

## Media Release

27 August 2020

### Government investment into Ancient Kauri Trail

Today Minister Shane Jones announced \$4 million of funding from the Infrastructure Reference Group for the Kaipara District Council to develop the Kaihū Valley cycle trail, which will bring immediate and long-term jobs to the Kaipara District.

This announcement is part of a \$16 million Government package to create jobs and boost economic development in the Kaipara District, which includes \$6m for maintaining stop banks between Dargaville and Te Kopuru and \$5m to improve the unsealed road network. A further \$1m was awarded directly to community projects.

The Kaihū Valley Trail, connecting Dargaville to Donnelly's Crossing is part of the Ancient Kauri Trail that will eventually extend from the Brynderwyns all the way to the southern headland of the Hokianga Harbour.

The trail brings opportunities for the area; including local employment for local Contractors whose jobs are at risk as well as those who've lost jobs due to COVID-19; an attraction that will encourage more people to spend time in Kaipara, a place for new and interesting business opportunities related to the trail, for example, hospitality, transit services, cultural tourism, or other recreational activities. It is expected to create 36 new jobs including 24 apprenticeship roles in West Kaipara, which is an area suffering high unemployment. Apprentices will train in project management, safe working practices, fencing, the environment and tourism.

GM Infrastructure, Jim Sephton says "New Zealand is experiencing a surge in domestic tourism and Kaipara currently only attracts around 10% of this market. This means more local opportunities for employment and business, as well as finding sustainable ways to share our local environment and culture. These projects have been targeted as they provide an opportunity to train and develop people who are new to the Civil industry in a relatively safe environment. Training and development will be a significant part of the way in which we deliver these projects".

Council has started the process of talking with landowners, the Department of Conservation and iwi to plan a route. This investment allows more work to be done in this space and the trail will be developed to minimise impacts and disruptions to working farms, and large landowners and neighbours of the path, which may include rerouting where possible. The design will also factor in potential environmental issues such as Kauri Dieback, flooding, and land stability, health and safety for the farms, their animals and cyclists.

Following consultation with individual landowners, the proposed route will be designed and physical works can commence. Construction will commence in Nov-Dec this year, this work will be completed in stages.

## **Background**

The Kaihu Valley Trail forms part of the Twin Coast Cycle Trail which was developed and endorsed by the NZ Transport Agency in 2019.

The cycle trail would start/end at in Dargaville and travel north to Donnellys Crossing. It will be completed in stages, as funding and resource allows. It is likely to use portions of corridor along the historic Kaihu Valley Railway line that was constructed in 1896, connecting Donnellys Crossing to the bustling port of Dargaville.

A majority of the land is owned by Kaipara District Council, and the Department of Conservation.

***For more information contact Jody Kelly 0210 2759 738***