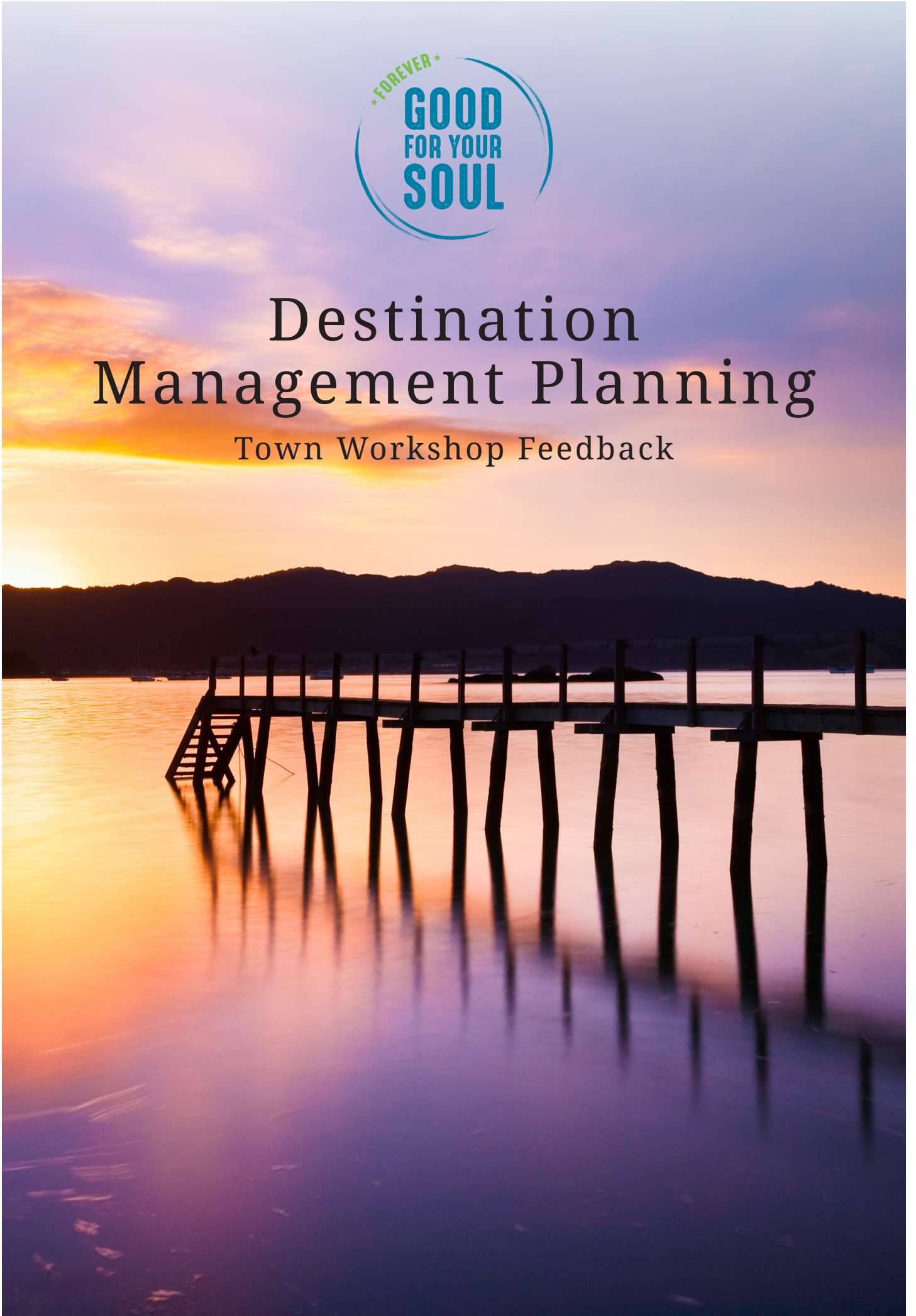




Destination Management Planning

Town Workshop Feedback



SHAPING THE FUTURE OF TOURISM IN OUR REGION TOGETHER



In May and June this year we invited some community members to attend small group consultation meetings. The town workshops brought together people with deep insight and community connections to help plan a regional future with the needs of their town in focus.

The information from these workshops forms a key part of our consultation for the Hauraki Coromandel Destination Management Plan.

This is a summary of key points from each of the town workshops, which were all structured in the same way. It doesn't attempt to cover the breadth and depth of the conversations that developed. We knew from surveys conducted earlier that views are likely to differ depending on where you live, but the workshops were designed to also help understand common priorities.

Details of the workshop design and questions are presented on the last page of this summary.

Thank you to all those who attended the 10 town workshops. Your aspirations for your communities form an integral part of planning for our future.



Workshops were designed and facilitated by Versus Research for Destination Hauraki Coromandel.

If you would like to comment on these insights, share your thoughts, or keep in touch with this destination management planning process, please do so here:

<https://www.thecoromandel.com/destination-management-plan/community-feedback/>



NGATEA

FUTURE FOCUS

Discussions about the future of Ngatea focused on the need to build an identity and grow awareness.

Strong identity: Residents felt Ngatea lacked a clear sense of place and valued the idea of developing a strong local identity. This would lead to increased recognition and acknowledgment of the area, while also generating a greater sense of pride amongst locals.

Growth, community, and a reason to stop: Growth at both a resident and visitor level to support a flourishing community. While Ngatea may not be a final destination for visitors, there is a desire for the area to be a valued stop in the journey, even if it was just for a coffee!

Gateway to other places: Linked with the idea of 'a reason to stop', Ngatea has often been a gateway for travellers heading to the Coromandel. This presents an opportunity to generate greater economic activity from those 'passing through'.

Key Projects

Some pragmatic projects would provide 'quick wins' for Ngatea and added ways to pull visitors in and enhance their overall experience.

- *Visitor kiosk*
- *Street furniture*
- *Beautification of area*
- *Upgrade to bridge area*
- *History and wetlands*
- *Cycle trail extension*

Priorities

Make the most of Ngatea's geographical position to add to visitors' journey.

- *Enhancement of our town*
- *Better experiences for visitors and locals to share*
- *Highlight our unique cultural heritage*



PAEROA

FUTURE FOCUS

One of the key themes that emerged from the discussions at Paeroa related to increasing visitor attractions and economic activity. This was highlighted through a recognition of the region's and/or Paeroa's natural attractions, alongside current or potential attractions and/or greater industry.

Playground for the three big cities: The Hauraki Coromandel region is an ideal place for outsiders living in larger cities to relax and unwind (typically those from Auckland, Hamilton, and/or Tauranga). Positioning the area in this way means

people can connect with nature and with each other, leaving behind the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Thriving happy town: Residents want Paeroa to be a place which attracts visitors through a wide range of activities, and thriving in a way that benefits locals.

Industry: Paeroa residents recognise the benefits that sustainable industry could bring to the town's economy. There is preference for year-round industry, rather than being seasonal in nature. An example of this is Paeroa being known as the 'antiques capital of New Zealand' and how this could be leveraged.

Key Projects

The development of cultural experiences starting with current attractions e.g. the Hauraki Rail Trail

A stadium would draw people to the area, and provide a tangible asset for local rangatahi.

- *Cultural experiences*
- *Sports stadium/facilities*
- *Paddle steamer/maritime museum*
- *Eco-tourism*

Priorities

Celebration of the region's cultural heritage, particularly pre-European

- *Highlighting our unique cultural heritage*
- *Better experiences for visitors and locals to share*
- *Enhancement of our town*



FUTURE FOCUS

A strong desire to enhance the key areas that make the region unique e.g., history, diverse environment, the small town charm. There was an underlying theme of preservation and protection of both the tangible (e.g. environment) and the intangible (e.g. history).

Sense of place: Residents wanted to see a greater emphasis on, and an improved understanding amongst locals, about what has made the region as it is today. At a local level, there is a need to emphasise both the

mining history of Waihi, and its link to pre-colonial history and culture, woven into the visitor experience.

Visitor experience without damaging what is here: There is a need for a balancing act for tourism. Retain the small town charms of Hauraki Coromandel to ensure each location offers something unique to the overall visitor experience.

Cater to tourists who will leave our place better than they found it: We must attract visitors who share local values. Like-minded visitors can aid in preserving the region's local and natural assets.

Key Projects

These centre around enhancements of assets that already exist, adding a stronger sense of place.

- **Develop key attractions (e.g. bike stands/rail trail connection)**
- **More story telling**
- **Biodiversity enhancement**
- **Karangahake Gorge and Owharoa falls protection/enhancement**
- **Programmes for youth**

Priorities

Many visitors are drawn to the region because of the environment, so its protection is critical in maintaining visitation.

- **Better protection of our environment**
- **Highlighting our unique cultural heritage**
- **Improved resources and opportunities for youth**



FUTURE FOCUS

The history and the environment are key features that set this region apart. We must preserve and promote these regional features, while also celebrating the uniqueness of each individual town in the region.

Linked: Every town in the region is different and offers something unique for a visitor. These differences could be promoted to better link towns around the region and offer a more complete visitor experience.

Unique location and landscapes. Further solidify and better associate the region with its distinct offerings.

Greater connection with and knowledge of Māori history: Some residents felt more needed to be done to better recognise pre-colonial history in the area and at a local level.

Maintain and protect the environment: By recognising the unique environmental features of the region, we must ensure that these elements are preserved for the future.

Key Projects

Regional cycling trails hold significant potential, and linking the current mountain bike park to town would benefit local uptake by offering safe access. Also connecting other regional trails and creating multi-day biking experiences.

- **Cycling and mountain bike trails**
- **Regional business advocacy group**
- **Building a brand identity (e.g. surf museum)**
- **Campground**
- **Signage**

Priorities

Protection of the local environment is a key priority, as the area's natural beauty is the draw-card for both visitors and locals.

- **Better protection of our environment**
- **Improved accessibility to and around the region**
- **Enhancement of our towns**

THAMES



FUTURE FOCUS

Thames becomes a destination in its own right, rather than simply being a gateway to other attractions. However, residents also noted the value in having a region which is more cohesive, whereby everyone profits from the visitor market and towns can collaborate to develop their own individual opportunities.

Linking of attractions: Thames has a range of outdoor, adventure, and heritage attractions and these should be better connected so that visitors get a broader

experience of all Thames has to offer.

Every town has an opportunity to 'tap in': Residents noted that more needed to be done at a regional level to ensure that each town featured in a visitor's journey to the region. One practical example of this was through physically linking each town to a region wide trail.

Working together: More could be done to foster greater collaboration on activities at a regional level. An example of this was the collaboration of community groups on the heritage attractions and the mountain biking initiatives.

Key Projects

Many attractions are limited by volunteer availability, so there is a need to create an holistic 'Thames' experience while managing and shaping what visitors expect e.g. information around opening times.

- *Shaping of visitor expectations*
 - *Ferry services*
 - *Cycle trail*
- *Information centre*
- *Town investment and preservation*
- *Holistic visitor offerings*
 - *Events*

Priorities

Heritage sites make Thames what it is, but aging buildings and infrastructure require work to add character and interest.

- *Enhancement of our towns*
 - *Highlighting our unique cultural heritage*
- *Better experiences for visitors and locals to share*

COROMANDEL



FUTURE FOCUS

Coromandel area residents felt strongly about the need to preserve and protect the region's environment. They saw the future of their area as a bespoke part of the Hauraki Coromandel region with a special connection to both the forested ranges and the sea.

Collection of hubs: Coromandel area residents acknowledged that each town/area in the region offered something unique for visitors and operated quite separately. The unique identities of each town should be maintained and preserved.

Keeping outdoors healthy: Ensure that the natural environment is thriving in years to come through continued care and protection. Words such as 'wholesome' and 'flourishing' were used to describe the desired state of the environment (both land and sea) in future years.

Attracting values based tourists: Linked closely to the above, Coromandel residents were keen to see more done to attract visitors who shared like-minded values. That is, visitors who come and partake mindfully both in the way they treat the environment, and how they conduct themselves.

Key Projects

Provide greater utilisation of the harbour while inviting visitors to understand the marine environment in a more sustainable way.

Cycle trails provide a feasible opportunity, potentially connecting the region together.

- *Water-based non-extractive tourism*
- *Cycle trails*
- *Streamlined/connected visitor experience*
- *Greater utilization/maintenance of the waterfront*
- *Improved accuracy of regional information*

Priorities

The unique forest to sea environment is a key feature of both the region and the local.

- *Better protection of our environment*
- *Highlighting our unique cultural heritage*
- *Better experiences for visitors and locals to share*

KŪAOTUNU



FUTURE FOCUS

The remoteness and 'relaxed' vibe of living in a small coastal town is highly valued but visitors do have a role to play in the local economy. Thus, discussions around the future largely focused on a desire to preserve the 'remote' feeling of this area, while acknowledging a need to create or maintain a sustainable offering for both visitors and local people.

Character Maintenance: Kūaotunu residents

wanted to see a region that avoided homogeneity and embraced and promoted the 'quirkiness' of the different Hauraki Coromandel towns.

A constant place to be nourished, to relax, and to explore: Opportunities to visit in shoulder seasons and the traditional winter 'off-season'. Ideally this would involve a melting pot of tourism businesses benefiting from a 'smoothing' of visitors across the year. There is also a need to ensure local residents are not burned out by typically high summer visitor numbers.

Key Projects

Accessibility is a real issue, mostly from a safety point of view. Other key projects reflect the passion locals have for their environment.

- *Access via walk/cycleways, traffic calming*
- *Dark Sky Project*
- *Marine reserves*
- *Mining prevention*

Priorities

There are concerns around limited opportunities for rangatahi, specifically sustainable employment opportunities connected to tourism.

- *Better protection of our environment*
- *Improved resources and opportunities for youth*
- *Highlighting our unique cultural heritage*

WHITIANGA



FUTURE FOCUS

Whitianga residents acknowledged the ongoing impact that growth has had in the Mercury Bay area, and are focused on how to manage continued growth, and how it should look.

Maintenance of a small town feel despite growth: While growth is inevitable, Whitianga's small town/community feel must remain.

Transformation: Residents recognised the degree to which the local economy is dependent on tourism activity, with acknowledgment that the local economy needs to diversify for a stronger future.

Nurturing the growth of our young people: Residents want to see greater opportunities for rangitahi. There is a perception that the challenges of limited housing, education and employment options, rangatahi leave the area to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Key Projects

Learning as a destination was highly favoured, linked closely to the need to nurture growth for rangatahi.

- *Outreach learning programmes*
- *Medical facilities/services*
- *Preservation of significant/heritage sites*
- *Safe cycling*
- *Extension of marine reserves*

Priorities

There was a wide range of priorities within the group, but working together with visitors to support local growth is important.

- *Better experiences for visitors and locals to share*
- *Enhancement of our towns*

HAHEI/HOT WATER BEACH/COOKS BEACH



FUTURE FOCUS

The preservation and protection of the region's environment and character features strongly. Residents feel connected to the wider Hauraki Coromandel region mostly because of their reliance on facilities and services from other areas due to the lack of services available locally.

'What it was like 200 years ago': Residents wish to see a prospering environment with the region's natural assets flourishing. Initiatives such as kauri and native plantings, pest eradication, and rubbish control need further development.

Leader of marine protection: There is great concern over the fragile state of marine life on the eastern seaboard. Given the importance of the coast to the region, residents would like to see the Hauraki Coromandel region become a leader in this protection space.

Preservation of the coastal character: Residents are wary of the effects which continued growth (both resident and visitor) might have on the small-town character of the Hauraki Coromandel region, and their local area in particular. While not opposed to growth, there are concerns over how it should be managed. Preserving the 'relaxed' vibe which attracts people to the area in the first place is important.

Key Projects

First steps would acknowledge mana whenua and Māori history, particularly in sacred areas which attract mass visitation, generating greater awareness and respect.

- *Cultural/heritage focus/hub*
- *Purpose built arts centre*
- *Preservation/maintenance of key environmental attractions*
- *Promotion of public transport*
 - *Wharf expansion*
- *Expansion of marine reserve*
- *Walking/cycling tracks*

Priorities

While a generational shift in attitudes towards environmental protection is perceived, urgent action is the key priority.

- *Better protection of our environment*
- *Enhancement of our towns*
- *Highlighting our unique cultural heritage*

PAUANUI/TAIRUA



FUTURE FOCUS

Pauanui/Tairua residents noted that the history and natural landscapes make this area particularly special. We need to attract a diverse visitor market without losing the essence of these features, and felt that the history and landscapes should be celebrated and elevated further in future community initiatives.

Preservation of our place: Residents respect the presence of visitors, and though happy to share their little corner of the world, there are some things that should be

preserved and not promoted as attractions. Words such as conservation and strategy were used in reference to this point

History enriched visitor experience: One participant described people coming for the 'sea, sand and history', with history being a fundamental part of that visitor experience. Culture at general level (i.e. the arts) also can attract a diverse visitor market.

Connected: A stronger physical connection between Pauanui and Tairua, so that residents and visitors can travel easily between the two towns.

Key Projects

All projects should have potential to promote creativity, environmental wellbeing, and historical awareness e.g. assisting local artists to incorporate local history and stories along the walk/cycle trail.

- *Connecting cycleway*
 - *Great walk*
- *Tell local stories/history*
- *Ferry operation/access*
- *Icon events for conservation funding*
 - *Air show events*

Priorities

The region's culture should be interwoven to create a more enriching and meaningful connection for visitors.

- *Highlighting our unique cultural heritage*
- *Better protection of our environment*
- *Better experiences for visitors and locals to share*

WORKSHOP DESIGN



What does the future look like for Hauraki Coromandel and

- The people who live here
 - The people who visit
- that captures what is most special about our place?

What is most important to achieve the vision?

(The participants were asked to rank these priorities)

- Management of the number and timing of visitors to our towns and nearby attractions
- Better protection of our environment, so that our region is known for the beauty and health of our nature, and as a champion of sustainability
- Better things to do and experiences for visitors and locals to share
- Improved accessibility to and around the region
- Highlighting our unique cultural heritage and ways for communities and visitors to interact
- Improved resources and opportunities to support youth
- Enhancement of our towns with better infrastructure that is of value to our community and visitors
- Increased support for and access to our creative communities

What is one key project that will...

- Benefit your community most?
- Make a difference to the future?
- Make your grandchildren proud of our region?

Workshops were held in 10 towns, each with between 3 and 9 participants.

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