



# COROMANDEL *Heritage Region*

Kaitiaki Whenua i Te Tara-o-te-Ika a Māui

Public Summary of Concept  
*August 2015*





# SUMMARY OF FEASIBILITY REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS :

A summary of the full feasibility report submitted to the Thames-Coromandel District Council for consideration at the meeting of August 17th 2015.

## COROMANDEL *Heritage Region*

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*This is a summary of the Coromandel Heritage Region Feasibility Report and Recommendations – submitted to the Thames-Coromandel District Council for the meeting of August 17th 2015. The full report may be accessed by emailing TCDC at [www.tcdc.govt.nz/heritageregion](http://www.tcdc.govt.nz/heritageregion)*



## COROMANDEL Heritage Region



### AT A GLANCE

- 1. PRESERVING WHAT IS SPECIAL.** The Thames-Coromandel District is seeking to preserve, enhance and recognise what is special and unique about this much-loved part of New Zealand – Aotearoa. This includes both its superb natural environment and its vibrant communities and the associated heritage and cultures of the region.
- 2. HERITAGE REGION.** The objective of ‘The Coromandel Heritage Region – Kaitiaki Whenua i Te Tara o Te Ika a Maui’ (working titles) is to seek the establishment of a nationally- and ultimately internationally-recognised “Protected Landscape”.
- 3. NATURE & COMMUNITIES.** “Protected Landscapes” include both natural areas and communities, conservation and sustainable economic activities in a defined region. Such a designation would complement other more purely ‘Conservation’ areas eg: New Zealand National Parks – whose status would be unaffected.







**Figure.** Lake District National Park (an IUCN Category V Protected Landscape) and Right, the Noosa UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are two examples of thousands of protected areas worldwide that incorporate both natural areas and communities. New Zealand currently does not have any such internationally recognised, protected areas of this type. The Coromandel Heritage Region would be a first.

4. **INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES.** There are thousands of such areas around the world – but none in New Zealand. The ‘National Parks’ of the United Kingdom are perhaps the best known examples of such “Protected Landscapes”. There are also more than a dozen in Australia and in countries as varied as Spain, Cuba and Japan.
5. **BALANCE OF CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.** A primary objective of such areas is the preservation and restoration of the natural environment; however, economic activity and sustainable economic development are permitted – indeed encouraged – to support healthy, vibrant and resilient communities able to support and protect the natural environment.
6. **NO NEW REGULATIONS.** An initial review of the criteria for IUCN Protected Landscape Status noted that the existing legal framework of the Thames-Coromandel District should be sufficient and only minor updates to the Long Term District Plan may be required.
7. **COROMANDEL IS UNIQUE.** The Coromandel has a range of compelling claims on why it is uniquely placed to be New Zealand’s first “Protected Landscape” These include its “many areas of exceptional ecological significance”, 107 rare or endangered species, a rich Maori and Pioneering heritage – and its close proximity to more than half of all New Zealanders - at the centre of New Zealand’s “Golden Economic Triangle” of Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga.
8. **COROMANDEL ACCORD.** The Coromandel Accord is the first one of four ‘pillars’ providing the foundation of a Heritage Region. The Accord is a consultation and ‘heads of agreement’ process with key partners (eg: Regional Council, DOC, Iwi, Industry and Communities) and is proposed as the opportunity to affirm the key values of the Thames-Coromandel District and to discuss and define the details for a Heritage Region.
9. **OTHER PILLARS OF HERITAGE REGION.** The other pillars for a Heritage Region are Signature Conservation Projects (agreed during the Accord Process), Signature Species Monitoring (of iconic and representative species and water quality standards) and a Sustainable Development Fund (a public-private fund to support innovative sustainable business projects and vibrant communities).
10. **ACTION PLAN.** An 11 point Action Plan outlines a process to turn this concept into a reality. The process of creating a Heritage Region may take considerable time - however, some parts of the concept (eg: Signature Conservation Projects) could be started sooner. The initial Accord Process will define some of the important details and determine if there is the broad support needed. The costs for this initial work are estimated to be minor and will be funded out of the modest discretionary budget of the Thames-Coromandel District Mayor.



### INTRODUCTION

This reports speaks to a vision –preserving, enhancing and defining what is special about the Coromandel Peninsula – i Te Tara o te ika a Maui – a truly unique part of New Zealand - Aotearoa.

The Coromandel Heritage Region would build on the values of the Thames-Coromandel District and expand a balanced model of sustainable development, vibrant communities and responsible environmental stewardship or Kaitiakianga.

Specifically, ‘The Coromandel Heritage Region’ would create a new, internationally-recognised area for New Zealand; preserving and nurturing the special environmental, community and heritage characteristics of the Coromandel.

This is expressed in the vision for a ‘Coromandel Heritage Region’ – Kaitiaki Whenua i Te Tara o te Ika a Maui (working titles) (i).

### WHAT IS A HERITAGE REGION?

This report proposes the Thames-Coromandel District (ii) would seek a new national and then international designation in New Zealand – an International Union of Conservation in Nature (IUCN) Category V Protected Landscape that encompasses both natural areas and communities. IUCN Category V Protected V Landscapes, and the comparable UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, are the designations for preserving and enhancing both unique natural and man-made environments that exist together; intertwined and sustaining each other. There are thousands of such areas across dozens of countries in the world, but none specifically in New Zealand (iii).

***The Coromandel Heritage Region would include the core principles of both conservation and sustainable development. The preservation and enhancements of natural landscapes, the environment and communities would be carefully managed with smart, sustainable development across the District.***

### INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

In the full feasibility report we looked in detail at case studies of protected landscapes across countries as diverse as Australia, England, Scotland, Spain, Cuba and Japan. Such ‘protected landscapes’ are a significant and important part of the world’s special natural and cultural areas and it’s surprising New Zealand has not complemented its rich history of National Parks with the opportunity for such special environments that combine unique natural areas and communities.

Such a ‘mixed’ designation would complement other more purely ‘Conservation’ areas such our iconic National Parks – whose status and strict regulation of activities within these parks would be unaffected.



**Above:** Cuba, described as the “Jewel of the Caribbean” has a number of prominent Category V Protected Landscapes (“Touristic Natural Areas”), which include both natural landscapes and farmed countryside plus adjacent marine reserves where certain types of fishing are permitted.



## EXAMPLES: IUCN Category V Protected Landscape are present in dozens of countries

- **China:** Scenic Areas and Country Parks
- **Spain:** Nature Parks
- **Japan:** National Park eg: Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park
- **Cuba:** Touristic Natural Areas
- **UK:** National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Scenic Areas eg: Lakes District National (see case study below)
- **France:** Regional Parks
- **Greenland:** Landscape Protected Areas eg: Lyngmarken Landscape Protected Area

Such a designation will take time and effort – but will bring real benefits. It would build on the community consensus of the natural and community values that must be protected and enhanced; foster a long-term vision for this work; and would build a strong, national and internationally recognised ‘brand’. The full report recommended applying for the IUCN Category V Protected Landscape designation – which is the longest established such designation and appears to be the most balanced and flexible model for the Thames-Coromandel District. However, the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation (as used in Noosa and other Australian examples) remains a possible option.

## INTERNATIONAL CRITERIA

The foundation criteria for an IUCN Category V Protected Landscape is defined as:

*“A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”.*



Below are the three ‘essential’ characteristics in the selection of Category V Protected Landscapes<sup>1</sup>.

1. **“Landscape and/or coastal and island seascape of high and/or distinct scenic quality** and with significant associated habitats, flora and fauna and associated cultural features”.
2. **“A balanced interaction between people and nature** that has endured over time and still has integrity, or where there is reasonable hope of restoring that integrity”.
3. **“Unique or traditional land-use patterns, e.g., as evidenced in sustainable agricultural and forestry systems** and human settlements that have evolved in balance with their landscape”.

In addition, there are four ‘desirable’ characteristics:

1. Opportunities for recreation and tourism consistent with lifestyle and economic activities;
2. Unique or traditional social organisations, as evidenced in local customs, livelihoods and beliefs;
3. Recognition by artists of all kinds and in cultural traditions (now and in the past);
4. Potential for ecological and/or landscape restoration.

For all seven characteristics, the case for the Coromandel Heritage Region is strong and compelling.

## THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A Coromandel Heritage Region would in many ways be an extension of the considered, balanced approach to development, and preservation of the natural environment in the District over a generation or more. Many of these values have been reflected in plans, programmes and projects from 1991 onwards including an International PATA taskforce (1991) and one of the world’s first long-term, Sustainable Tourism Plans: “Towards 2020” (1991–1994). These values have also been part of the public debate around the review and updating of the Thames-Coromandel District Long Term District Plan from 2004 onwards and in associated planning documents such as “The Coromandel Peninsula Blue Print” (2009). Most recently, they were also reflected in the values and enhanced protections in managing the Hauraki Gulf expressed in “Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari” - the Hauraki Maritime Strategy and Marine Spatial Plan” (being finalised by September 2015).

A review of the detailed criteria for an IUCN designation highlights that all requirements appear to be met by the existing legislative framework for the Thames–Coromandel District. Hopefully, only minor and progressive enhancements to the District’s Long Term Plan would be required. At a national level, enabling legislation recognising this new type of “Protected Area” may be needed and would smooth the application process to the IUCN.

In the interim, however, district, regional and then national action to define a Heritage Region will have real value in articulating the values and a clearer brand for The Coromandel.

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Category V Protected Landscapes not only allow economic activity but often nurture and encourage it – with a commitment to sustainable economic development. Indeed, a review of Category V Protected Landscapes around the world highlights that economic prosperity is a key objective for such regions and there is strong evidence that a Protected Landscape designation can significantly foster economic growth.

***The Coromandel Heritage Region – Kaitiaki Whenua i Te Tara o te Ika a Maui – would further develop the District as a unique and special place to live, work, visit, invest in and retire to.***

A major independent report (2013) on the economic success of England’s National Parks illustrates this potential for economic growth. A short online video summarising the study can be viewed here: <http://budurl.com/EnglandNatParks>.

Just a few of the economic highlights of England’s Category V Protected Landscapes include:

1. Average unemployment in England’s National Parks is 2% (as at 2013) – significantly below the national average of the time 7.1% (BBC News Unemployment tracker).
2. Of the 157,000 employees in the National Parks, there is a high proportion of senior, professional and skilled occupations in the workforce.
3. Average household income for most National Parks is higher than the wider regional averages (in their respective parts of the UK)
4. It is estimated that England’s National Parks generate £4.1 to 6.3 billion of Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2012 (0.4% to 0.6% of all GVA generated in England, and this is significantly higher than other rural, non-National Park areas in England).
5. England’s National Parks make up just over 9% of the nation’s land area and around 20% of its rural land but account for over one third of all rural tourism in England.



**Figure 1** National Parks in the UK – Category V Protected Landscapes have both conservation & prosperous communities as central objectives. They have generated strong gains in both areas.

The full feasibility report outlines specific objectives for the Coromandel Heritage Region across the ‘Triple Bottom Line’ of environmental, social and economic benefits. These will be refined during The Coromandel Accord process (see page 8) as well as a framework for measuring and reporting on progress in all these areas.





## THE PROPOSED FOUR PILLARS OF HERITAGE REGION

Four pillars are proposed as the framework for the establishment of a Coromandel Heritage Region:

- I. **Coromandel Accord.** This Coromandel Heritage Region would start with a 'Coromandel Accord' – a high level agreement between the Thames-Coromandel District Council, Waikato Regional Council, Department of Conservation (DOC), Iwi, Industry Sector Groups and the Community that reaffirms the key values that all seek to protect and enhance. This accord would be at the centre of an establishment process that would create a Heritage Region that is both visionary and pragmatic – identifying short-, medium- and long-term goals and focusing on what is achievable in these time periods. As with some Protected Landscapes overseas (eg: France), community engagement and ownership (a 'bottom up' approach) should be at the centre of the governance model.

**Right:** The Coromandel Accord follows a similar process to the Mackenzie Basin, which brought together the Council, key industry sectors and the community to agree on a shared vision for the future of the region.



- II. **Signature Conservation Projects.** These would be important conservation and community projects discussed and agreed in principle during the Accord process. The projects would provide a real and practical illustration of the Coromandel Heritage Region in practice. These may include such projects as "Thousand Year Forests" – an extension of The Coromandel's current reforestation programmes, additional kiwi sanctuaries and some type of marine conservation area for each community in The Coromandel (which may allow certain types of recreational fishing) and for all its representative marine environments. In addition, it is proposed The Coromandel should aspire to establish a Marine Reserve in a location around the Peninsula that could rival the experience and visitor attraction of the world famous Poor Knights Marine Reserve, which attracts tens of thousands of divers and generates millions of dollars in visitor spending annually.



- III. **Signature Species Monitoring.** The Coromandel Heritage Region would define a set of 10 or so significant and representative species, for example: kiwi, dotterel, kauri and rock lobster plus air and water quality standards. These would be monitored and reported annually, on a 'Coromandel Heritage Day', to publically highlight progress around protecting and enhancing the natural environment. The monitoring would include strong community involvement, reporting against short-, medium- and long-term goals.



- IV. **Sustainable Development Plan & Fund.** The Coromandel Heritage Region would develop a Sustainable Development Plan with 5-, 10- and 25-year targets in employment, business creation and community wellbeing – part of the Triple Bottom Line of environmental, social and economic objectives. The public-private Sustainable Development Fund follows a successful model from the Lakes District National Park in England and would support key business and community projects closely aligned to the long-term objectives of the Heritage Region.

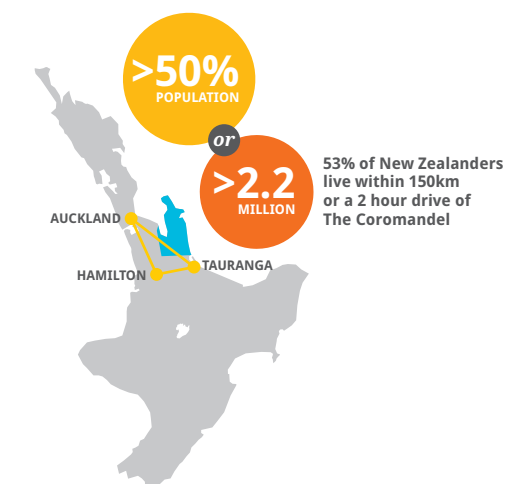


**Left.** The Lakes District National Park Sustainable Development Fund is currently supporting a small, community-owned Hydro Electric Power scheme in Keswick, England (pictured). This is just one of dozens of such projects across the National Park. Other Fund projects included sponsoring research on a new form of recycled, insulation for clothing and buildings, refurbishment of historic community churches and halls, support of a 'national "Green Build Conference and other micro hydroelectric power projects".

## WHY THE COROMANDEL?

The Coromandel Heritage Region, would be an ideal first such 'protected landscape' for New Zealand. The Thames-Coromandel district has a superb natural environment, which "contain many areas of exceptional ecological significance". It is home to 107 species which are threatened – a number found nowhere else in the world. The District has a rich Maori and European history and contains many beloved communities – including coastal towns which have been the holiday destination for tens of thousands of New Zealanders for generations. The District has long been a national leader in balancing the issues of preserving and restoring the natural environment with managing a diverse range of primary industries and the rapid growth of coastal communities.

Perhaps most importantly – and unique to The Coromandel – is its location at the centre of what has been dubbed 'New Zealand's Golden Triangle' of population and economic growth: Auckland, Tauranga and Hamilton. Close to all the upper North Island's major population centres, The Coromandel is just 150 km or a 2-hour drive from well over half of New Zealand's population – and New Zealand's major International Airport in Auckland.



The natural coastline and beaches of The Coromandel are amongst its most beloved natural areas – and experiences. The region is home to 107 rare and endangered species – a number of which are found nowhere else in the world.





### WHAT'S NEXT?

The concept has been discussed with the Minister of Conservation, Hon Maggie Barry who replied through her Department; “the concept is well worth further investigation”.

The Economic Development Committee of the Thames-Coromandel District Council has considered a full feasibility report in a workshop, noted its exciting potential and also agreed to further explore the opportunity.

The most important next step will be the process of developing a Coromandel Accord – where key partners including Regional Council, DOC, Iwi, Industry Groups and Community are invited to affirm the key values and long term objectives of the region – and to discuss the detail of a possible Coromandel Heritage Region. This will define the important details including the other Pillars and how communities can be at the centre of shaping and managing any Heritage Region. The Coromandel Accord is the most important step in an 11-Point Action Plan that will turn a Heritage Region from a concept into a reality.

The timeline for this is flexible – but even the initial steps of regional and national recognition and specific projects will have meaning and benefits. Costs will also be minimal and paid for out of the Mayor’s modest discretionary budget while the concept is explored and defined through the Coromandel Accord process.

***The concept of Guardianship – Kaitiakitanga, is a powerful basis of Maori and – more widely – New Zealand society. The Coromandel Heritage Region will provide guardianship over both the natural environment of the Coromandel Peninsula and its communities. It will also build sustainable prosperity that supports and is enriched by its diverse, expressive communities. The Coromandel Heritage Region would be a first for New Zealand. We commend this concept to central government, both the District and Regional Council and its key partners including DOC, Iwi, Industry and the Community.***



### APPENDIX

#### NOTES

- Working Title: ‘Coromandel Heritage Region’ – Kaitiaki Whenua i Te Tara o te Ika a Maui has been used as a working title for the purpose of this report. “The Coromandel Heritage Region” was originally suggested by Mayor Glenn Leach and no better alternative has been identified. The Maori name “Kaitiaki Whenua i Te Tara o te Ika a Maui” refers to guardianship of Te Tara o te Ika a Maui – ‘the Fish Hook of Maui’, the Maori name for the Coromandel Peninsula. It was developed with input from Scotty Morrison of TVNZ’s Te Karere. Both terms should be reviewed and finalised in conjunction with the Accord process. A range of alternative English and Maori terms developed during the process were included in the appendix of the Feasibility Report.
- Regional Naming Definition: This report looks at the opportunity for an internationally recognised protected landscape in the Thames-Coromandel District of New Zealand; the “Coromandel Heritage Region - Kaitiaki Whenua i Te Tara-o-te-Ika a Māui” (working title). For the purposes of this specific report\* the “Thames-Coromandel District”, “Coromandel Peninsula” and most simply, “The Coromandel” are used to refer to same area – the Territorial Authority boundaries of the Thames-Coromandel District Council. It is recognised that “The Coromandel” and its Regional Tourism Office; Destination Coromandel covers and markets both the Thames-Coromandel District and the Hauraki District.
- New Zealand Examples: The Department of Conservation has noted there are a few, small areas in New Zealand that were initially classified in the 1990s as Category V Protected Landscapes – but that these classifications needs to be reviewed and likely updated. The closest area to an IUCN Category V Protected Landscape or a UNESCO Biosphere in New Zealand is the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park which includes both extensive marine areas and island landscapes, also including some communities. However, no international designation or recognition has been sought for it.

#### LIST OF SOURCES

**Below is a summary of some of the signature reports over the last 24+ years which have formed the basis of the defined values and principles of sustainable management in the Thames-Coromandel District/Coromandel Peninsula.**

**“The Coromandel Experience”:** a PATA Task Force study / Pacific Asia Travel Association, with the assistance of Air New Zealand and New Zealand Tourism Board. 1991

**Report available from:** Waikato University Library, National Library of New Zealand

**“Towards 2020 : a strategic plan for tourism in the Coromandel to the year 2020”** : Thames/Coromandel and Hauraki Districts of New Zealand” 1991-1994, updated 1998 and 2000

**Report Download:** [http://www.tcdc.govt.nz/Global/3\\_Our%20Services/2020%20Tourism%20Strat%202004%20ed.pdf](http://www.tcdc.govt.nz/Global/3_Our%20Services/2020%20Tourism%20Strat%202004%20ed.pdf)

**“Thames-Coromandel Long Term District Plan”**, Thames-Coromandel District Council, 2004 -

**Online District Plan:** <http://www.tcdc.govt.nz/Our-Services/Online-services/Online-District-Plan/>

**“Coromandel Peninsular Blueprint”**, Thames-Coromandel District Council and Waikato Regional Council, December 2009

**Report Download:** <http://www.tcdc.govt.nz/Your-Council/Documents-incl-Bylaws-Policies-and-Strategies/Coromandel-Peninsula-Blueprint/>

**“Sea Change – Hauraki Marine Spatial Plan”** 2014 – 2015. Various agencies - A partnership led by mana whenua and central and local government.

**Report issued in September 2015.** <http://www.seachange.org.nz/>



