

Coromandel Great Walks Project

Cathedral Cove Walk

Hahei Community Group Report 1

Executive Summary

- **Working Group Brief** – Created to provide feed back on proposed walkway, but it is now clear that group must consider all matters related to proposed walkway, particularly parking infrastructure
- **Summary of Group Activities**
 - Meeting with Mayor, Iwi and other on 12 December 2015
 - Most members have emailed/talked to many people they represent
 - Overall we have received input from about 100 people. See Appendix 2 for all written feed back
 - We have just experienced the busiest holiday season ever in Hahei
- **Key Issues Identified**
 - Visitor numbers in Hahei are growing rapidly.
 - Although parking ambassadors and shuttle buses helped, visitor congestion over holiday period was extreme.
 - Proposed Walkway does not comply with most recent Community Plan (June 2010). We therefore need update Community Plan before we can support Proposed Walkway. District Plan should also support Proposed Walkway
 - Before the Community can support Proposed Walkway in any form, a visitor management plan must be developed and agreed.
 - In principle, many people like the idea of a walkway providing parking and other visitor management issues can be solved at no cost to residents.
 - Local community would like a strong control over future development of any tourist developments in Hahei.
- **Recommended Next Steps**
 - Develop a new Community Plan which must be legally recognised by any walkway developer
 - Develop car parking solutions to solve holiday congestion. These could include
 - Lees Road Car Park
 - Sewage Pond Car Park
 - Halt development of Proposed Walkway until Car Parking is solved.
 - Strengthen the Walkway Governance Trust with delegates from the Stakeholders group.

Hahei Community Plan Core Values

To allow the our Group to evaluate the Proposed Cathedral Cove Walk or any other investment in Hahei, we must be guided by our Community Plans. The most recent was an update in 2010.

Relevant issues stated in the Community Plan are:-

What We Have	What we want	What we don't want
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small commercial area including general store, café's, petrol, gift shop and real estate • Niche businesses in service, tourism and home based business • Hahei Holiday Resort and Family Camp • Access to a full range of business and trade firms at Whitianga • Hahei is a special place with small village charm, an unspoilt safe beach, low density housing, no high rise buildings and limited commercialism • A family orientated holiday destination with a number of permanent residents • Minimum of concrete footpaths, street lighting and kerb and channelling • Increasing number of tourist buses and camper vans • Large traffic volumes at peak time • A distinctive and attractive stretch of road, east of the intersection of Link Road and Hahei Road, which leads down through trees. This marks the entry to Hahei. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To remain a small commercial centre as detailed above • No expansion of current town boundary. • One dwelling per section • To limit concessions • Continued operation of Hahei Holiday Resort and Motor Camp with a focus on the provision of family camping facilities • Minimum signage • Continued operation of Hahei businesses in non-intensive manner • Continuation of existing small village atmosphere • Improved collaboration between TCDC, EW and DOC in dealing with local planning issues • Alternative access to Cathedral Cove • Speed restrictions at targeted locations in the village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further commercial zoning • Extension or expansion of commercial operations and associated signage • Any further concessions • Apartments or any residential development in the commercial zone • Growth to exceed the size of the beach and village infrastructure • Tourist transport (e.g.: coaches and motor homes) congesting the village roads and car park • Loss of small village charm of Hahei • Large scale accommodation duplex/apartments/hotels • Concessions on reserves e.g.: scenic, beach etc.

Clearly the Plan must be updated to support any tourist attraction such a Walkway

A copy of the Community Plan is attached in Appendix 1

Community Survey Results

Summary of Key Point of community feed back is

Firmly Against	Cautious Against	Cautiously Supportive	Firmly in Favour
66%	8%	22%	5%

Common Issues Identified

Issue	Details	Potential Solution
Car Parking	During peak holiday season management of visitor to Hahei is unsatisfactory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Park at Sewage treatment plant • Lees Road Car Park
Proposed Walkway is incomplete	With no firm plan for walkway to continue to Hot Water Beach or across Purangi, residents are concerned that walkway will attract more visitor to Hahei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start Construction of walkway only after complete walkway from Cooks Beach to Hot Water Beach is approved
Local Control	Residents are very concerned that TCDC and others will proceed without taking into consideration local input. They are very concerned that once funding for the walkway is secured, it will proceed without there input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include local representatives in the Walkway Governance Board • Develop new Community Plan using feedback received. • Explain to Residents that they really do have control
Destruction of Peaceful Village Atmosphere	Most residents own property in Hahei as it a peaceful village. The do not want it to be a tourist destination. However they recognise that tourists are going to come whether they like it or not.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread tourist load around region by investing new destinations, parking facilities etc. • Actively manage tour operators
Funding	Residents are not aware of TCDC and other funding strategy for the required infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCDC and other to provide a investment plan for the area

Residents request that no walkway construction proceeds until local parking and other infrastructure issues are resolved

Representative Group Feed Back

Group	Representative	Feed back
Grange Road	Bill Stead	<p>Based on input from approximately 40 responders, the key points are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council must focus investment resolving parking problems first, and if successful, only then consider a walkway • No new tourist attractions in Hahei until parking and other visitor congestion management issues resolved • Support Lees Rd carpark as a first step in resolving visitor numbers in Hahei • Only 20% of residents support Proposed Walkway. • All responses in Appendix 2
Pa Road	Jeremy Lomas	<p>Summary of the feedback received from Pa Rd and adjoining roads rate payers . (We have received feedback from 56 ratepayers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The question was asked if they were in favour of a return blowhole walk being formed. 54 have said No, and 2 have said "maybe yes if infrastructure issues have been addressed". • Pa Rd is not suitable for extra traffic due to the blind corners and narrowness, and the need for buses and campervans to back up from the end of Pa Rd due to no turning room. Huge safety issues. • People feel that Pa Rd will have even more issues than Grange Rd had, given there is no parking at all at the end. • Too much weight being put on commercial activities vs managing visitor impact on the village and environment • Even with infrastructure improved the Village/Beach is already at its capacity with the current Hahei attractions. • There are concerns that the small number of green areas at the eastern end of the beach are being filled with cars and campervans and being lost as safe playing area for families. • All responses in Appendix 3
Hahei Rate Payers Association	Brian Keucke	<p>The public meeting attended by 140 HBRA members in regards to the new walkway project were clear in their response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cathedral Cove and Marine Reserve tourist venture which has now become one of NZ most popular short walks does not have a parking system. This needs to be put in place before any more walks are planned. The parking system must take into account the increasing lack of parking at the beach The HBRA has been actively seeking from DOC and the TCDC a parking solution for the last 10 yrs • Future walks would be best looked at in other areas as the Destination of CC is reaching saturation point. There are many sea concession operators using CC, the marine reserve and the Hahei coastline as the basis of their businesses. CC is a small beach. We are in danger of affecting the popularity of this tourist destination 3. The general feeling of the community is that they would not support the funding application for the proposed 1A and 1B walking tracks until the existing tourist experience has its infrastructure needs met

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Hahei Business Association	Peter Harrison	<p>At a meeting on 9th February 2015, the Hahei Business Association voted unanimously to support for the walkway in principle, subject to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a thorough review of the detailed plan of the Proposed Walkway • the Proposed Walkway must be supported Hahei area community before anything is actioned.
Rural Land owners	Graham Harsant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone supports walkways on the Coromandel. However, IS THIS WALKWAY THE BEST OPTION FOR LIMITED FUNDS AND COULD IT JUST ADD TO THE ISSUES WE ALREADY HAVE? Should Council be starting elsewhere? • The Miles Report and approach taken thus far for this walk way has been poor. Council, DOC and IWI give the impression that they know best on what we want and where. • Instead of the singular focus towards the walkway, we should debate the draft district plan as this could lead to improvements to the infrastructure within Hahei. The hearing is only six weeks away and to date there has been no discussion • Cathedral Cove is struggling now and if not managed carefully could be damaged as one of the most successful tourist destinations on the Coromandel Peninsula. The tourist numbers continue to increase even without the walkway. We still haven't found the best solutions for the immediate problems. • Making sure the parking within Hahei, sewage, water, commercial areas and other infrastructure is planned and managed is a far more rational approach. We should engage in diplomatic dialogue with the likes of Arthur Harsant, Wendy Harsant etc., who are open to constructive discussion. From these discussions and with community involvement, better options may be found. All ideas should at least be tabled and considered. • We only have the one opportunity to get this right. For the future generations we have an obligation to carefully plan. There have already been too many mistakes made.
Hahei Reserves Committee	Karen Blair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hahei Reserves Committee supports walkways in principle, as long as they are well planned, well managed, maintained and are established with the majority community support. • We would like Hahei to be promoted as a walking destination. • We support the idea of a large (looking to the future) permanent parking facility using the land off Pa Road that was used for wastewater disposal. • We envisage an information centre there with maps of Hahei's walkways and facilities. Push bike hire and shuttle pick up. Walking to Hahei Beach and to the start of a blowhole walk is possible from this location. It could be a starting point for a bike trail/walking track along Wigmore stream and farmland to Hot Water beach. • To ensure grass verges are kept open for pedestrians and to ensure cars use the car park we recommend no parking in Hahei. Local households issued with parking permits, commercial parking zoned with time limits. Beach front and car parks with pay and display. • Let's get creative and make Hahei people friendly, sustainable, unique and famous for all the right reasons.
Hot Water Beach	Sherree Webster	No Feed back

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Lees Rd	Michael Wilkinson/John Dalimore	<p>In principle 72% support the walk and 28% do not. It is fair to say that the support for the walk is very much conditional on a number of very important issues being resolved.</p> <p>If you do support the walk, is there anything the council should do as part of the walk project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Lees Road issues – Poor state of road and safety. Upgrade to cope with current use and increased future use. Add full Lees Road upgrading to the District Plan budget for action at time of walkway construction (or before). • The Purangi crossing is essential, as once this is in place it will provide the ability to WALK from Whitianga/Ferry Landing/Cooks Beach to Cathedral Cove. This creates an alternative to driving and may actually mitigate vehicular traffic. • Safety (for walkers and drivers) on Lees Road. The main thing will be to separate vehicles and pedestrians, and upgrade the road between Stella Evered and the new track to Cathedral Cove. If more vehicles are going to be coming onto Lees Rd, the Council will need to improve safety at the intersection with Hahei Rd. • An assurance that traffic/parking regulations will be enforced, the problems on Grange Rd in recent years were largely due to non-existent enforcement. • Develop complete master plan for a Coromandel Great Coastal Walk including detailed layout plan, identification of issues for resolution along each section, realistic timelines and costings, assignments of responsibilities in detail, etc. This would relieve the walkway project of its current piecemeal development and leave a roadmap for implementation over the long term (sustainability). • Complete and publicly distribute the referred TCDC studies on Hahei area environmental (especially the carrying capacity of Cathedral Cove) and cultural/iwi aspects. Public notification of major developments (e.g. Lees Road parking, Purangi crossing). • The TCDC and DoC walkway mavens should enter into discussions with all coastal landowners re routing as close to the coast/in the most scenic way as possible. With the rejection by some of the big players, TCDC has ignored other options that could improve the walkway layout. For example, TCDC has never discussed with me the potential coastal access from my property. • Engage with our community to develop this as a partnership project • Investigate a real coastal walk rather than a make do along Lees Road. • Do not move parking problem to Lees Road. Spend money on a world class solution for a world class destination and experience.

Representative Group Feed Back

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Lees Rd	Michael Wilkson/John Dalimore	<p>If you do not support the walk, what are your reasons for objecting to the walk? Can your objections be mitigated in anyway?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is already a large volume of people and traffic in the Hahei area over summer. This must be stretching the current infrastructure and natural resources. The presence of such a large number of people severely compromises the experience that most people aim to have when visiting the area. If the walkway does proceed I believe it will create a hazard to drivers and pedestrians on Lees Road as the intended route seems unsuitable and largely unattractive. If the Council is so adamant to create a walkway, why not do so in the DOC estate in the Coromandel ranges or elsewhere in low use areas. Personally I do not support any increase in numbers in this area. • Improve the infrastructure. Lees Rd upgraded, an adequate Purangi crossing, namely a pedestrian bridge. A public notification of Lees Rd carpark. If all in place, then we can support. • Lack of infrastructure for present tourists makes expansion an unattractive proposition . Also lack of planning from TCDC gives us no confidence it will be done well . • Loss of privacy to our property. Possible parking congestion in front of our property if people attempt to avoid paying for parking or want to do only short loop walk to the cove and back. Plus the obvious road safety issues. • Council should be spending their money on core council services. The route to Purangi estuary seems particularly pointless, given the dead-end nature of the road. • Council could gain my support if they planned well and consulted. However, they would need to address present problems first, such as the very poor condition of existing walkways

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Absentee Landowners	Ian Chalmers	<p>Replies were received from 20 lots of non-resident rate payers These people had properties in: Grierson Close x2, Wigmore Cres x2, Lees Rd, Grange Rd, Robyn Place, Tutaritari Rd x3 , Hahei Beach Rd, Pa Rd x3, Christine Tce, Michelle Lane and Margot place. Some did not give their local address.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the holiday season from December to March when most property owners are likely to visit, what do you think about day visitors to Hahei Beach? Current number Ok or too many? 75% said Yes Ok, 25% said no or no more please. • Would you be happy with the extra visitors as mentioned in the TCDC proposal (up to 100,000 p/a more)? 16% said Ok, 16% gave a qualified Ok if things were improved and 68% gave a resounding No • Current car parking for visitors OK or getting annoying? 63% said the current car parking around the village is getting annoying, 37% it does not annoy them. • Are you currently affected by visitor parking? 30% are directly effected by parking where their property is the other 70% are away from these areas. • Would a special pay & display day carpark for visitors off Pa Rd be a sensible solution for the current parking situation? 32% said yes OK, 26% gave a qualified maybe and 42% could not see this as a useful solution. • Is there plenty of room on the beach for you and your family or not? 72% said there was enough room for them and 29% said it was getting too crowded. • Do you support the proposed extended walkway? 32% said yes, 21% said a qualified maybe and 47% gave a definite No • Should Hahei Beach itself be part of a walkway? 31% said that's OK, 6% said maybe and 63% said No we don't want walkers along the beach.

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Absentee Landowners	Ian Chalmers	<p>Most people realise that places overseas attract far more visitors than we do but most of them have the infrastructure to handle these numbers and a lot of places do not allow cars in the villages (Cinque Terre, Voltera etc). The USA is quite different but they mostly have a lot of space for parking.</p> <p>There were some complaints about the large number of commercial Kayaks on the beach.</p> <p>The pay and display parking gave a lot of different opinions. Some preferred the current site near the Church with people going down Beach Rd compared to Pa Rd which will not be as obvious and cause more problems with walkers gaining access to the Beach or walking tracks. Would anyone use a P&D if they can park on the side of the road anyway? Pa Rd owners did not want any more traffic down their Rd as it would be too dangerous. Some just think the idea is no goer.</p> <p>The proposed walkway to the Blowhole and beyond got a lot of reaction. Some said it is not worth it or it is too dangerous or it would be too expensive or the CC walk need to be properly upgraded first.</p> <p>The profile of Hahei Beach right now is not conducive to a walking zone. With high tides taking most of the beach away, kayaks, tractors and trailers, plus lots of visitors in the camping ground, there is only just enough space for the present number of people over the peak season. Out of season it does not matter.</p> <p>Here is a comment from one owner which may have been communicated to other people in the group but sums up what a lot of owners think:</p> <p><i>No doubt many residents/owners are not in favour of the walkway. It certainly is something that we would prefer not to go ahead for personal reasons. The beach was over full the last few weeks and with the publicity the area is getting and the general increase in Auckland population that is only going to get worse even without the proposed walkway. Existing residents / owners should have some significant influence over the decision as we will be the most impacted. Impacted financially and in terms of the quality of life we have at Hahei year round or during the holiday season. We are all significantly invested in the place and love it for what it offers that is different from the more developed and more touristy spots in NZ. We should not have artificial forces accelerating the change away from what we have all chosen. There are many methods for other people to enjoy the area already, and they do. The existing walkway to cathedral cove might be better supplemented with something completely different. Maybe a walkway further up in the hills with peace and quiet and a more distant view of the water.</i></p>

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Absentee Landowners	Ian Chalmers	<p><i>. Regardless of our personal situation. Clearly it would be irresponsible to do anything that increases visitors without resolving and forward investing in the infrastructure required to support these visitors. I think this extends way beyond just parking and has to include toilets, other transport options, a bigger beach, more shops & cafes, more accommodation, rubbish facilities, etc. This will come at a huge cost which no doubt will be funded by the very rate payers who don't want it to go ahead. Once built, we can resemble other developed beaches...and then none of us will want to be there.</i></p> <p><i>The argument for providing the walk to give economic benefit confuses me? Who gets the economic benefit and at what environmental cost and economic cost to others. A small economic benefit to a small few (whoever they are) would be at significant economic cost (both capital and operating cost) to current land owners, and also significant environmental cost to the beach and surrounding areas.</i></p>
Coastal Walkways	Peter Hawley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In principle costal walkways supports the concept of the walk • However, parking and other infrastructure issues in Hahei must be resolved before the walkway goes ahead