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## Media Release

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### Work progresses in Kaipara under Te Tai Tokerau Redeployment Package

Work is progressing at pace, as a result of \$2.87m recently allocated to Kaipara District from the Te Tai Tokerau Redeployment Package. A total of \$9.32 million is allocated across Northland. The funding package through the Provincial Growth Fund is providing urgent economic relief for those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, by creating immediate work opportunities for local people and businesses.

Through the accelerated work in Kaipara District Council parks, 38 people have already been employed as part of the preliminary and current stages of work. Of these, 24 roles are full-time and include contract managers, skilled labourers, and machine operators. A further 14 are part-time and include administration and traffic control duties. Approximately 18 of the workers were previously unemployed. Further stages of work are being finalised, which will provide employment for another 15+ workers.

There have been a number of success stories including that of Turf Tamer, a local contractor. Earlier in the year they had invested in a remote-controlled mulching machine, providing a much safer way of clearing vegetation. Turf Tamer had secured several contracts which were then lost as a direct result of the first COVID-19 lockdown. The work through the Te Tai Tokerau Redeployment Package enabled them to recover their business as well as retain their assets – including the mulching machine, for immediate work. Turf Tamer are also working with Te Roroa to provide work for one of their staff on a casual basis, and if work continues to grow this opportunity may lead to a permanent contract.

The relatively low risk environment of the work being undertaken has also allowed some contractors to safely train less experienced staff. This includes Kia Tupato, a local Traffic Management company, assisting with some of the Parks projects.

Environmental responsibility is a strong factor in the projects. Projects are using sustainable work practices, protecting and enhancing local ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity, and minimising or reusing waste generated. Many of the projects focus on pest plant removal and revegetation with native planting. Where trees have been removed the waste is left onsite and mulched for ground cover, gum stems are used as landscape edging, and in some parks, firewood is donated for community groups.

So far work at the Mangawhai Community Park includes pest plant, gum tree, and pine removal. Once the pest plants are removed, native trees such as kānuka and mānuka will be planted alongside some greenspace. The Council is working with Te Uri o Hau and their Te Arai Pt. nursery to plant and maintain the native vegetation.

At Pou Tu o Te Rangi Harding Park pest plants are being removed. The work funded by Te Tai Tokerau Redeployment package is supporting earlier native tree planting around the gully areas to help with sediment control. Approx. 5000 native plants including cabbage trees, kānuka, mānuka and flaxes have been planted in the last two months alone.

Around Kai-iwi Lakes – Taharoa Domain teams have started the task of removing pest plants. The Council has been working closely with Te Roroa who have employed 11 people on this project. Workers have received specialist training, such as Growsafe and chainsaw training, that will benefit them in the future.

Pest plant removal is about to start at Northern Wairoa Memorial Park and will be followed with minor track upgrades.

Omana Road Reserve has had a general tidy up, which included removing pest plants.

Kaipara District Council's General Manager for Infrastructure Services Jim Sephton says he's pleased to see the funding and approved projects supporting a strong number of local people and businesses affected by the economic downturn from COVID-19.

"Not only has the funding initiative given some much needed support to local employment in the region during COVID-19, it's also been brilliant to see some projects accelerate as a result," says Jim Sephton.

A number of roadside projects are yet to begin, including roadside litter cleanup, a new footpath in Matakohe, dangerous tree removal, self-seeded tree removal, and noxious weed spraying. This work will improve the visual appeal of the area, improve safety, and reduce the need for future maintenance.

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