

The Great New Zealand River Ride





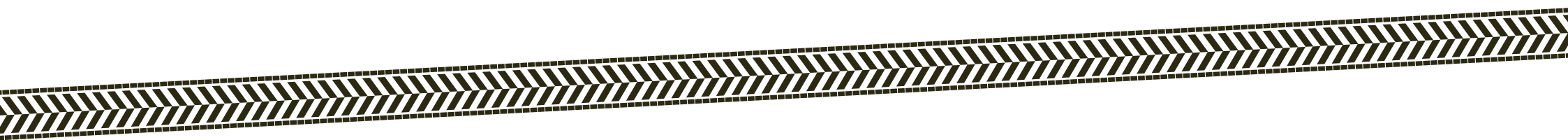
Overview

“Waikato taniwharau!

He piko he taniwha, he piko he taniwha!”

“Waikato of one hundred chiefs!

At every bend a chief, at every bend a chief!”





Overview

The concept of the national cycleway was proposed at the Employment Summit in February 2009 by the newly elected National government.

Objectives for the Cycleway include:

- to create jobs through design, construction and maintenance of the cycle network;
- to create a high quality tourism asset which will enhance New Zealand's competitiveness as a tourism destination and provide ongoing employment development opportunities for regional economies; and
- to maximise the range of complimentary benefits that the cycle network provides including events, recreational, health and others.

In March 2009 the Business Development Centre and the Ministry of Social Development held a Waikato Job Summit with the intention of stimulating growth and activity in the region. These discussions subsequently identified an opportunity to fast track a cycleway in the region that would link into the John Key led initiative

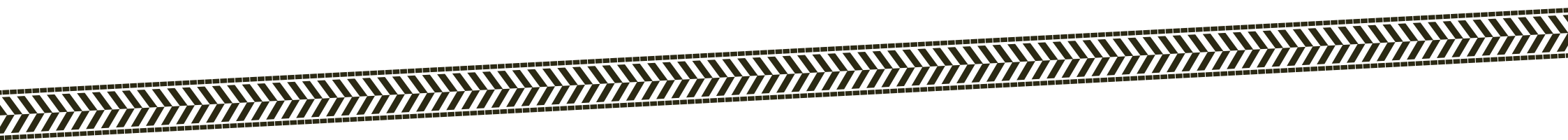
to create a national cycleway. This concept has strong regional support as it is seen as a significant social, cultural and economic contributor for the region.

The national cycleway project also coincides with the release of Environment Waikato's Regional Walking and Cycling Strategy. The New Zealand cycleway is mentioned in the strategy and includes a future proposal to connect Ngaruawahia to Cambridge along the Waikato River.

Business and community leaders formed a working group who had a Vision of a shared cycle/walkway that followed the path of the Waikato River and stretched from Meremere in the north to Taupo in the south. This 200km plus river journey would maximise the magic, mystique and beauty of New Zealand's largest river and be the spine that connected the history, culture, picturesque scenery, towns and communities of the Waikato region.

This journey will be known as:

"The Great New Zealand River Ride"





The Waikato River

The Waikato is the longest river in New Zealand, running 425 kilometres from the eastern slopes of Mt Ruapehu, joining the Tongariro River system and emptying into Lake Taupo. It drains Taupo at the lake's northeastern edge, creates the Huka Falls, then flows northwest through the Waikato Plains. It passes through many Waikato communities including Mangakino, Cambridge, Hamilton, Horotiu, Ngaruawahia, Huntly, Hampton Downs and Meremere (all with points of difference and stories to tell).

In many ways the river's path reflects the many facets of New Zealand's past, present and future.

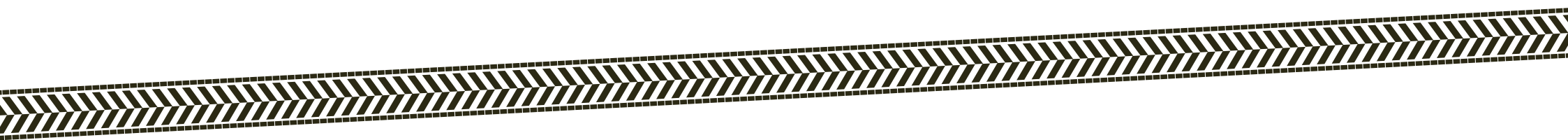
The tribes of the Waikato are river people - generations of Waikato Maori have lived close to the River and it is deeply important to them. The Waikato River is a tupuna (ancestor), a taonga (treasure), and the mauri (life force) of Tainui Waka and Ngati Tuwharetoa.

The first permanent European settlers arrived in the Waikato by river in 1864 and it continued to be an important trade and supply route for many years. Many

relics of a bygone shipping age can be seen on the banks of the river including the PS Rangariri which currently lies at Memorial Park in Hamilton and is being restored by the Hamilton City Council.

In modern times the river has been neglected and underutilised other than being a major source of the North Islands renewable energy from the eight hydro stations located on the river. It is only recently that there has been a growing trend to turn towards the river. As our longest river running through a region of major economic significance, the health and utilisation of the Waikato River is now being understood. The recent treaty settlement on Iwi's claim to the river and the subsequent "clean up fund", of which the crown will contribute \$7 million a year for 30 years, will ensure that the mighty Waikato River will once again be the major attraction of the region.

The Great New Zealand River Ride will contribute significantly towards this reincarnation.



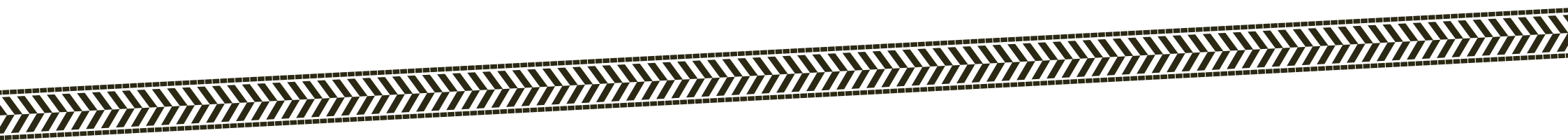


Our Proposal

There are already some fantastic cycleway projects in various forms and stages of completion in existence in the Waikato region. Some of these follow the path of the Waikato River. These include the Waikato River Trails Trust, the Waipa District Council's plan to create a trail from Cambridge to Karapiro to coincide with the World Cup of Rowing in 2010, and the Hamilton City Council's shared cycle/walkway paths within the city boundaries.

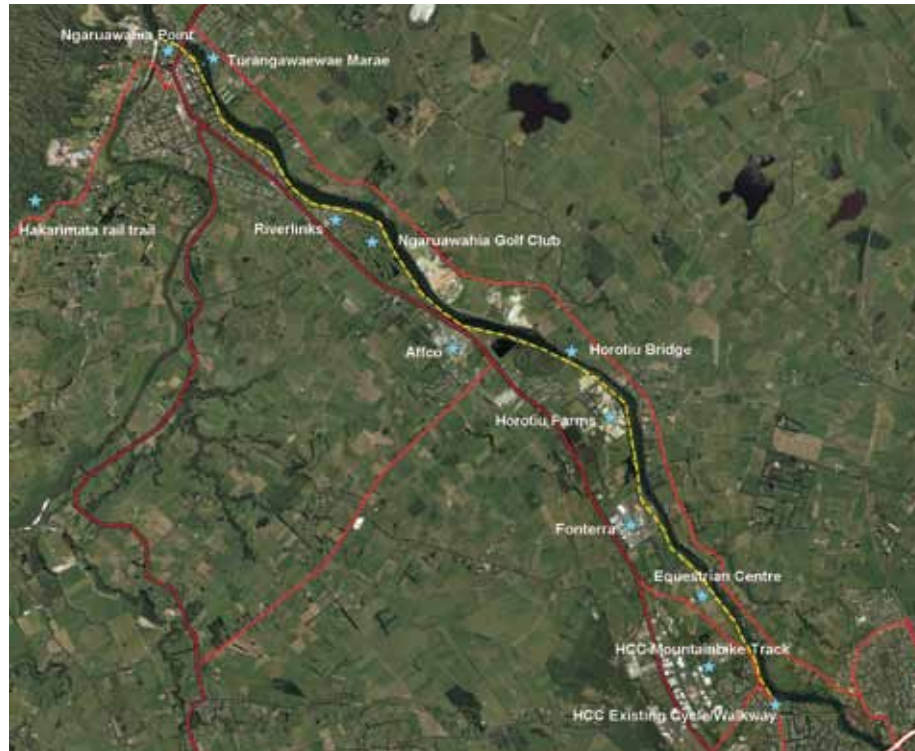
We see Hamilton City as the economic and tourist hub of the Waikato region. Our desire is to extend the existing cycle/walkway north and south of the city providing a link to other communities and facilities along the way.

As this proposal was conceived at the Waikato Job Summit a key agenda was to generate activity as soon as possible. With this in mind, we have broken the dream into stages with priority focus on those parts that we believe are achievable in the short term.



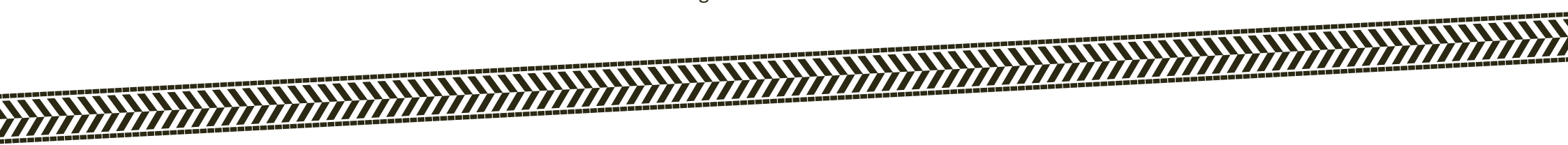


Stage One – Ngaruawahia to Hamilton



We have started working on the feasibility of building a track between Ngaruawahia and Hamilton that will link in with the existing Hamilton City river trail which already operates as the spine of the Hamilton walking and cycling network. Pedestrians and cyclists currently share tracks along the river in excess of 26km.

Our view for the design of this section is for a 2.5 metre wide solid track (concrete, asphalt or paving) that will cater for all forms of cycling, as well as pedestrian traffic.





The 10km section begins at 'The Point' in Ngaruawahia, follows the Western bank of the Waikato River and connects with the Hamilton section at Pukete.

Points of interest along the way include:

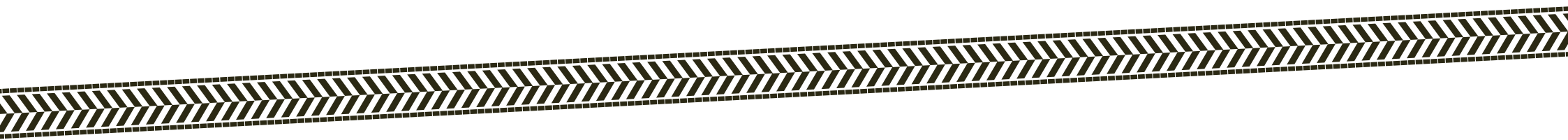
- Access to the Hakarimata DOC bush reserve along with the Hakarimata Rail Trail that is currently under development
- The 1.5km Kingitanga Heritage Trail
- Turangawaewae Marae – Home of the Maori King
- Historic sites marked with Pou
- Ngaruawahia Golf Club
- Fonterra Dairy Factory and its significance to the regions economic reliance on dairy products
- Affco and its significance to the regions sheep and beef industry
- The Waikato Equestrian Centre with public access available. Equestrian and thoroughbred racing industries have a proud tradition in the Waikato. Home of Sir Patrick Hogan and the world equestrian rider of the 20th century, Mark Todd

- Direct link to 10km of mountain bike trails at the Hamilton Mountain Bike Club. This fantastic facility accommodates novices to expert riders.

We see this as an important starting point as it takes in points of historical (cultural) significance along with key aspects of the Waikato economy.

As key stakeholders in this project (HCC, WDC and the Perry Group) already own significant sections of the proposed route, only two commercial operators and five private landowners will need to be negotiated with to obtain access.

Another important factor for this section is Te Araroa Trust. Initial discussions with them have indicated that there is potential for cost sharing on the common sections of the route. They have yet to complete the Ngaruawahia to Hamilton section and are keen to participate in this project.



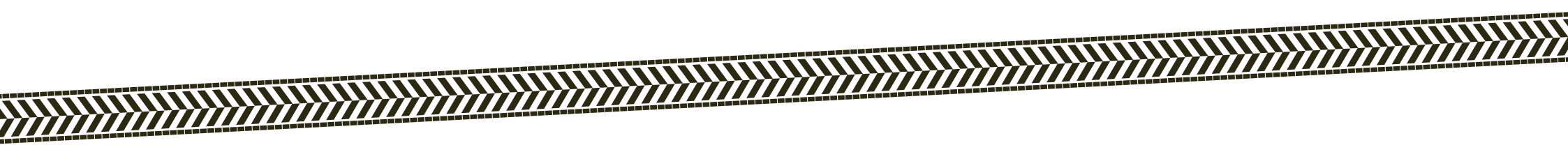


Stage Two – Existing Hamilton river trail upgrade

This section is well established, however increased cycle traffic volume generated by the Great NZ River Ride will require upgrading and widening of the path to ensure the safety of both cyclists and pedestrians.

Attractions on this section of the river:

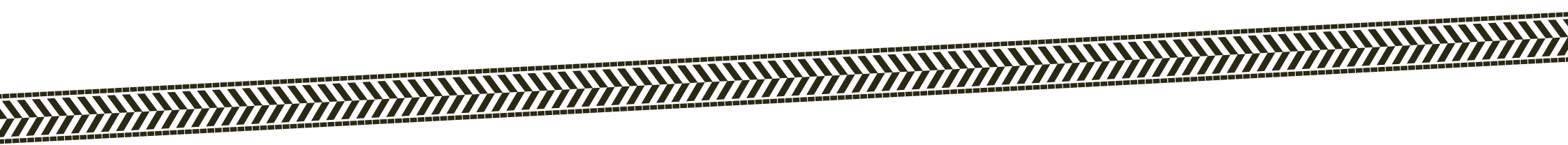
- Access to 26km of river paths
- Hamilton Golf Course
- Accommodation on and nearby the river
- Café culture
- Shopping
- Casino
- Arts and culture including the Museum, Arts Post and sculpture
- Waikato Rowing Club
- Hamilton Gardens





Stage Three – Hamilton to Cambridge

This section will be an important link to the existing river trail development projects south of Cambridge. New Zealand Olympic Rower Rob Waddell lives on this section of the Waikato River and is passionate about forming this trail. Attractions include winerys, cafes, Pa sites, thoroughbred horse studs and the Mystery Creek Events Centre, home of the National Fieldays, car and boat shows.



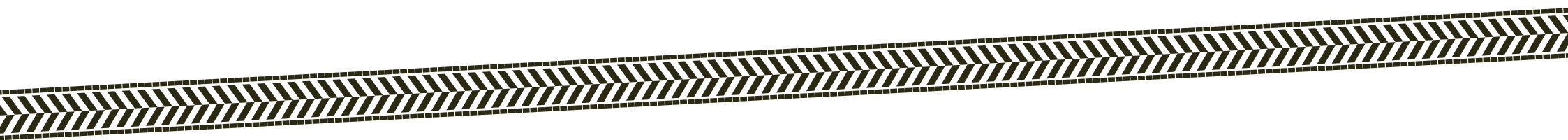


Tourism

The main driver for tourism to New Zealand is the landscape and engagement with people/places. The Waikato River is the region's greatest asset. It connects towns/communities, history and culture. The river is hugely significant to Maori and European people and it connects our region not only physically but spiritually.

The Waikato River is an underutilised tourism resource. The Great New Zealand River Ride will significantly strengthen the region's tourism offering.

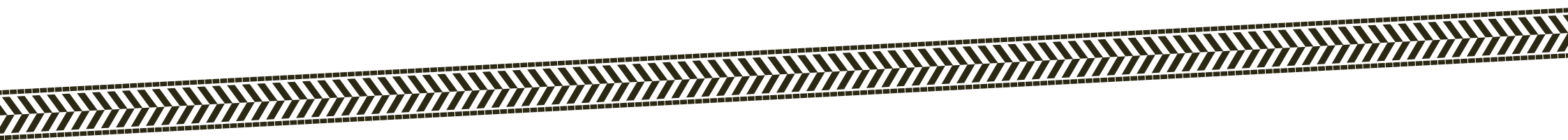
The easy contour will mean that it will suit all ages/markets. Multiple towns along the river means that people can do short or long trips, so it suits all fitness levels. Mild temperatures and the general absence of wind make it an ideal cycling climate throughout the year.





Who we are engaging with

- Hamilton City Council
- Waikato District Council
- Environment Waikato
- Affco
- Fonterra
- Ngaruawahia Golf Club
- Perry Group
- King St Advertising
- Riparian rights holders
- Riverfront properties without riparian rights
- Tainui
- Te Araroa Trust
- Mighty River Power
- DOC
- Waikato Regional Tourism

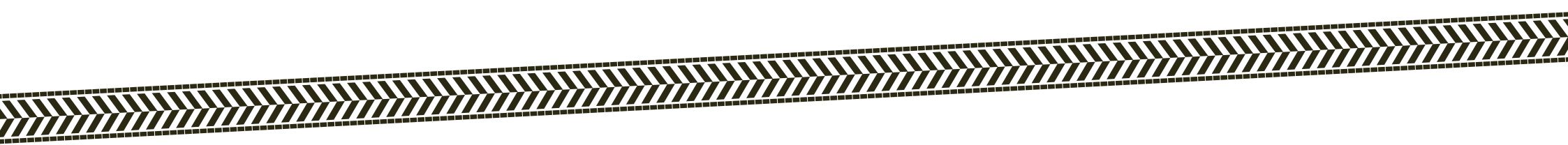




Summary

- The Great New Zealand River Ride has the potential to create a significant cycleway that encompasses the true beauty of the Waikato, while benefiting the many communities along its route.
- The Waikato has its own unique cultural heritage and landscape that distinguishes us from the rest of New Zealand. From a national perspective we want to have a range of environments available for people to cycle through. We're not trying to compete with mountain scenery or coastal scenery. We want to diversify the tourism industry and give visitors a choice. The Waikato River gives us the opportunity to offer that point of difference.
- The Great New Zealand River Ride will strengthen the region's tourism offering for both international and domestic visitors by connecting people to the river and its associated history and culture. It will provide an accessible, achievable outdoor activity pursuit for all ages.
- This is an opportunity for communities and local government to work together on a project that they all have a stake in. It has the potential to achieve the immediate objectives of increasing jobs and tourism along with creating a lasting legacy for the community to enjoy well into the future.

**The Great New Zealand River Ride
Let the people flow.**





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