual stations/kiosks)
 - d. The overall site is quite large, and the clever use of landscape design has created a path between the buildings so that visitors hikoi between the reception building and the theatre, engaging with a guided commentary as they walk.
- e. Solar panels and water catchment tanks reduce the environmental impact of the site and its construction and mitigated some of the concerns of the local community about increased pressure on local infrastructure.
- f. There are challenges with supporting infrastructure including accommodation and food and beverage options. Aiming to have a beneficial impact on local businesses and early days seeing this and getting locals to see opportunities.
- g. Design and production company Gibson Group did the creativity innovation and technology. The actual cost was significantly more than forecasted with several essential items, e.g. internet access not included in the budget.
- h. Gibson Group and Far North Holdings both contributed early stage resources and invoiced for these costs when the site opened. These costs were not factored into the early trading budgets and placed pressure on the finances. Be sure to clearly define any commercial terms especially if in-kind or deferred terms are offered.
- i. \$3.4mil for Digital, Theatre and Gallery Entrance. Planning budgets didn't include retail, carpark, operation costs. The overall cost to get the site operating was roughly \$1.0mil more than planned.
- j. In hindsight should have included a 50% contingency for the construction as there were so many additional items to fund. This included extensive site works.
- k. Education has become a core activity and revenue stream and replaces some of the income lost through Covid impacts on tourism. Their education material was developed by a specialist Māori educator.

- l. The experience is very specific to the place where it stands (Place-based venture) and specific to the story that the founding three hapū and four marae want to tell. If other hapū want to tell their own Kupe narrative, that's fine with Manea.
- m. Need to be very clear about who the audience is for the venture and who benefits from it.
- n. The operational structure was influenced by funding discussions and the type of entity that could work with external funders.
- o. Initial governance model followed the NZ Institute of Directors guidelines and included independent directors as well as Trust representatives. The independent directors brought in business and marketing expertise but when the venture was put under financial pressure as a result of tourism disruptions, they became very concerned about their own liabilities and this didn't fit with the hapū/te ao Māori priorities about community well-being and impact
- p. The Trust pays the CEO salary costs but the CEO is employed by the company. This structure was necessary to fund the role. The Trust does all the funding applications and distributes about 12% of funding to support the Trust's functions, including paying the CEO. This is not ideal or seen as a long-term approach. The venture should be able to cover its costs, but this is some way off.
- q. The local Community Trust provided the initial seed funding to start the project and fund Katherine (CEO) to get the venture off the ground.
- r. The venture is a Limited Liability company solely owned by the Te Hua o Te Kawariki Trust – 'a charitable trust representing a group of local marae and all profits are returned for community projects.
- s. Looking to change structure to the Limited Liability company having one Director and a Managing Director, reporting to the Trust. This model is seen as a better way to develop and maintain a close relationship with the Trust. Advisory Boards could then be established to provide expert input to key areas.
- t. Need to have levels of delegation for Advisory Board.
- u. The local EDA met with Manea to offer services and support that were behind what the venture had already achieved and although enthusiastic, currently the EDA provides limited assistance. Māori Tourism and Tourism NZ provide marketing assistance.
- v. Be careful about descriptions for the Hub. The early marketing for Manea included references to history and culture and people thought the site was a museum. Manea started a campaign #maneanotamusuem to counter this. It is difficult to attract domestic tourists to 'cultural' experiences and museums. Domestic visitors don't want to pay more than \$50 for an experience.
- w. Employ local. The exception to this is if you can't find the skills you need, look outwards. Don't compromise the vision and quality of the experience because of local skills gaps. E.g. Manea employed an external Experience Development Manager as the skills weren't available locally.
- x. See where the Hub sits with the new New Zealand history curriculum. Start this conversation now.
- y. Develop a central concept that suits multiple markets and audiences with a diversified offering. Risk mitigation and multiple revenue streams.
- z. Be brave.
- aa. Kelvin Davis has been helpful especially in directing Manea to people who can assist.

ALL BLACKS EXPERIENCE FROM A VISITOR'S PERSPECTIVE (SORAYA PEKE-MASON)

I had a very open mind about what to expect from the All Blacks Experience and was pleasantly surprised in terms of concept, delivery, and experience. This is a partnership between New Zealand Rugby and Ngāi Tahu Tourism.

After receiving instructions and walking through the sliding doors already I felt this is going to be interesting. They started with covering the values on which the All Blacks stand by, 'Ehara taku toa he toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini – my success is not achieved alone, but rather it is achieved collectively.' Briefly, walking through to various rooms and sliding doors they covered the history of the All Blacks including the Black Ferns, before moving to the next room for training by testing and strengthening our ball handling and strategic thinking skills on computers. Then off to a hot, sweaty, liniment lotion smelling changing room, we sat in our own cubicles waiting further instructions. Coaches and players popped up around us giving personal last-minute instructions and encouragement. After final preparations, we were all lined up for the big run out, there we were only metres away standing right in front of the All Blacks as they prepared to do the haka on a massive screen. It was a goose bumping exciting feeling of exhilaration and being there after they finished delivering the haka.

This is a well-developed, cleverly designed state-of-the-art experience, from the time the automatic doors opened to arriving at the Games room, well worth the visit. With the use of innovation and technology it provided us with a full sensory, interactive, and immersive experience with real insights into the world of being an All Black.

<https://www.experienceallblacks.com/news-and-blog/thanks-to-our-partners/>



WHANGANUI SITE OPTIONS

The project team has explored several potential sites for the Eco-Tourism Hub in Whanganui. At this stage the review of sites has been limited to sites owned by iwi entities. The potential sites itemised in the Feasibility Study are presented as options only and not intended to represent any conclusions as to a preferred site. The following information is intended to support discussions on possible sites.

SITE RISK OVERVIEWS

WMRTO put a request to Whanganui District Council (WDC) to assist with a preliminary, high level site risk assessment for the three site options listed. This early work on site risks was designed to determine any critical risks for the sites that may be material to initial site viability assessments.⁸

The risk snapshots are not comprehensive and extensive mahi will be needed on any shortlisted sites to fully understand their risk profile.

The site options presented are:

1. Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui land-Taupo Quay (Former Whanganui Māori River Trust Board site)
2. Whanganui District Council land bank site- corner Taupo and Moutoa Quays
3. Whanganui Court House (adjacent to Pakaitore)-Market Place and Bates Street

Items presented in the review are focused on the potential alignment of the sites' attributes to the current view of the core deliverables of the Hub. The items listed are intended to stimulate discussion on site options and as these discussions progress, other sites may be brought into consideration.

All property data presented has been obtained through the Whanganui District Council Property Information website⁹.

⁸ WMRTO and the project team acknowledge and thank Tim Crowe and his team from WDC for their assistance.

⁹ <https://www.whanganui.govt.nz/Property-Rates/Property-Information-Search>

1. NGĀ TĀNGATA TIAKI O WHANGANUI (NTT) LAND-61 TAUPO QUAY (FORMER WHANGANUI MĀORI RIVER TRUST BOARD SITE)

Property number 15326

Assessment number 1328000103

Area 0.2404 Ha

Land value \$630,000

Capital value \$760,000

SUMMARY

The site is positioned opposite the Trafalgar Square Shopping Centre on Taupo Quay and adjacent to the Whanganui awa. The site borders a small WDC land parcel, designated for public use. The awa walk/cycle shared path runs between the site and the awa and is a popular corridor along the awa. A new apartment complex on a neighbouring site is nearing completion (see Figure 1).

The site is currently owned by NTT, following the transfer of assets from the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board (disestablished).

Site attributes:

Pros

- Good visibility from the southern entrance to Whanganui along State Highway 4/ Putiki Drive and the Whanganui City Bridge.
- Good public access via shared pathway
- WDC may consider the Hub a good fit with the use of the public land between the site and the share pathway. The WDC land could connect a Hub café with the shared pathway. Access to the land could be a WDC contribution to the project.
- Very good proximity to the awa, suitable for accessing awa-based activities such as waka ama, riverboats, canoeing and the potential for visitors to arrive at the Hub from the awa.
- NTT owns the site and the Hub development may be an attractive investment and appealing to Whanganui iwi members.
- The site may be readily available for development.

Cons

- The site is constrained on all sides by other developments and roading and this limits the size of any potential Hub complex.
- The traffic is busy especially with the Shopping Centre across the road. This may be problematic with staff and visitor parking and space to manoeuvre tour buses.
- Site vulnerability to flooding and earthquake impacts (see Site risk overview below).

SITE RISK OVERVIEW

- Sits inside both the 1/100 and 1/200 flood plain. This site flooded in 2015 and sustained water damage. It has no flood protection and will likely flood again. The annual exceedance probability of a repeat flood similar to 2015 is 1/85. This roughly equates to a 1-2 percent chance of a reoccurrence on any given calendar year. This will increase in likelihood when climate change impacts progress, and the site is unlikely to be viable by the end of the century.
- The site has a high liquefaction risk due to its' sub-soil content and proximity to the river. It would also have a higher risk to earthquake damage and, on the river side, seitching (partial or full bank collapse) is possible in large events.
- Any new build here would require investment in sinking piles down quite deep as well as design and engineering to account for flood inundation. The I-Site building further along gives a good example of a retrofit to cope with similar issues.

Site 1 – NTT Site (old Trust Board Site)

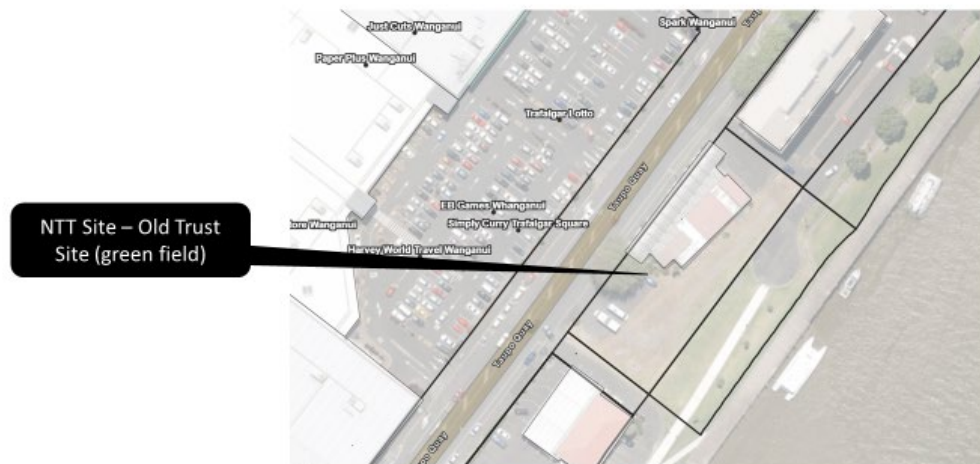


Figure 1 NTT Taupo Quay site

WHANGANUI DISTRICT COUNCIL LAND BANK SITE- 5 AND 6 TAUPO QUAY, CORNER TAUPO AND MOUTOA QUAYS

5 Taupo Quay

Property number 15011

Assessment number 1328072800

Area 0.0489 Ha

Land value \$143,000

Capital value \$160,000

SUMMARY

The site is opposite an entrance to UCOL's carpark on Taupo Quay, and adjacent to the Whanganui Riverboat Centre and Waimarie paddle steamer wharf and booking office. The site is earmarked to house a tram terminal as part of a WDC waterfront development, which will see the tram travel past the site. The site is part of the area of the waterfront that host the Whanganui River Traders Market each week and is near several historic buildings (see Figure 2).

Confirmation is needed as to the parcel of land being 5 Taupo Quay or 5 and 6 Taupo Quay.

Pros

- The site could be part of a heritage precinct that includes the Whanganui Riverboat Centre and Waimarie paddle steamer wharf.
- The proposed tram would be a source of potential visitors and a novel way for visitors to arrive at the Hub.
- Good proximity to the awa, suitable for accessing awa-based activities such as waka ama, riverboats, canoeing and the potential for visitors to arrive at the Hub from the awa. For a view of the awa several established trees would need to be removed from the public land between the site and the awa.
- Good public access via shared pathway.
- Walking distance to the I-Site and Moutoa Gardens/ Pakaitore.

Cons

- The site is part of the land bank, the details of which are incorporated in the Whanganui iwi Treaty of Waitangi Settlement claims process, currently underway. As such, the site may not be available for development for 2-3 years (estimate).
- There may be an expectation that the sites are transferred to iwi as clean sites i.e. the existing buildings will be demolished and the sites remediated, so that the cost of demolition and disposal of the building material is not transferred to new owners. If these site clearance costs are transferred to a new owner, for example a Hub ownership entity, then these costs will need to be included in the overall project cost and budget. These costs may be significant.
- The site is constrained on all sides by other developments and roading and this limits the size of any potential Hub complex. An estimate of the site is approximately 40m x 40m.

- Parking is limited in the area. This may be problematic with staff and visitor parking and space to manoeuvre tour buses.
- Site vulnerability to flooding and earthquake impacts (see Site risk overview below).

Site risk overview

- Similar to the NTT site, flood prone, with a slightly higher reoccurrence likelihood. A 15.5 metre flood at Pipiriki would inundate this location and this should be considered very likely in our lifetime. Any build should consider flood proofing similar to the I-Site as part of the design.
- High liquefaction risk
- Not prone to non-river overland flooding

Site 2 – Maori Landbanked Site - Waimarie

Derelict building –
Maori Land bank
(being demolished)



WHANGANUI COURT HOUSE (ADJACENT TO PAKAITORE)-10 MARKET PLACE

Property number 15044

Assessment number 1328075800

Area 0.1803 Ha

Land value \$120,000

Capital value \$2,420,000

SUMMARY

The Whanganui Court House is the Ministry of Justice building in Whanganui. The land and building are included in the current considerations for iwi land settlement processes. For the purposes of opening an initial korero about the appropriateness of the site and its attributes in terms of any Hub development, the Feasibility Study has positioned the current decision-making process under NTT. The decision-makers may change as the land settlement process progresses and mana whenua move forward with their settlement and post-settlement aspirations for property developments.

The site is included in the wider Pakaitore site, a site a special significance to mana whenua, iwi, and the wider Whanganui community. Historically, Pakaitore was a universal gathering place during season fish migrations and was a place for trading and connectedness for people of the awa and its catchment.

The site is a significant place in Māori and iwi political landscapes, including as the site of the 1995 protests and occupation in response to Crown's position on Whanganui land and awa ownership rights. The project team acknowledge that there are sensitivities surrounding the Court House site and Pakaitore. The site as an option for a Hub development has been included as a place to start a korero on what might be possible once the Court House and land are available for development in the next few years.

The 'site' is interpreted as the land and current Court House building. Reference to the 'full site' includes the Court House building and land, Pakaitore and Moutoa Gardens.

Pros

- The site is located within a historic precinct that includes:
 - Pakaitore
 - The Māori Land Court building
 - The Sarjeant Gallery
 - The Whanganui Regional Museum
 - The Whanganui District Library
 - The Whanganui War Memorial
 - The Whanganui Riverboat Centre
- The awa is visible from the Taupo Quay-Somme Parade-Bates Street perspective.
- Potential high levels of foot traffic connected to the city centre

- The site has existing off-street parking and parking opportunities on Market and Bates Street.
- Immediately adjacent to the Pakaitore/Moutoa Gardens, public access from all sides of the full site.
- The adjacent Māori Land Court building tells its own significant story and could speak to the Pakaitore and Hub narratives and could expand to opportunities to tell a wider and more comprehensive story.
- The site is on a range of history and heritage walking tours around the significant sites in Whanganui.
- There site has the potential to be a greenfields development if any decisions were made to remove the existing Court House.
- The site is large enough to develop a centre that could house the Hub and other initiatives or narratives that iwi and hapū may want to develop.

Cons

- The Court House is a sensitive site for many whānau and the wider community who have been involved with the criminal justice system. Many people may feel that the building represents both personal and tribal circumstances of stress, sadness, anger, inequity, and disadvantage. For these and other issues, the site might only be an option for the Hub if the building is removed. There will be considerable demolition and disposal costs that would need to be included in any development estimates.
- For the reasons described above, the site may not be an option at all.
- As the site is a consideration in current land settlement process, the timing for the site to be available for any Hub development may be difficult to determine for some time. An indicative timeframe may be 2-3 years until the site could be considered or available.
- The awa is a short walk from the site and would only be visible from the site through careful design of the Hub and surrounding landscaping.
- If the building was retained and remodelled, there are existing cost estimates for building repairs especially for the roof, with an estimate of \$2.0mil for this work.

SITE RISK OVERVIEW

- Best location from a disaster hazard lens.
- No flood risk, no land instability issues. Good soil. Low Liquefaction risk
- Cannot find any link to its earthquake risk from a structural viewpoint, though it is not listed as quake prone.

Site 3 - NTT Owned Whanganui Court House

NTT Building – Whanganui Court House



The site is adjacent to the Native Land Court building which has its own narrative aligned to the wider historical narrative of Pakaitore.

Key decisions

For the Hub concept to progress and develop, there are a range of core decisions that need to be approached. As discussed, the purpose of the Feasibility Study is to assist decision-makers by providing currently available information on the Hub model and its risks and opportunities. There are many elements to consider and the following are provided as initial discussion points.

LOCATION

The Feasibility Study outlines three possible sites and their characteristics. There may be other sites that can come into consideration. As the site preferences narrow and one or two preferred sites emerge, detailed analysis of these sites can be undertaken.

OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE

The reference sites presented a range of ownership models that work for their various circumstances. Initial consideration could be given to the following ownership models.

PARTNERSHIP:

The Hub could be developed through partnership arrangements between iwi and private developers, iwi groups, iwi and the Crown or iwi and Whanganui District Council.

All partnership models present opportunities and risks. Considerations for partnerships include the level of shareholding each partner wants, the valuation of shareholdings/equity, voting structures, exit mechanisms and risk appetite of each partner.

NGĀ TĀNGATA TIAKI O WHANGANUI (NTT)

Social and environmental development, links with operators to generate prosperity for iwi members

NTT is the organisation trusted with the protection of the awa and has a vested interest in the appropriateness of any initiative that proposes to engage with the Te Awa Tupua narratives, and any commercial activities aligned with Te Awa Tupua. Protection of the awa through stewardship over the Te Awa Tupua values may position NTT as the parent entity for the Hub development. NTT could approach the development through its subsidiary Trusts, being Te Ngakinga o Whanganui Trust and/or Te Whawhaki Trust.

Te Ngakinga o Whanganui Trust is responsible for NTT investment portfolios and Te Whawhaki Trust is involved in development opportunities. There may be an opportunity for the Hub development to sit between the investment and the development arms of NTT to create a wholly owned commercial investment, with control over the Te Awa Tupua narratives and any external commercial alignment to Te Awa Tupua.

WMRTO MEMBER OF GOVERNANCE BOARD BUT NOT AN OWNER

The WMRTO is a Charitable Trust formally setup in 2003 and is a constitutionally mandated Iwi Authority. The Iwi mandated groups are Tupoho, Tamaupoko, Tamahaki, Hinengakau, and Ngāti Rangī. WMRTO may consider taking a governance role in the Hub structure but may feel that any ownership stake in the Hub would create conflicts of interest with tourism operators and some iwi or hapū groups.

NGĀ TĀNGATA TIAKI O WHANGANUI AND TE RUNANGA O TUPOHO JOINT VENTURE

Given the strategic importance of both NTT and Te Runanga o Tupoho (Tupoho) to both the development of initiatives involving or impacting on the awa, its catchment and Te Awa Tupua, it may be appropriate for the two

key stakeholders to join forces and establish a joint venture entity that is responsible for the establishment of the Hub and then establishes a preferred operating model for the Hub into the future.

This process could involve the establishment of a joint board to direct the early stages of the Hub development and embed Te Awa Tupua values at the inception of the Hub. The establishment board could be responsible to securing the initial seed funding and capital investment needed to begin the Hub development. The establishment board would also appoint the start-up stage CEO and provide guidance and support for the development. Post-start up the Board would have opportunities to consider the longer-term needs to the Hub in terms of governance and amend the entity's governance structure accordingly.

This joint venture model could provide both NTT and Tupoho with flexibility to shape the Hub at its establishment and at a later date reshape the organisational structures to accommodate the needs of the enterprise which may be very different if a few years times to what is currently perceived.

FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

Regardless of the establishment structure of the Hub and any governance entities, an important consideration will be the impact of any structures on the eligibility of the Hub development to access external funding. Many of the large national project funding bodies such as Lotteries Significant Projects Fund, have set eligibility criteria for fund applicants.

During the process of deciding on the nature, scope and structure of the Hub entity, a thorough review of opportunities or potential constraints on funding because of governance or ownership models should be considered.

NAMING THE HUB

The project team have maintained the position that 'Eco-Tourism Hub' is a working title only. It is appreciated that stakeholders may hold strong feelings about what the final 'Hub' model should be named. As part of the Hub development, key stakeholders are asked to consider the process for naming the 'Hub' and the point at which the project can commence using any new name for the development.

Next steps

The following are the recommended next steps in the ongoing development of the Eco-Tourism Hub over the next several months.

1. WMRTO signs off on the Feasibility Study-
2. WMRTO distributes the Feasibility Study to the Key Stakeholders and other significant parties to progress the core decisions needed to advance the development. These include:
 - a. Finalise the Eco-Tourism Hub purpose, functions, markets (quantum) and offerings
 - b. Establish 1-2 preferred locations for detailed review
 - c. Commence discussion on ownership and investment models
 - d. Review funding options
 - e. Naming of the Hub
 - i. determine the preferred brand in association with the name.

- f. Complete Business Case for preferred site
 - g. Engage a Whanganui-based graphics designer to work with the project to develop preliminary conceptual designs for the preferred site to assist in planning and consultation
 - h. Develop communication and website development plans
 - i. Establish a plan for engaging with key stakeholders
 - j. Consider the composition of the Hub Project Team as the initiative moves towards realisation. What skills and experience are needed and who should be involved and in what capacity? Establish a liaison approach with Tupoho about the Feasibility Study
3. Establish the Business Case development project to advance the decisions made by the key stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS

The Eco-Tourism Hub is seen by most stakeholders as an important development in the Whanganui and wider Whanganui awa catchment's approach to visitor and tourism industry development. Following consultation process, reviews of reference sites and considerations of location, and organisational structure issues, the project team believe that the Hub has a significant contribution to make the sustainable development of tourism in the region and on the awa. The Hub can provide a unique opportunity to communicate Te Awa Tupua narratives to local, national, and international visitors, through place-based experiences and digital innovation.

To move the Hub forward, there are several critical decisions that need to be made by the key stakeholders for the Hub, and these are outlined in the Feasibility Study. The project team acknowledge and thank all the stakeholders who have helped to shape the Hub to this point and remain available to the key stakeholders as and when needed to provide any additional information or related assistance.

The Feasibility Study marks the conclusion of Phase 1 of the Hub concept development. Phase 2 will involve progressing the decisions of the key stakeholders and moving the Hub concept closer to realisation.

For further information of the project and the concept please contact:

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