

**MEDIA RELEASE** 20 April 2017

## **Kawakawa Hundertwasser Park Centre 'Te Hononga – the joining of cultures'**

### **New design revealed for Kawakawa**

Last night a new design concept and name for the proposed Kawakawa Hundertwasser Park Centre was announced at a community meeting in Kawakawa.

*Te Hononga* literally is translated as a joining place, a junction, a meeting place of cultures. Not only is it symbolic of the joining of Māori and Pakeha cultures, but also the dual-use of the building as both a public (library/service centre) and visitor facility.

As part of an on going community engagement process the presentation of the floor plan and design concept moves the community-led project to the next stage of development, including finalising the co-funding model and progressing to final plans and consent.

Spearheaded by the local Kawakawa Hundertwasser Park Charitable Trust (KHPCT), Te Hononga will be celebration of art, culture and ecology; paying homage to Friedensreich Hundertwasser who's legacy and gift to the district is his last and only building in the Southern Hemisphere – The Kawakawa Hundertwasser Toilets.

"Improving community and visitor facilities and safety has been an important component of our project," says Trust Chair Noma Shepherd. The Kawakawa Hundertwasser Park Centre, Te Hononga will provide for significant public amenities, coach and cycle parking, toilets, and freedom camper facilities. It will also house the public library and council service centre, as well as provide for an alternative 'off state highway' route for the Pou Herenga Tai Twin Coast Cycle Trail through the Hundertwasser Park.

The visitor experience includes the original Toilets, the Park and grounds, a Town Square and Atea, an Interpretive Centre/ Gallery tower, and a dedicated Arts, Culture and Environment Workshop.

"Kawakawa is already world-famous and we get thousands of visitors each year to see our toilets. We know our visitors are wanting a deeper connection to Frederick but also the community of Kawakawa, our Maori community, and a connection to the environment, where he spent his last years." says Mrs Shepherd.

When the toilets were opened in 1999, Ngati Hine elder, Kevin Prime presented Hundertwasser with the tokotoko stick as a symbol of Te Hononga – a joining of cultures.

"This was a natural choice of name for the new Centre, representing our community working together, mahi tahi, to bring the vision of the centre to life, welcoming and hosting our visitors, celebrating environmental values, and paying homage to our past and our future" says Pita Tipene, CEO Te Runanga O Ngati Hine and co-Chair of the project partnership group.

The land the Centre will be built on was originally gifted by Maihi Kawiti to the township of Kawakawa and encouraged European settlement in the area. "Ngati Hine sees the Hundertwasser kaupapa as a further development of this vision of partnership and nationhood" says Mr Tipene.

Te Hononga will showcase environmental design and building techniques and be a catalyst for social innovation and ecological enhancement in our community and with our visitors to the district. Te Hononga will also be a platform for arts and culture with

a dedicated workshop, Atea space, and arts programmes being a key component of the original Trust deed.

Last night's meeting provided a platform and pathway for community members to participate in the design and creation of key features of the Centre. The KHPCT Trust and Ngati Hine will be working with the community to develop and incorporate these ideas into the final experience, reflecting the kaupapa and the name Te Hononga; bringing ideas, people, cultures and our environment together.

Historically Kawakawa was always a significant trading route, and today the junction sees the highest traffic movement in the district with just under 15,000 units/day.

The TRC Business Case (November 2016, commissioned by Northland Inc) recognises Kawakawa as a critical junction and the connection to increased cyclists on the Pou Herenga Tai Twin Coast Cycle Trail from Opuia, Cruise ships and international visitors on the Twin Coast Discovery route. The report forecasts a likely high visitor scenario of 350,000 visitors per annum and \$1.75M economic spend (at a conservative spend of just \$5/visitor) for Kawakawa.

The TRC Business Case also states the Kawakawa Hundertwasser Park Centre "would give Kawakawa a unique place in recording and presenting his (Hundertwasser) life and compliment the proposed Whangarei Art Gallery."

### **Project Partnership Group**

The project partnership has been formed with representation from The Hundertwasser Park Trust, Far North District Council (Deputy Mayor Tania McInnes, co-chair), Te Runanga o Ngati Hine (CEO Pita Tipene, Co-chair), Northland Regional Council (Cllr Justin Blaikie), Far North Holdings Ltd (CEO Andy Nock), The Kawakawa Business and Resident Association (member Dianne Te Nana), The Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board (Kelly Stratford) and the a youth project team from the Bay of Islands College (K-Town Kreative Natives).

The project's economics are built on the increasing number of International visitors to the Bay of Islands (MBIE forecast 5.4% growth in International visitors p.a.) and Kawakawa in particular from Pou Herenga Tai Twin Coast Cycle Way (forecast at 30,000 riders), Cruise Ships into Waitangi (up 25% next season to 133,000 visitors), the Bay of Islands Vintage Railway development project, and the Northland Hundertwasser experience (connecting Kawakawa to the Whangarei Arts Centre).

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### **Attachments:**

1. Pip Bolton from Avail Pacific, Artist impression of the Kawakawa Hundertwasser Park Centre – Te Hononga, a joining of cultures. Connects the Pou Herenga Tai Twin Coast Cycle Trail through the Hundertwasser Park, and connects other key growth opportunities such as cultural tourism product, cruise ship market and the Bay of Islands Vintage rail.

2. Floor plan of the Kawakawa Hundertwasser Park Centre – Te Hononga, shows the dual-use of the centre as both a community and visitor centre. Delivering much needed public amenities and infrastructure to the busy, cultural junction of Kawakawa.