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PRESS RELEASE

Kaipara Kai opens, ready for business

Kaipara Kai, a support base for landowners and the kai industry was opened for business in Ruawai by Hon. Shane Jones today.

The ribbon-cutting event, hosted by Kaipara District Council, included iwi, local dignitaries, and representatives from the farming and food manufacturing businesses.

The Kaipara Kai hub will support landowners to use their fertile land to its best potential. It will serve as a physical HQ base, where landowners can come to access sector knowledge and resources, industry professionals can meet with clients, informational events will be run, ag-tech companies can display their products, and remote workers and travelling professionals can hot-desk.

Part of Kaipara Kickstart, Kaipara Kai is funded by the Provincial Growth Fund to spur economic growth in land productivity and development. It is identifying opportunities for farmers to draw greater value from their land use.

The Council has now teamed up with Northland Inc, the economic development agency, to help landowners identify opportunities to transition their land use.

Louise Miller, Chief Executive of Kaipara District Council, described Northland Inc as “ideal managers for the Kaipara Kai hub, who’s knowledge and connections will enable this project to deliver results for our current and future farming communities”.

She added: “The research we’ve done has uncovered some real opportunities for those seeking to transform their land use to higher-value horticulture activities, and Northland Inc bring their expertise in economic development to translate the research into action through the hub and transferring that knowledge to farmers.”

Joseph Stuart, Northland Inc’s General Manager, Business Innovation and Growth, said: “We’re excited to be working on what is a national first and fortunate to have the opportunity to partner with Kaipara District Council because of the undoubted benefits this project will bring to the region.

“Delivery, engagement and collaboration are the key functions of our role, and we’ll be working with farmers to strengthen their understanding of land-use diversification and the positive impact this can have on their livelihoods. The success we’ve already achieved with Extension 350 [a farmer-led, farmer-focused programme], shows we have the expertise and tools to succeed.”

Kaipara Kai is situated at 1 Jellicoe Street, Ruawai.