

Media release

24 July 2020

Whale Trail construction funding welcomed

The Whale Trail is a new recreational cycling and walking trail along the upper east coast of the South Island. It has received \$18m of funding for construction as announced by Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Regional Economic Development Fletcher Tabuteau in Blenheim today.

The Whale Trail is an initiative of the Marlborough Kaikōura Trail Trust, with support from Marlborough District Council, Kaikōura District Council, Rātā Foundation, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency and KiwiRail.

Rātā Foundation has been a long-time supporter of The Whale Trail, making a \$600,000 grant back in 2017, from its 2016 Earthquake Recovery Fund, towards project development costs for the trail.

Rātā's Chief Executive Leighton Evans says "At the time it made sense to us to look at different ways we could catalyse the long-term recovery of our quake affected regions. We are really supportive of the vision for the Trail, which will not only provides a fantastic recreational facility for local communities and an iconic experiences for visitors, but also revitalises the many communities and businesses along the route."

In June 2019 the Provincial Growth Fund granted \$322,000 for a technical study to identify the route, develop project costs and develop a business case which have now been completed.

Luke van Velthooven, Chair of Marlborough Kaikōura Trail Trust said: “We’re absolutely delighted to receive this funding which will enable us to construct The Whale Trail. It’s been four years of quiet effort behind the scenes to place us in this position. We’re incredibly appreciative of the many volunteers, the Marlborough and Kaikōura district councils, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, KiwiRail and the Rātā Foundation, who have worked with us or provided funding.”

“By working with Iwi, landowners and our community we can complete our vision of a world-class cycle and walking trail that offers exceptional recreational experiences, while providing wide-ranging and long-lasting economic and social benefits for our communities.

“This trail will be an exceptional asset for our community, but importantly it’s an investment in this region that will create local jobs at a time when we need them most as we recover from the economic fallout of COVID-19.”

“People will be attracted to The Whale Trail because of the marine life, stunning Marlborough Sounds and Kaikōura coastlines, the side adventures of jet boating the Clarence or whale watching, washed down with a glass of sauvignon blanc and a feast of local kōura - and those weary legs can return on KiwiRail’s Coastal Pacific rail service!”

Marlborough Mayor John Leggett has hailed The Whale Trail as a timely catalyst, which will bring lasting economic benefits to the region by tapping into the growing market of New Zealanders and future overseas tourists seeking active adventures.

“Marlborough District Council has strongly supported The Whale Trail concept since its inception after the Kaikōura earthquake in 2016. We funded a share of the early feasibility work and committed \$2m to project funding in 2018, as well as on-going operating budget.”

About The Whale Trail

The Whale Trail is an approximately 200 kilometre long cycling and walking trail that will connect the communities of Picton, Blenheim, Seddon, Ward, Kekerengu, Clarence and Kaikōura.

The name is a nod to the importance of whales to the area and mirrors their migratory path along the east coast of the South Island.

The Whale Trail will enable access to some of the most unique, beautiful and historic locations in New Zealand. The Wairau Bar was one of the first landing sites by Māori on New Zealand shores 800 years ago. The region, from the Marlborough Sounds down through to Kaikōura, was home to New Zealand's whaling industry. Cape Campbell is the site of numerous shipwrecks and is steeped in maritime history. Yealands' are pioneers in organic coastal wine production. The recent earthquakes, from Seddon through to Kaikōura, have forever changed the ancient landscape of one of the world's youngest islands.

Our region is also currently a "missing piece of the jigsaw" for New Zealand's national walking and cycling trail network.

Further information, join the Trust mailing list, or submit an idea or comment:

<https://www.thewhaletrail.nz>

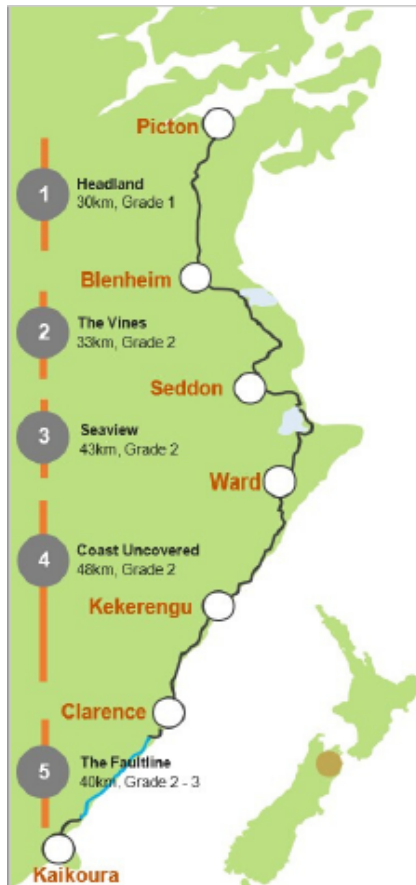
For media comment please contact:

Luke van Velthooven

Marlborough Kaikōura Trail Chair

luke.vanvelthooven@aplproperty.co.nz

Tel. 021 477 502.



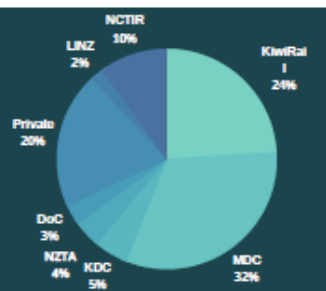
The Whale Trail

A world-class cycle trail that offers exceptional recreational experiences while providing wide-ranging and long-lasting benefits for our communities.

Benefits

1. Facilitating quake recovery
2. Building community connections and encouraging local recreational use in a sustainable environment
3. Increasing understanding of local taonga and history
4. Attracting new and regular visitors and encouraging them to spend more and stay longer
5. Increasing access to existing and new amenities
6. Completing the missing link in the South Island cycle trails
7. Encouraging and growing small and medium businesses

Trail



Capital Cost \$19.49M

Trail Development Costs	\$8.55M
Bridge Costs	\$9.40M
Trail Structures	\$0.50M
Development Costs	\$1.04M

Jobs



42 full time jobs per year over three years of construction



137 full time jobs per year over 28 years

Users



Year 4 (when trail complete)
Year 2028



5,720 locals use trail
50,000 times per year
9,216 by year 28



50,000 regional visitors per year
97,754 by year 28



6,750 international tourists per year
13,197 by year 28

Regional

\$367M additional visitor spend over 28 years

NPV \$23.1M

cost: benefit 1:2.0 internal rate of return 14%

Visitor benefits (GDP) \$40.6M

\$4.33M Health benefits

Consumer surplus \$795k

National

\$54.7M additional visitor spend over 28 years

NPV \$27.2M

cost: benefit 1:2.2 internal rate of return 15%

Visitor benefits (GDP) \$7.62M

\$17.9M Health benefits

Consumer surplus \$24.3M

Marlborough Kaikoura Trail Trust thanks foundation funders:

