REPORT

Tonkin+Taylor

Te Ara Tipuna Trail (Stage 1)

Assessment of Effects on the Environment

Prepared for
Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust
Prepared by
Tonkin & Taylor Ltd
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Table of contents

Language and abbreviations

This Assessment of Effects on the Environment only uses tohuto (macrons) for organisation names, documents and programmes named by organisations, otherwise they are not used, in accordance with Ngati Porou practice.

Abbreviation	Full Description
'The Ara' or 'the Project'	Te Ara Tipuna – Stage 1
AEE	Assessment of Effects on the Environment
ASCH	Areas Sensitive to Coastal Hazards
BOPRC	Bay of Plenty Regional Council
CIA	Cultural Impact Assessment
CMA	Coastal Marine Area
CMP	Construction Management Plan
CMT	Customary Marine Title
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
dbh	Diameter at Breast Height
DOC	Department of Conservation
EcIA	Ecological Impact Assessment
ECX	East Coast Exchange
ED	Ecological Districts
EMP	Ecological Management Plan
ESCP	Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
ESMPP	Ecological Survey and Management Plan Protocol
GDC	Gisborne District Council
GIS	Geographic Information System
GMA	General Management Area
HAIL	Hazardous Activities and Industries List
HHMP	Historic Heritage Management Pla
HL	Hikurangi Loop
HNZPT	Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga
HPL	Highly Productive Land
LMPF	Landscape Management Plan
LUC	Land Use Capability
LVA	Landscape and Visual Assessment
MACA	Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011
MASCV	Marine Areas of Significant Conservation Value
NES-F	Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020
NES Soil	Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulations 2011
NPSFM	National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020

NPSIB	National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023
NPS-HPL	National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022
NZCPS	New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010
NZTA	NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi
ODC	Ōpōtiki District Council
OMMP	Operational and Maintenance Management Plan
ONFL	Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes or Outstanding Landscapes
PMA	Protected Management Areas
PSI	Preliminary Site Investigation
QEII	Queen Elizabeth II National Trust (Ngā Kairauhī Papa)
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
RPS	Regional Policy Statement
SCEMP	Stakeholder and Communication Engagement Management Plan
SH35	State Highway 35
SSA	Safe Systems Audit
STMS	Site Traffic Management Supervisor
SVMA	Significant Values Management Area
TASCV	Terrestrial Areas of Significant Conservation Value
The Trust	Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust
Tracker	Km by Km Tracker
TRMP	Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan
WAA	Wildlife Act Authority

Te Ara Tipuna: The Ways of our Ancestors

Karakia

Tu-waewae tapu ra	*Be it the hardened or uncalloused foot*
Tapuwae kotuku!	*Tread respectfully over these lands!*
Tu mai, piki ake, kake ake	*Come, we welcome you*
Ki runga ki nga taumata karangaranga	*Ascend these renowned platforms*
Ka titiro iho au ki nga huarahi	*From where it is clear to see the paths*
I haere ai oku matua tipuna, ki te kimi oranga	*My ancestors traversed, to seek sustenance and prosperity*
Tu-waewae tapu ra	*Be it the hardened or uncalloused foot*
Tapuwae kotuku!	*Tread respectfully over these lands!*
Tini nga hua, maha nga huarahi	*There is much to see and much to do*
Na noa e whakaata mai nei	*You need only follow the paths*
Pua ana nga mau o te taiao	*Nature in all its glory*
Tipu matoro, tipu matoro	*Strong and free*
Ki te ao!	*For all the world to see!*

Pepeha

Ko Hikurangi te maunga	*Hikurangi is the ancestral mountain*
Ko Waiapu te awa	*Waiapu is the ancestral river*
Ko Ngati Porou te iwi	*Ngati Porou is the tribe*

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and overview

This Assessment of Effects on the Environment (AEE) report has been prepared in accordance with section 88 and Schedule 4 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) on behalf of Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust (the Trust).

The AEE report is to support a resource consent application to authorise the construction, operation and maintenance of a recreational pedestrian trail referred to as Te Ara Tipuna – Stage 1 ('the Ara'[1] or 'the Project').

1.2 Te Ara Tipuna Trail background and meaning

Te Ara Tipuna – literally meaning 'the ways of our ancestors' – represents far more than a physical trail network. This kaupapa embodies multiple layers of cultural significance that must be understood as the essential foundation for all technical assessments within this resource consent application to the Gisborne District Council (GDC).

From whenua to whanau to wellbeing – this is the foundational principle that guides both the development of Te Ara Tipuna and the assessment of its environmental effects within the 345-kilometre network between Gisborne and Potaka, between Te Toka a Taiau and Potikirua, across Ngati Porou rohe, under the jurisdiction of GDC. Ultimately, this kaupapa is about creating the conditions for people to connect and to be able to live good quality lives on the East Coast.

Critically, Te Ara Tipuna has been designed with environmental protection at its core, employing a low-impact design philosophy that emphasises natural character preservation. The overall Ara composition reflects this commitment: approximately 75 % will be wayfinding (being an unformed ara or existing formed track) through natural terrain requiring minimal construction (limited to the installation of intermittent wayfinding markers), and only approximately 25 % is proposed to be constructed elements such as gravel/compacted earth formed trails and structures (including proposed single-span bridges and toilets). Construction will follow Department of Conservation (DOC) Track Construction and Maintenance Guidelines, with natural contours of the land followed as much as possible to ensure minimal interference with the surrounding landscape.

Te Ara Tipuna encompasses five interconnected dimensions that inform every aspect of its environmental impact assessment:

- First, Te Ara Tipuna is an evocation of the ways of ancestors. The way they practiced life and community; the way they interacted with the physical and metaphysical environment; the ways they used to move between whanau and hapu, undertake activities, connect with each other; the way they were in the world, in their time, and the cultural legacy they have left. This dimension recognises the trail as a living expression of the cultural legacy they have left, establishing the spiritual and cultural framework within which all environmental effects must be considered.
- Second, Te Ara Tipuna is intended to restore connectivity and momentum in the daily life of those who live and work in-rohe, the iwi kainga, the ahi ka, safe and independent of State Highway 35 (SH35). Te Ara Tipuna functions as an arterial route of possibility – connecting communities figuratively and literally while creating opportunities for innovation, enterprise, learning outside the classroom, attracting investment into the region, and drawing capable uri and others home to live and contribute.

[1] Throughout this document, 'Ara' (capitalised) refers to the full 345 km Te Ara Tipuna trail, while 'ara' (lowercase) refers to individual tracks within it.

- It will provide a resilient alternative to the unreliable SH 35, offering safe passage during and following weather events when communities become isolated, and encouraging recreational activities and positive experiences. While firstly serving the 102,480 Ngati Porou uri (Census 2023), Te Ara Tipuna also welcomes all tu-waewae (visitors).
- Third, Te Ara Tipuna, is the overall description of the proposed network of ara/accessways, connecting existing tracks, old and new, reviving unused trails, defunct paper roads, easements, along with new mapping to create a continuous journey through Ngati Porou rohe. Te Ara Tipuna has been designed to pass as many of Ngati Porou's 46 active marae and 20+ communities as possible.
- Fourth, Te Ara Tipuna provides opportunity for a distinct tourism experience into the heart of Te Tairawhiti. It opens a part of Aotearoa New Zealand where tough terrain, beautiful beaches and bays are home to richly carved and decorated wharenui and wharekai, and people with deep ancestral and cultural connections.
- Fifth, Te Ara Tipuna offers a warm welcome and unique manaaki experience – iwi to kiwi – to fellow Aotearoa New Zealanders – uri and tu-waewae – to be welcomed into a marae, and to prepare kai in the kauta, eat and wash dishes, yarn by the fire, sleep in the wharenui, and head off into the day and to the next equally proud hapu along the Ara.

1.2.1 Environmental Kaitiakitanga: Te Tiriti Foundations

The environmental assessment of Te Ara Tipuna must be understood within the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the principles of kaitiakitanga that guide Ngati Porou's relationship with their ancestral lands and waters. This Treaty foundation establishes that environmental protection through Te Ara Tipuna represents the active exercise of everyday rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga responsibilities that have been maintained by Ngati Porou for generations.

1.2.2 Environmental Protection as cultural practice

Te Ara Tipuna provides opportunities for skills development, knowledge sharing, enterprise creation, and leadership in environmental restoration. This aligns with the cultural mission to "create the conditions in which Ngati Porou can regenerate the cultural wealth of a lively, healthy society of connected communities, culturally fluent and capable, enterprising and economically active, environmental protectors and sustainers, in revitalised whanau, hapu, and iwi relationships."

1.2.3 Regional context and innovative partnerships

Te Ara Tipuna represents pioneering environmental infrastructure that anticipates and addresses the significant environmental and living challenges facing Te Tairawhiti. This approach aligns with the environmental transformation vision outlined in the 2023 Ministerial Inquiry into Land Uses in Tairawhiti and Wairoa report "Outrage to Optimism[2]," which recognised the East Coast as offering "the context of a living laboratory for practical application of these commitments, in real time, in plain view" for climate adaptation and sustainable land use practices.

Te Ara Tipuna's environmental approach is supported through partnership with the East Coast Exchange (ECX), which provides access to the MAHI digital token system - "a digital token which represents a unit of work in service to nature" – enabling measurable environmental outcomes. The practical application of this approach is demonstrated through the Te Kautuku pilot, where ECX has partnered with Air New Zealand to fund verifiable nature-based work with transparent verification of outcomes.

[2] Ministerial Inquiry into Land Uses in Tairawhiti and Wairoa. 2023. Outrage to optimism. Ministry for the Environment. https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Outrage-to-optimism-superseded.pdf

Te Ara Tipuna integrates with existing conservation initiatives including the Raukumara Pae Maunga project, demonstrating alignment with established iwi-led environmental restoration efforts across the rohe.

Significantly, Te Ara Tipuna has been formally included in the Whakakitenga Tairawhiti Economic Plan (September 2024), confirming GDC's recognition of the project as integral to regional economic development planning. This institutional support creates pathways for ongoing environmental investment.

1.2.4 Kaitiakitanga in practice

The environmental approach of Te Ara Tipuna embodies practical kaitiakitanga designed to strengthen capabilities for caring for the taiao. Key practices include:

- Active restoration and emergency preparedness including native planting, erosion control, habitat enhancement, and emergency first responder training for community members.
- Community-led taiao stewardship by those who traverse and maintain the Ara, building capacity through both traditional knowledge and contemporary environmental science.
- Building on recent conservation initiatives including Jobs for Nature programmes (closed June 2025), the Raukumara Pae Maunga project, and catchment restoration projects, by providing for further enhancement opportunities.
- Skills development including learning outside the classroom, creating pathways for uri and tu-waewae to engage in land management, emergency response, and cultural tourism.
- Sustainable enterprise development combining environmental protection with tourism opportunities that showcase cultural and environmental taonga.

1.2.5 Conclusion: Integrated assessment approach

Te Ara Tipuna represents a paradigm of development that places cultural values and kaitiakitanga at its centre. This AEE proceeds from the understanding that environmental protection and cultural revitalisation are complementary expressions of the fundamental relationship between tangata whenua and ancestral environments. The success of Te Ara Tipuna depends on fulfilling the obligation to restore and regenerate the environment and taiao for future generations, in accordance with the ways of ancestors.

1.3 Application background

The below provides a brief chronological description of the progress of this resource consent application since lodgement:

- October 2023: resource consent application lodged with GDC, Ōpōtiki District Council (ODC) and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) to construct, operate and maintain a multi-modal Ara between Te Toka-a-Taiau near Gisborne to Tarakeha near Opotiki (enabling use by pedestrians, horses and bicycles).
- November 2024: The AEE was replaced with an amended version, revising the trail alignment and reducing the scope of the resource consent application to authorise development of the trail for pedestrian use only.
- December 2024: the application was publicly notified.
- January 2025: a further information request was issued on 31 January 2025,[3] with the key matters sought being trail construction staging, ongoing trail management, coastal hazards, ecological effects and landscape effects.
- February 2025: submissions on the application closed.

[3] Minute 1 of the Independent Hearing Commissioners dated 24 January 2025; Memorandum to Commissioners from Katrina Roos, reporting planner jointly engaged by GDC, ODC and BOPRC, 31 January 2025.

- March 2025: the Trust issued a letter to submitters notifying them of the intention to amend the application to shorten the overall length of the proposed walking trail, with the trail now only being proposed within the Ngati Porou rohe. This change means that the Ara will end at the Potaka community (generally being the boundary between GDC and ODC). As advised in the letter of 26 March 2025 to submitters, the decision was made to reduce the extent of the Ara to focus on Ngati Porou (Figure 1.1).[4]
- April 2025: the resource consent applications lodged with ODC and BOPRC were withdrawn[5]. In this letter, the Trust indicated that it expected to have a formal amendment to the application and the further information lodged with GDC by 11 April 2025; however, the Trust subsequently advised GDC that additional time was required to prepare the amended application and the response to the further information request.
- May/June 2025: The Trust appointed T+T to prepare a revised AEE. A two day site visit was attended by T+T planners along with the landscape and ecology technical specialists and a project manager.[6] A separate visit was also carried out by the transport safety engineer as a part of a safety audit for the Project.
- August 2025: this revised AEE has been prepared to address the key matters identified by the consent authorities and is lodged with GDC. It represents a significant amount of work in terms of reflecting further information, assessment, mitigation proposals and project details which has resulted from further desktop studies, along with ground truthing site visits by key personnel. Technical assessments have been updated to reflect the changes to the Proposal, including the changes to the alignment.[7]

[4] The Ara has been realigned since this figure was produced (refer to GIS map (Appendix C)) for realignments.
[5] Letter dated 4 April 2025.
[6] Zac Borrie, CPS, who has prepared the CMP and Tracker.
[7] With the exception of the Recreational Assessment and Social Impact Assessment.

Figure 1.1: Extent of the Ara as lodged (grey line) and reduced extent of the Ara that constitutes this resource consent application (orange line)[8] (Source: TAT, 2025)

This resource consent application formally establishes the reduced extent of Te Ara Tipuna from the original 2023 proposal of 500 kilometres between Gisborne and Opotiki to the current application extent of 345 kilometres between Gisborne and Potaka.

In addition to the reduced extent of the Ara, this revised AEE also addresses changes to the original application. Generally, these changes are in response to the further information request, matters raised in submissions and advice from the Trust's technical specialists. The changes reduce the adverse effects and provide greater certainty within the scope of the 2023 and 2024 applications, and generally involve:

- Changes to the alignment at various locations, with key changes[9] being at Whangara (km 20 to km 23), adjacent to Pakarae River (km 25 to km 33), Karaka Bay (km 54 to km 56), Tokomaru Bay (km 88 to km 95), Hikurangi Loop (km 27 to km 44), Kemp's Hill adjacent to Waiapu River (km 153 to km 159) and the Turitaka Gorge (km 163), and as shown on the GIS map (link provided in Appendix C).[10]

[8] Noting there have been amendments to the Ara alignment to that shown in the orange line, as addressed in in Section 1.3

[9] Any other changes to the alignment are minor, for example to adjust the ara location slightly so that it lines up more accurately with an existing track.

[10] Realignments were made primarily for safety reasons based on expert advice and feedback from NZTA in its submission and direct engagement discussions. Other realignments were identified on the June site visit, such as utilising existing tracks and bridges where possible.

- Change in approach to waterbody crossings, with the project proposing the use of current bridges (with appropriate safety measures in place), the construction of new swing bridges or timber bridges (collectively referred to as 'single-span bridges'), or providing for river crossings by foot (in the case of smaller rivers), as detailed further in Section 3.3.
- The removal of the waterbody crossing at Pakarae River (km 24), with the Ara now following the southern side of the river and crossing at Pakarae Bridge (being a local road).
- Removal of huts and shelters from the Proposal to facilitate local bespoke options.
- Addition of the assumption that steps will be used in locations where the ascending or descending gradient is over 25 %.
- Clarification around the Tokomaru to Ruatoria route which in parts requires an all weather surface to provide for pedestrian access or egress during civil defence emergencies. As there is a functional need to provide an all-weather surface, it is proposed to gravel this section of the Ara, where necessary.
- Identification of potential construction laydown areas.

1.4 Applicant details

Table 1.1 below sets out the details of the applicant.

Table 1.1: Applicant details

Applicant	Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust
Council / Plans	Gisborne District Council / Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan
Address for service during consent processing	Tonkin & Taylor Limited Attention: Jennifer Carvill Phone: (09) 355 6000 Email: jcarvill@tonkintaylor.co.nz
Address for service during consent implementation and invoicing	Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust Attention: Hekia Parata (Project Lead and Trustee) Phone: 0274362227 Email: hekia@tearatipuna.nz

We attach copies of the Client Statement in Appendix A and maps showing the Ara concept alignment and property title boundaries in Appendix B. The GIS tool in Appendix C can be used to identify property details including legal description and record of title references.

1.5 Summary of resource consent required

Resource consent is required from Gisborne District Council (GDC) under the Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (TRMP), applying a bundling approach, overall resource consent is required as a discretionary activity.

For the avoidance of doubt, Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust is seeking resource consent under the rules identified in Section 5 of this AEE and any other consents necessary to authorise the activities described in the application, even if not specifically noted.

1.6 Lapse and duration

1.6.1 Lapse

Pursuant to section 125 of the RMA, a lapse date of 10 years is sought. A longer lapse period is sought to enable the Ara to be delivered in stages as complex underlying whenua Maori governance issues are resolved, easements are negotiated, and funding is secured.

1.6.2 Duration

Pursuant to section 123 of the RMA, resource consent for single-span bridge structures in the Coastal Marine Area (CMA) and rivers is sought for a duration of 35 years. A 35 year duration is sought as the Ara will make a significant contribution to social, economic and cultural wellbeing in Te Tairawhiti and a longer term will provide security for funding and investment.

No duration is sought for the land use consent.

1.7 Approach to application

1.7.1 Introduction

The assessment approach for the application, together with proposed conditions and management plans has been tailored to the scale of the Project, the level of design information that is available, and the scale and significance of the actual and potential effects that the Project may have on the environment. The following features are integral to the assessment approach for the application:

- Management units.
- Detailed design.
- Application assessment tools.
- Consent corridor approach.
- Proposed conditions and management plans.

1.7.2 Management units

Throughout the AEE and the technical assessment reports the proposed Ara concept alignment has been divided into 'management units' to assist with describing the proposal and assessing the potential effects, and is necessary given the linear extent and scale of the Project.

The primary management unit used in the AEE is the 'segment' – the Ara has been divided into eight segments of approximately 10 to 60 kms each, as set out in Figure 2.1. This approach enables a structured and consistent approach to describing the environmental setting and proposal, effects assessment and management, and structuring of the proposed conditions of consent.

The AEE also refers to 'days' – the Ara has been divided into 22 days, each representing a typical moderate day of hiking.

The other main management unit used in the AEE is the kilometre 'km', with the Ara extending over 345 kms. The Ara concept alignment maps in Appendix B show the km markers and the Km by Km Tracker (Tracker) (refer Section 1.7.2 below) provides detailed information regarding each km.[11]

[11] The km markers used in the Tracker and on the GIS map indicatively represent a distance of 1 km; however, trail realignments (for example undertaken as a result of ground-truthing), mean that the distance between km markers

The segments, days and kms used in the AEE are set out in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2 also outlines the 'management unit' approach used in each of the technical reports. The approach used for each report has been selected depending on the nature of effects being assessed. This table is designed to guide the reader in identifying the specific locations or areas along the Ara that have been assessed within each technical assessment in relation to the management units defined and used throughout this AEE report.

Table 1.2: Management unit approach used in AEE and technical assessments

AEE management unit approach								
Segments	1: Titirangi	2: Uawa to Tokomaru	3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria	4: Kopuaroa	5: Hikurangi	6: Port Awanui	7: Waiapu	8: Matakaoa
Days	1 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 11	-	HL 1 – 4	-	12 – 15	16 – 17
Km marker (Tracker column ref)	km 1 (C) to km 50 (BG)	km 51 (BH) to km 94.7 (DB)	km 94 (BH) to km 139 (FA) and km 140 (GP) to km 149 (GY)	km 1 (JI) to km 10.6 (JS)	km 1 (HD) to km 53 (JH)	km 1 (FB) to km 39.2 (GO)	km 150 (GZ) to km 153 (HC) and km 154 (JT) to km 206 (LV)	km 207 (LW) to km 239 (ND)
Technical report management unit approach								
Ecological Impact Assessment	Uses km markers along the Ara to identify beaches traversed and protected areas of ecological significance							
Landscape and Visual Assessment	Section 1 – Makorori to Cooks Cove Walkway, Tolaga Bay, Uawa (km 1 – 48)	Section 2 – Tolaga, Uawa to Waipiro Bay (km 49 – 116)	Section 3 – Waipiro to East Cape (km 117 – 191)				Section 4 – East Cape to Potaka (km 192 – 239)	
Heritage Assessment	Day 1 to Day 17 and Hikurangi Loop							
Transport Safety Assessment	Uses km markers along the Ara in Appendix A and Appendix B spreadsheets							
Coastal Hazard Assessment	Uses km markers along the Ara to discuss key areas							
Geotechnical Assessment	Day 1 to Day 17 and Hikurangi Loop							
Recreation Assessment	Okitu to Waihau Bay	Waihau Bay to Anaura Bay	Anaura Bay to Whareponga	Whareponga to Tikitiki; Hikurangi Loop			Tikitiki to Te Araroa	Te Araroa to Whangaparoa

1.7.3 Detailed design

Given the length of the Ara, detailed concept plans have not been prepared, as this is neither practical nor necessary to assess the effects of the project. As addressed in this AEE, the technical specialists have assessed indicative concept designs, considered the worst case scenario envelope of effects (meaning detailed design will only reduce effects through the "consent corridor" approach discussed in Section 1.7.6.2 below), included robust management measures and/or are

could be slightly more than or less than 1 km. Repeated km markers (identified with an (a)) and partial km markers that include part of a km (e.g., km 2.2) are the result of realignments that have added additional distance to the trail.

satisfied that the Proposed Conditions (Appendix T) set clear outcomes that will ensure the effects of the Project are appropriately managed.

Subject to consent being granted, the Trust proposes to develop the Ara in stages, with detailed design plans prepared for those aspects of each stage that require a higher level of detail. As approximately 75 % of the Ara will be wayfinding only, there will be significant stretches that require a much lower level of detail.

The final Ara alignment— to be located within the consent corridor (detailed in Section 1.7.4)— will be refined in collaboration with landowners and informed by specialist input, as required by the proposed conditions and management plans (detailed in Section 1.7.5).

Certain components of the project, such as major single-span bridges and works within the road corridor, will require detailed design drawings and will be subject to additional approvals outside the RMA (e.g. building consent, engineering approval, or approval to work within the road corridor).[12]

Detailed landscape, ecology and heritage management plans will also be prepared for areas where physical works occur in sensitive locations. In other areas, conceptual plans will guide implementation, with works managed in accordance with the proposed management plans.

The final alignment and detailed design drawings will be submitted to GDC for certification. Proposed conditions of consent are provided in Appendix T setting out these requirements.

1.7.4 Application assessment tools

Given the length of the Ara, information has been drawn from a number of tools and documents to support this AEE and appended technical assessments. These tools include a GIS tool and the 'Km by Km Tracker' (Tracker).

A GIS map has been prepared on ArcGIS to show the proposed Ara concept alignment within Te Tairawhiti. The GIS map marks 'Points of Interest' along the alignment, including the location of proposed waterbody crossings and toilets. Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (TRMP) zoning and planning notations and information on wetlands and whenua Maori blocks are included as map layers in the GIS map and can be viewed in conjunction with the alignment and points of interest. The link to the GIS map is provided in Appendix C.

The Tracker provides an estimate of the extent and type of works that will be undertaken, amongst other key information, for each individual km of the Ara. The Tracker was prepared to support independent effects assessments based on a conservative assessment of the indicative maximum nature and extent of the construction works and trail design anticipated within each km. This has enabled the planning and technical assessments to be based on a conservative maximum and means that they are likely to overstate the scale of any actual or potential effects. The Tracker, along with a guidance document prepared to assist users, is attached as Appendix D.

All amendments to the Ara since notification of the application can be identified in the Tracker with the columns labelled "amended" or "new" in green. These amendments can also be identified in the GIS tool as the alignment as notified and the amended alignment are shown on different layers.

The AEE has used the GIS map and Tracker as tools to review the proposed Ara concept alignment in relation to TRMP zoning and planning notations to determine resource consent requirements and identify the key values within each segment of the Ara to enable an assessment of actual and

[12] These secondary approvals will ensure that the key aspects of these detailed designs will have appropriate oversight. Any aspects needed to manage the effects of the Project will be managed through conditions of consent, as proposed in Appendix T.

potential effects. Figures produced from the GIS map are used throughout the AEE. While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the information provided in the current Tracker is both conservative and accurately portrays environmental and indicative details, some minor errors may remain.[13] The information is intended to be indicative and sufficient to enable the assessment of effects to be undertaken in an appropriately robust and conservative manner that is commensurate to the scale and significance of effects.

PDF maps have also been prepared (attached as Appendix B), which show the full extent of the proposed Ara concept alignment for which consent is sought. Two map series have been prepared to enable TRMP overlays to be shown.[14]

1.7.5 Consent corridor approach

This application takes a "consent corridor" approach by which consent is sought for the final Ara alignment to be located within a 50 m corridor (25 m on each side of the Ara concept alignment as indicated by the PDF maps, Appendix B) along the entire extent of the Ara (referred to as the 'Standard Consent Corridor'), except for those areas that are ecologically or landscape sensitive. A wider 'Sensitive Area Consent Corridor' is sought for those areas that are ecologically or landscape sensitive as follows:

- A 100 m corridor (50 m on each side of the proposed Ara concept alignment); or
- Where the Ara concept alignment is within 50 m of a landholding boundary: a corridor of between 50 m and 100 m (with the minimum width of the corridor being 25 m on each side of the proposed Ara concept alignment; and the maximum width being 50 m or the landholding boundary, whichever is the lesser).[15]

The rationale for a wider 'Sensitive Area Consent Corridor' in ecologically or landscape sensitive areas is to provide greater flexibility at the detailed design stage to locate the track in a way that further enables adverse effects to be minimised. For example, the Sensitive Area Consent Corridor may allow the Ara to weave through existing vegetation in a way that avoids the need for earthworks and vegetation clearance, or the most appropriate dune crossing location to be selected.[16]

Ecologically or landscape sensitive areas, for the purposes of the 'Sensitive Area Consent Corridor', are defined as follows:

- The following TRMP map layers:
  - Protected Management Areas (PMAs).
  - Terrestrial Areas of Significant Conservation Value (TASCV).
  - Marine Areas of Significant Conservation Value (MASCV).
  - Scheduled G17 wetlands.
  - Outstanding Landscapes (ONFL).
  - Areas Sensitive to Coastal Hazards (ASCH).
- Ngā Whenua Rāhui Kawenata covenanted areas.
- QEII National Trust covenanted areas.

[13] The subsequent use of the Tracker information in this AEE and the attached reports has been undertaken making every reasonable effort to ensure accuracy.

[14] The PDF maps include the key TRMP planning notations and overlays that are relevant for the reasons for consent. All TRMP planning notations, overlays and zones that apply to the Ara concept alignment can be viewed on the online GIS map.

[15] This ensures that the Sensitive Area Consent Corridor crosses no additional landholdings to those crossed by the Standard Consent Corridor.

[16] The technical effects assessments have predominantly been based on the Standard Consent Corridor, and therefore are conservative in their effects assessments in these sensitive areas.

- Other mapped wetlands[17].

The Ara itself (including signage) will be located within the consent corridor, with the exact location being determined during the detailed design stage which will include obtaining agreement for easements from landowners, consideration of safety requirements and minimising adverse effects.

Where the Ara concept alignment is located in a road or reserve, and is adjacent to the General Residential Zone, Rural Commercial Zone or Industrial Zone, it is proposed to utilise the flexibility of the Standard Consent Corridor to locate the Ara within, but not beyond, the Road Corridor or reserve during detailed design. No parts of the Ara will be located within the General Residential Zone, Rural Commercial Zone or Industrial Zone.

1.7.6 Proposed conditions and management plans

1.7.6.1 Introduction

The Trust has proposed a set of draft conditions which are included in Appendix T. These conditions have been developed together with the input of the technical team and are relied upon in the assessment undertaken in this AEE and the attached technical reports.

The proposed conditions have been structured under five headings, as follows:

1 General Conditions;
2 Pre-construction;
3 Construction;
4 Post-construction; and
5 Operation.

Some key features of the conditions are summarised below.

1.7.6.2 Consent Corridor Plan

As discussed above, the consent corridor approach has been proposed to provide a consented envelope for the final Ara alignment, and to provide some flexibility to minimise effects during detailed design. Condition 12 is proposed to require the provision of a Consent Corridor Plan to confirm the location of the Standard and Sensitive Area Consent Corridors, and the properties located within those corridors.

It is intended that this will provide a useful reference document for all parties, including the Trust, during the pre-construction phase when undertaking detailed design and engagement with landowners and the community, and GDC when undertaking certification tasks in accordance with conditions.

1.7.6.3 Management plans and standards

Given the approximately 345 km extent of the Ara, it is important to provide for flexibility in design and construction whilst appropriately managing and mitigating effects. The technical assessments contain key principles and robust management measures to ensure the effects of the Project are appropriately managed. Accordingly, it is proposed that a suite of management plans will be developed to reflect these outcomes. This approach is supported by conditions that set clear performance and environmental standards to be met. The conditions reflect the

[17] Identified by the GDC Provisional Regional Wetland Assessment 2022 GIS map layer.

assumptions and outcomes adopted in the technical assessments to ensure the effects of the Project will be appropriately managed.

Proposed Conditions 5 to 11 set out the process by which management plans will be certified, amended and implemented. In particular, Proposed Condition 8 requires all works to be carried out in accordance with the certified management plans.

Proposed Condition 11 provides that management plans may be submitted in parts or in stages. It is likely that the Ara will not be constructed all as one project, therefore it will be practical for management plans to be staged in line with any planned construction staging.

The management plans proposed are:

- Cultural Monitoring Plan
- Landscape Management Plan
- Ecological Survey and Management Plan
- Construction Management Plan
- Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Construction Ecological Management Plan
- Historic Heritage Management Plan
- Wayfinding Signage Concept Plan
- Stakeholder and Communication Engagement Management Plan

Attached to this application are indicative drafts of the Construction Management Plan, and Historic Heritage Management Plan, a Landscape Management Plan Framework that sets out the requirements for the Landscape Management Plan, and an Ecological Survey and Management Plan Protocol that sets out the requirements for the Ecological Survey Management Plan and the Construction Ecological Management Plan. These documents will be updated prior to their certification, in accordance with specific conditions setting out requirements for each management plan.

The construction conditions include specific performance and environmental standards to be met. While these will be incorporated into the applicable management plans, they are key requirements that ensure effects are appropriately managed. These conditions also ensure the Ara is developed in a way that is consistent with the baseline assumptions that were included as assessment tools and standards in the technical assessments. Examples of these include:

- No indigenous trees over 30 cm d.b.h[18] will be removed, except in road corridor where required – as was proposed and included in the Ecological Impact Assessment to ensure effects of mature indigenous vegetation were avoided;
- Swing bridge decks will be 1.5 m in width and will be set at a height that will not be overtopped by the 2 % annual exceedance probability (50 year) flood event – as set out in the CMP as a measure to avoid and minimise flooding effects; and
- Pedestrian crossing points will provide at least 165 m of forward visibility in both directions on sections of SH35 with a 100 km/h speed limit – as was applied as a traffic safety measure in the Transport Safety Assessment.

1.7.6.4 Detailed Design Report

As discussed above, given the length of the Ara, detailed concept plans have not been prepared, as this is neither practical nor necessary to assess the effects of the Project. Moreover, the consent corridor approach provides flexibility to help minimise adverse effects, enable ongoing

[18] Diameter at Breast Height.

discussions with landowners and respond to matters raised through the consenting process. Subsequently, the detailed design will incorporate recommendations relating to landscape, ecology, erosion and sediment control, traffic, historic heritage, and signage to ensure effects are appropriately managed.

1.7.6.5 Traffic and pedestrian safety

In some areas, the Ara uses the local road corridor and the state highway road corridor. At both pre-construction and post-construction stages, conditions will require Safe Systems Audits to be undertaken to ensure safety measures are identified and incorporated in the detailed design and the constructed Ara, including appropriate sight distances, separation from live traffic lanes and safe bridge crossings. In addition, where no swing bridge is proposed and there is no safe option for Ara users to cross an existing road bridge on foot, the proposed conditions require an alternative safe crossing option to be provided, such as a shuttle service.

1.7.6.6 Stakeholder involvement

The proposed conditions include requirements for a Stakeholder and Communication Engagement Management Plan and Cultural Monitoring Plan. These conditions provide for structured engagement with relevant mana whenua, [19] other landowners, hapu and communities to address how stakeholders will be engaged with throughout the construction works, methods for developing and undertaking a cultural monitoring programme, and ongoing engagement during the operational phase.

1.7.6.7 Operations and reporting

The use and maintenance of the Ara will be managed under an Operations and Maintenance Management Plan (OMMP). This plan will provide comprehensive detail to ensure that any adverse effects of the operation of the Ara are appropriately managed and monitored. An annual operations report will be required, which will include reporting and addressing any complaints or incidents, and any appropriate recommendations for amendments to the OMMP based on actual operations.

A key feature of the OMMP will be the "passport" system (Arawhenua passport system) which is described in more detail in Section 3.13 below. The Arawhenua passport system will assist with monitoring, educating Ara users, and communication of information such as updates on hazards and track closures.

[19] Unless otherwise specified, the use of "mana whenua" in this AEE refers to the owners of multiply-owned whenua Maori land blocks (represented by their governance entity). The use of "tangata whenua" refers to the definition in section 2 of the RMA and associated definitions.

2 Environmental setting

2.1 Overview

The following section provides an overview of the environmental setting of Te Tairawhiti in which the proposed Ara is located. Section 4 provides detailed descriptions of the specific environmental setting and values within the eight segments of the Ara (shown in Figure 2.1).

2.2 General site location

The proposed Ara is located within Te Tairawhiti on the East Coast of the North Island. It extends from Makorori near Gisborne, generally following the coastal environment around East Coast to Potaka (near the boundary of the Gisborne District). In addition, the Hikurangi Loop track extends inland to the west of Ruatoria and the Port Awanui Track is located to the east of Waiapu River.

The general Ara concept alignment, showing the eight segments, are shown in Figure 2.1.[20]

[20] This resource consent is for Phase 1, Stage 1 only. Sections 1 to 8 in Figure 2.1 are referred to as 'segments' throughout this AEE as outlined in Table 1.2.

Figure 2.1: Segments of Te Ara Tipuna (Source: Te Ara Tipuna, 2025).

The Ara will establish a continuous, interconnected network of pedestrian pathways across various types of land parcels, including local road and SH35 corridors, whenua Maori, general landholdings, public reserves and coastal shorelines. It will traverse numerous environments including clifftops, beaches, farms, forests and roadsides, and will connect several communities and settlements along the East Coast, including Tolaga Bay, Tokomaru Bay, Te Puia, Ruatoria, Tikitiki, Te Araroa and Hicks Bay. Existing trails, including the Anaura Bay Track, Cooks Cove and the Earnest Reeve Walkway, have also been incorporated into the proposed route.

2.3 Coastal environment

The general coastal environment along the Ara concept alignment is dynamic and diverse, consisting of high cliffs formed by weak sedimentary rocks, sandy and gravel beaches, dunes, river and stream entrances, farmland and forested areas. Active coastal processes such as erosion, shoreline retreat, flooding and inundation are present along much of the coastline, with low-lying

areas such as Tolaga Bay and Tokomaru Bay particularly vulnerable to periodic inundation during coastal storm events.

While small settlements exist at many of the beaches, most of the coastline is backed by coastal reserve, roads or rural land. Significant townships exist at Tolaga Bay, Tokomaru Bay, Te Araroa and Hicks Bay. The Coastal Hazard Assessment (Appendix L) provides a detailed description of the coastal environment and processes within Te Tairawhiti.

2.4 Ecology

2.4.1 Overview

The proposed Ara is located within the Waiapu, Pukeamaru and Motu ecological districts (EDs), each encompassing a diverse range of ecological features. The southern section of the Ara and parts of the Hikurangi Loop are within the Waiapu ED, which consists of coastal lowlands and hills, most of which is farmed, with increasing areas of exotic forest on severely eroded farmed slopes. The northern part of the Ara is within the Pukeamaru ED, which has diverse topography, mainly hills with some steep and wide flat bottomed river values and narrow coastal terraces. Vegetation consists of pasture, scrub and indigenous forest including tawa, mangeao, tawari and kamahi. Pohutukawa and puriri are present in coastal areas and kahikatea dominant forest on alluvial terraces. The western part of the Hikurangi Loop is within the Motu ED, which is characterised by steep, rugged areas with some peaks above the treeline. There are a range of forest types, including coastal pohutukawa and puriri, and low altitude conifer-tawa-hard beech forest rich in tanekaha, podocarp-red beech to silver beech forest.

Across the region, ecological values have been impacted by historical vegetation clearance, land use practices such as forestry, introduced plant and animal pest species, and high rainfall events that have increased erosion and affected both freshwater and marine habitats.

The overall ecology along the proposed Ara concept alignment is discussed in the following sections. The specific areas with high ecological values identified in the TRMP (PMAs, TASCVs and MASCVs) and the ecological values relating to species, communities and systems within each segment of the Ara are discussed in detail in Section 4 and in the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) (Appendix H).

2.4.2 Terrestrial vegetation

The Ara traverses a mix of land covers and types of terrestrial vegetation, including grazed pasture, native forest remnants, scrub and regenerating vegetation, sand dune vegetation and plantation forest. Native forest types vary by location and include coastal pohutukawa and puriri, kahikatea forest on low-lying alluvial areas, and low-altitude conifer-tawa-hard beech and podocarp-hardwood forest. Regenerating areas are often dominated by native scrub species such as manuka and kanuka. Table 2.1 summarises the types and values of the vegetation traversed by the proposed Ara, as well as the proportion of the alignment that traverses each type of vegetation.

Table 2.1: Vegetation types traversed by the proposed Ara

Vegetation or habitat type	% of Ara	Botanical value in accordance with EIANZ guidelines
Grassland, pasture and crops	62 %	Low
Indigenous forest / broadleaved indigenous forest	10 %	Moderate - High
Kanuka / manuka dominated forest	14 %	Moderate
Exotic forest	4 %	Low
Scrubland / shrubland	1 %	Low - moderate
Other habitat types (e.g. sand, gravel, rock, built up areas)	9 %	Low

Eight rare plant species are known to be present in areas near the Ara. This includes species classified as 'Threatened – Nationally Critical' (swamp musk, kakabeak, raukumara, native hibiscus and Cranwell's iris), 'Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable' (dactylanthus) and 'At Risk – Declining' (pingao and marsh fern). A further sixteen rare plant species are found across Te Tairawhiti (identified in Schedule G7B of the TRMP) and may also be present.

2.4.3 Terrestrial fauna

Seven threatened gecko and skink species classified as 'At Risk – Declining' (barking gecko, ngahere gecko, forest gecko, copper skink, ornate skink, striped skink and shore skink) may be present along the Ara where suitable lizard habitats are traversed. These habitats include forested areas, wetland vegetation, dense low-lying vegetation and ground cover, rank grass and weedy areas, in rock piles and under rocks, logs and other vegetation, and in coastal areas. As outlined in Table 2.1, the majority of the Ara traverses grassland and pasture areas which are of negligible or low ecological value for lizard habitats.

There also is the potential for long-tailed and short-tailed bats to be present in suitable trees.

One threatened bird species (long-tailed cuckoo), along with a number of 'At Risk' bird species have potential to be present in terrestrial habitats and environments[21] along the Ara.

2.4.4 Freshwater ecology

Wetlands, rivers, and stream catchments in Te Tairawhiti provide habitats for a number of native species and therefore such species may be present along the proposed Ara concept alignment. Several of these waterbodies are identified as scheduled waterbodies in the TRMP due to their significant ecological, cultural, and recreational values.

These species include six threatened bird species (Australasian bittern, whio and New Zealand dabchick), along with a number of 'At Risk' bird species. Freshwater environments may also provide habitats for lizard species (discussed in Section 2.4.3) and Hochstetter's frog, particularly in the northern and western areas of the project area, noting they are less likely to be present to the south of East Coast. Native 'Threatened' or 'At Risk' fish and amphibian fauna found within the freshwater catchments that the Ara passes through includes lamprey, long-finned eel, inanga, short jawed kokopu, giant kokopu, koaro, torrentfish, bluegill bully and giant bully.

[21] Considered to be 'wide range', 'open' and 'forest' habitats identified in Table 5 of the EcIA.

Specific mapped wetlands,[22] rivers and streams that are found within each segment of the Ara are identified in Section 4.

2.4.5 Coastal ecology

Coastal habitats along the Ara include sand dunes, beaches, foreshore areas, estuaries and coastal wetlands. These habitats may support a number of 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' species, including lizard species (discussed in Section 2.4.3), coastal birds (little blue penguin[23], variable oystercatcher, New Zealand dotterel, banded dotterel, white-fronted tern, Caspian tern, pied shag, little shag, black shag, red-billed gull, reef heron, royal spoonbill, banded rail) and the katipo spider.

2.5 Landscapes, natural features and visual amenity

Landscapes across the Ara concept alignment are characterised by coastal environments, inland ranges, ridgelines, open valleys and rivers. The Ara traverses areas of natural character, particularly along the East Coast coastline where geological, topographical and ecological components contribute to the landscape values. The Ara crosses or follows several rivers, streams, beaches and natural dune systems and provides access to a variety of landforms along the coast, including elevated viewpoints and largely unmodified terrain comprising beach, bush and pastureland.

Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes (ONFL),[24] as identified in the TRMP, within each segment of the Ara are detailed in Section 4.

2.6 Cultural values

The Ngati Porou rohe encompasses a cultural landscape where ancestral connections to the environment form the foundation of identity and values. Ngati Porou values emphasise the mauri of the land, rivers, forests, and sea, with a strong commitment to protecting these taonga for future generations. Coastal areas and rivers and streams are valued mahinga kai sites, and the Ara passes a number of Ngati Porou's marae and historic kainga (settlements).

Ngati Porou statutory acknowledgement areas apply at the Waiapu River and the Uawa River (and their tributaries upstream of the coastal marine area). The Waiapu River is recognised for its spiritual, cultural and traditional significance to Ngati Porou and the Uawa River is recognised for its spiritual, cultural, traditional, and economic significance in particular to Te Aitanga a Hauiti. While not a statutory acknowledgement area, Hikurangi maunga also holds profound ancestral and spiritual significance for Ngati Porou, serving as a central cultural landmark and a source of many origin narratives.

Regarding waahi tapu sites identified in the TRMP, we note that most of the recorded sites are not crossed by the Ara, with the notable exception being WY5 at Makorori headland. Waahi tapu area WY12 at Kaiaua Bay (km 62) is also located within the consent corridor, but the ara is expected to be within the road reserve at this point of the alignment and therefore no

[22] Regionally significant wetlands are identified on the TRMP maps. In addition, the GDC Provisional Regional Wetland Assessment 2022 (Morphum Layer) has been used to map 'other' wetlands. It is noted that this is a provisional assessment, and not all of the sites will be wetlands for the purpose of the NES-F.

[23] Anecdotal feedback from the Trust is that little blue penguin have not been observed along this part of Te Tairawhiti coast.

[24] The TRMP maps include "Outstanding Landscapes" under the Coastal Management layers and "Outstanding Landscapes (Land) under the Natural Resources layers. Schedule G7C is titled "Outstanding Natural Landscapes in the Coastal Environment", and for each Landscape Unit listed in Schedule G7C, "Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes" are identified. This AEE refers to the above as ONFL throughout for ease of reference.

disturbance is anticipated. Additionally, the Ara will pass urupa, noting that the concept alignment has been designed to avoid such features in these areas.

The Trust recognises that cultural and spiritual values extend beyond formally recorded or legislated sites. This understanding has helped shape the alignment of the Ara, which aims to avoid sensitive areas where possible and will continue to shape engagement and detailed design.

2.7 Historic heritage and archaeology

The project area has a rich cultural, historic heritage and archaeological landscape. Archaeological sites, particularly those related to Maori activity, such as storage pits, midden and pa, are found throughout the length of the Ara. Post-European archaeological and historic heritage sites are also found in lower numbers, predominantly concentrated within and near coastal settlements.

The Historic Heritage Assessment (Appendix J) identifies 68 archaeological and heritage sites within the consent corridor of the Ara concept alignment. The recorded archaeological and heritage sites of significance for each segment of the Ara are detailed further in Section 4.

Community Heritage Reserves at Makorori Point, Pouawa and Waihau Beach are also crossed by the Ara or are in proximity to it.

2.8 Natural hazards

2.8.1 Coastal hazards

The coastal environment along the Ara concept alignment is vulnerable to a number of coastal hazards, including coastal erosion, inundation from storm surges and sea-level rise. The extensive and dynamic coastline and its exposure to strong ocean swells and extreme weather systems makes low-lying coastal communities particularly vulnerable to these hazards.

Areas such as Tolaga Bay and Te Araroa experience increasing pressure from shoreline retreat and erosion, which threaten homes, infrastructure, and culturally significant sites. Climate change is projected to exacerbate these hazards, with rising sea levels increasing the frequency and severity of coastal flooding.

Specific coastal hazards that exist within each relevant segment of the Ara are discussed in detail in Section 4.

2.8.2 Flooding

Numerous areas across Te Tairawhiti are vulnerable to heavy rainfall and flooding. During extreme weather events such as heavy rain and storms, rainfall is channelled into rivers which leads to inundation of the surrounding areas. Severe flooding events in Te Tairawhiti include Cyclone Gabrielle in 2023 and the East Coast floods in 2024, which caused significant damage to roads, land and property. Section 4 discusses specific mapped flood-prone areas that exist along the Ara.

2.9 Geology and geotechnical hazards

The geology of Te Tairawhiti is characterised by rapid changes in soil and rock type, many faults and major thrust sheets in parts of the region. Table 2.2 describes the four major units that categorise the geology of the region which are relevant to the proposed Ara concept alignment.

Table 2.2: Major geological units within Te Tairawhiti relevant to the Project

Unit	Characteristics	Location
In-place Cretaceous to Oligocene Rocks (Unit 2)	Moderately indurated sedimentary rocks; alternating fine-grained sandstone and mudstone; glauconitic and calcareous mudstone and sandstone.	Central and northern sections of the region (Segment 1, 3, 4 and 5)
East Coast Allochthons (Unit 3)	Early Cretaceous to Eocene igneous rocks, early and late Cretaceous sedimentary rocks, late Cretaceous to Paleocene sedimentary rocks; Eocene and Oligocene sedimentary rocks.	North and northeastern sections of the region (Segment 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8)
Miocene and Pliocene Rocks (Unit 4)	Massive to thinly bedded mudstones which are slightly calcareous; up to 2000 m of shelly sandstone, sandstone and mudstone.	Eastern coastline (Segment 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8)
Quaternary Sediments (Unit 5)	Alluvial plains; swamps; onshore coastal plain; landslide deposits; soft peats and mud; unconsolidated sands and gravels	Throughout the region near the coast and river plains (Segment 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8)

Te Tairawhiti is affected by many geotechnical hazards due to its tectonic setting and exposure to coastal weather systems. The complex geology of the East Coast, featuring weak rock formations and steep terrain, results in unstable landforms vulnerable to landslides and coastal erosion.

Along the proposed Ara concept alignment, potential geotechnical issues include landslips caused by earthquakes or heavy rainfall, liquefaction and lateral spreading during seismic events, active fault lines, and coastal regression and erosion.

Section 4 discusses the key areas where specific geotechnical hazards exist and areas subject to site stability cautions in the TRMP within each segment of the Ara.

2.10 Roading network

SH35 runs from Gisborne to Opotiki around the East Coast and East Cape through a number of towns including Tolaga Bay, Tokomaru Bay, Te Puia Springs, Ruatoria, Tikitiki, Te Araroa and Hicks Bay. SH35 is a high speed environment, with a posted speed limit of 100 km/h along the majority of the highway where the Ara runs adjacent. Traffic volumes are relatively low along the highway, with traffic volumes decreasing as the Ara follows the SH35 north. Some sections of SH35 are narrow with little or no shoulder, and there are several existing SH35 bridges along the alignment. The SH35 network and infrastructure is operated and maintained by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA).

There is also a network of local roads within and between these towns that connect rural and coastal communities, serving local residents and farm and forestry activities. These roads have lower speed limits and traffic volumes compared to SH35 and are narrow and winding in some locations, with a mix of sealed and unsealed surfaces.

Some sections of SH35 and local roads are in poor condition and have sustained damage during extreme weather events. Ongoing maintenance and significant recovery work is being undertaken across the region to improve the condition of these areas of the roading network. As a result those using SH35 commonly experience travel disruption from road works and construction that has been in place for a number of years.

2.11 Land uses

The proposed Ara concept alignment traverses and is surrounded by predominantly rural areas with sheep and beef farming, grassland, pasture, crops and exotic pine forest, with areas of

indigenous forest remnants being rare. The Ara runs intentionally through sparsely inhabited land and along coastlines, punctuated by small townships and communities, small residential properties, and marae. It also traverses public reserves, whenua Maori and general title land-blocks which are typically large landholdings. These landholdings were previously primarily used for agriculture but are now actively diversifying.

Table 2.3 below summarises the type of land that the Ara traverses.

Table 2.3: Land use types traversed by the proposed Ara

Land status	Description
Whenua Maori	Includes multiply owned whenua Maori, Maori Freehold Land, Maori Reservations, Maori Customary Land.
General Title	Land held under general ownership by individuals, companies, trusts etc.
Crown Land	Includes land administered by the Department of Conservation etc.
Public Reserves	Includes local authority-managed land such as esplanade and recreation reserves.
Road Corridor	Includes State Highway and local road reserves.

2.12 Zoning and planning notations

The TRMP zoning and planning notations that apply to the consent corridor of the Ara concept alignment are identified in Table 2.4Table 2.4: below, with the green shading indicating where the zoning/planning notation applies to part of each Ara segment.

The key planning notations identified with an asterisk (*) are discussed in further detail in Section 4 as they relate to each segment of the Ara. The planning notations identified with a hash (#) do not result in any reasons for consent associated with the works proposed as part of the Ara.

Table 2.4: TRMP zoning and planning notations

Zoning/planning limitation	Comment and applicability to segment(s)							
	Segment 1: Titirangi (km 1 – km 50)	Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru (km 51 to km 94.7)	Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria (km 94 to km 149)	Segment 4: Kopuaroa (km 1 to km 10.6)	Segment 5: Hikurangi (km 1 to km 53)	Segment 6: Port Awanui (km 1 to km 39.2 Port Awanui Loop)	Segment 7: Waiapu (km 150 to km 206)	Segment 8: Matakaoa (km 207 to km 239)
Coastal Management								
Coastal Marine Area (CMA) Boundary*	Identifies the boundary between the CMA and land at mean high water springs (MHWS). Regional coastal plan rules apply to the sections of the Ara that extend into the CMA.							
	■	■	■			■	■	■
Coastal Environment Overlay (Land)	Identifies areas within the coastal environment landward of MHWS. Broadly applies to the sections of the Ara that follow the coastline.							
	■	■	■			■	■	■
General Management Area (GMA)	Applies to the majority of the Ara within the coastal environment. Allows for appropriate development while managing effects on natural character, public access, and amenity.							
	■	■	■			■	■	■
Significant Values Management Area (SVMA)*	Applies to several locations along the Ara (as detailed in Section 4). SVMAs relate to more sensitive areas within the coastal environment where outstanding natural character, ecological, or cultural values require stronger protection.							
	■	■	■			■	■	■
Marine Areas of Significant Conservation Value (MASCV)*#	Specific marine zones, generally located below MHWS, identified for their ecological importance, such as habitats for rare species, spawning grounds, or unique marine ecosystems.							
	■	■					■	■
Terrestrial Areas of Significant Conservation (TASCV)*#	Land-based areas with high biodiversity or ecological value, including native bush, wetlands, or habitats for threatened species.							
	■	■	■			■	■	■

Zoning/planning limitation	Comment and applicability to segment(s)							
	Segment 1: Titirangi (km 1 – km 50)	Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru (km 51 to km 94.7)	Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria (km 94 to km 149)	Segment 4: Kopuaroa (km 1 to km 10.6)	Segment 5: Hikurangi (km 1 to km 53)	Segment 6: Port Awanui (km 1 to km 39.2 Port Awanui Loop)	Segment 7: Waiapu (km 150 to km 206)	Segment 8: Matakaoa (km 207 to km 239)
Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes (ONFL)[25]*	Areas in the coastal environment identified for exceptional natural values, cultural significance or geological features. Development is restricted to preserve character.							
	■	■	■				■	■
Environmental Risks[26]								
Stability Alert – Site Caution#	Identifies areas with potential land instability. Applies at Wainui (km 1) and Makorori (km 4 – 6) and at Te Puia Springs (km 1 – 2 Te Puia route). The TRMP sets out controls for the subdivision of land within the Site Caution overlay and therefore there are no consent requirements for the proposal in relation to this overlay.							
	■		■					
Coastal Hazard Overlays*	Identifies areas at risk from coastal hazards such as erosion, inundation, and sea level rise. There are four Coastal Hazard Overlays – Safety Buffer, Moderate Risk Area, High Risk Area and Extreme Risk Area – which have an increasing degree of risk associated with each.							
	■	■	■					
Flood Hazard Overlays*	Identifies areas susceptible to flooding during heavy rainfall or river overflow events.							
	■	■						
Areas Sensitive to Coastal Hazards (ASCH)*#	ASCH are areas assessed as being potentially subject to coastal hazard. A number of coastal sections of the Ara are subject to this overlay.							
	■	■	■			■	■	■
Freshwater								
Significant Recreation Areas (Schedule G19)#	Specific waterways and areas of the coast which have been identified as significant for recreational activities. The Ara traverses or is in proximity to a number of Significant Recreation Areas in each segment along the proposed alignment.							

[25] "Outstanding Landscapes" under the Coastal Management overlays in TRMP maps.

[26] The consent corridor on the GIS map is within the Makorori Hazard Overlay at km 4. In this location, it is proposed to utilise the flexibility of the Standard Consent Corridor to locate the Ara within, but not beyond, the Reserve Zone during detailed design. No parts of the Ara will be located within the Makorori Hazard Overlay.

Zoning/planning limitation	Comment and applicability to segment(s)							
	Segment 1: Titirangi (km 1 – km 50)	Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru (km 51 to km 94.7)	Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria (km 94 to km 149)	Segment 4: Kopuaroa (km 1 to km 10.6)	Segment 5: Hikurangi (km 1 to km 53)	Segment 6: Port Awanui (km 1 to km 39.2 Port Awanui Loop)	Segment 7: Waiapu (km 150 to km 206)	Segment 8: Matakaoa (km 207 to km 239)
	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Protected Watercourses (Schedule G21)*	Specific rivers and streams identified for protection primarily in relation to commercial forestry activities.							
			■	■	■		■	
Scheduled Rivers and Streams (Schedules G15, G18 & G20)*	Specific rivers and streams identified for their ecological, cultural, or recreational significance and values.							
	■	■	■	■	■		■	■
Scheduled Water Bodies (Schedules G15, G17, G18 & G20)*	Specific waterbodies identified for their ecological, cultural, recreational, or natural character values.							
	■		■					■
Land Management								
Land Overlays 1 – 3A	Encompasses the entire district and identifies areas based on susceptibility to erosion. Land Overlay 1 comprises Unit Classes I -V and VIe1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8 inclusive, encompassing flat and easy hill country. Land Overlay 2 comprises the balance of LUC Classification Units in Class VI, encompassing hill country land with moderately limited capability for sustainable use. Land Overlay 3 comprises land in LUC Classification Unit Classes VII and VIII and is the most susceptible to erosion, sediment generation and soil loss. Land Overlay 3A is a subset of Land Overlay 3 and identifies the worst eroding land. The Ara is subject to each overlay at various locations.							
	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Natural Resources								
Urban Ridgelines[#]	Ridgelines within or near urban areas identified for landscape, visual, and amenity values. There is an Urban Ridgeline at Wainui (km 1).							
	■							
Protection Management Areas (PMA)*	PMAs are areas where specific environmental, cultural, or landscape values are protected through rules and development controls.							
	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
	Areas identified for exceptional natural values, cultural significance or geological features. Development is restricted to preserve character.							

Zoning/planning limitation	Comment and applicability to segment(s)							
	Segment 1: Titirangi (km 1 – km 50)	Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru (km 51 to km 94.7)	Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria (km 94 to km 149)	Segment 4: Kopuaroa (km 1 to km 10.6)	Segment 5: Hikurangi (km 1 to km 53)	Segment 6: Port Awanui (km 1 to km 39.2 Port Awanui Loop)	Segment 7: Waiapu (km 150 to km 206)	Segment 8: Matakaoa (km 207 to km 239)
Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes (ONFL) (Land)[27]*								
Historic and Cultural Heritage								
Heritage Alert Overlay#	Provides an indication of where human settlement may have occurred across the district and aids early recognition of archaeological sites. The majority of the Ara is subject to this overlay.							
Archaeological & Waahi Tapu Sites and Archaeological Buffers (m)*	Locations identified as having cultural or archaeological significance. Buffer areas ensure that the site is protected during earthworks and development.							
Post European Contact Schedule - Historic Sites*	Locations identified as having European-era historical significance.							
Waahi Tapu Areas*	Places or landscapes of sacred and spiritual significance to Maori.							
Built Environment								
Road Hierarchy#	The Ara follows roads that are identified as Arterial, Collector, Local and Other under the Road Hierarchy at various locations where the alignment is within the road corridor.							
Electricity Networks#	The Ara crosses beneath the Eastland Network 50kV transmission line at Tokomaru Bay (km 89 and km 92), Kopuaroa (km 2) and Ruatoria (km 151 and km 154).							

[27] "Outstanding Landscapes (Land)" under the Natural Resources overlays in TRMP maps.

Zoning/planning limitation	Comment and applicability to segment(s)							
	Segment 1: Titirangi (km 1 – km 50)	Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru (km 51 to km 94.7)	Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria (km 94 to km 149)	Segment 4: Kopuaroa (km 1 to km 10.6)	Segment 5: Hikurangi (km 1 to km 53)	Segment 6: Port Awanui (km 1 to km 39.2 Port Awanui Loop)	Segment 7: Waiapu (km 150 to km 206)	Segment 8: Matakaoa (km 207 to km 239)
District Zones[28]								
Rural General	Covers broad rural areas used for farming, forestry, and conservation. Applies to the majority of the Ara.							
Heritage Reserve	Preserves sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance. Applies to the Ara at Okitu (km 1) and Pouawa (km 13 and 14).							
Rural Residential#	Provides for rural living with limited development. Applies to the Ara at Okitu (km 1) and Makorori (km 4 to 6).							
Neighbourhood Reserve#	Open spaces within residential areas used for local recreation. Maintains amenity and access. Applies to the Ara at Makorori (km 4).							
Amenity Reserve#	Public open spaces designed to enhance urban amenity. Applies to the Ara at Makorori (km 4) and Tolaga Bay (km 52).							
Road#	Land for transport infrastructure, including roads, footpaths and associated utilities. Applies to Ara where located within the road corridor.							

[28] The consent corridor on the GIS map is within the General Residential Zone, Rural Commercial Zone and Industrial Zone in limited locations along the Ara concept alignment. In these locations, the intention is to utilise the flexibility of the Standard Consent Corridor to locate the Ara within the Road Corridor during detailed design. No parts of the Ara will be located within the General Residential Zone, Rural Commercial Zone or Industrial Zone.

3 Description of proposed activity

3.1 Overview

The Project relates to the construction, operation, use and maintenance of a pedestrian ara extending from Makorori near Gisborne, generally following the coastal environment around the East Coast to Potaka, and additional loop tracks. The Ara will be approximately 345 km[29] in total length, including the Port Awanui Loop and Hikurangi Loop tracks.

The following activities and works are proposed for the construction and operation of the Ara:

- Establishment of different trail types.
- Waterbody crossings, including new single-span bridges.
- Construction/establishment of self-contained toilets.
- Earthworks and land disturbance.
- Vegetation clearance.
- Stormwater management (including culverts).
- Works in the road corridor.
- Concrete work.
- Laydown areas.
- Signage.
- Landscaping.
- Operation and maintenance.

The draft Construction Management Plan (CMP) (Appendix F) outlines the proposed design of the various trail types, works and components making up the Ara and management methods that relate to its construction, including a detailed description of the civil construction works components. The draft Operational and Maintenance Management Plan (OMMP) (Appendix G) sets out the mechanisms for the ongoing administration of the Ara and essential operational management requirements, including maintenance, management of trail users, monitoring of effects of use and a complaints procedure.

The following sections provide an overview of the proposed activities and works as they relate to the Ara overall, and specific details for each segment of the Ara are provided in Table 3.2 and Section 4.

3.2 Trail types

As set out in the CMP and the Tracker, the Ara will consist of the following typical trail types:

- Wayfinding[30] across grassed areas.
- Wayfinding along existing formed trails within reserves and private property.
- Wayfinding pathways through vegetation.
- Low impact bush tracks.
- Trails through plantation forestry.
- Trails along or adjacent to SH35 or local roads, including pedestrian crossings.

[29] 345 km is used throughout this AEE and in technical assessments to refer to the approximate physical length of the Ara that is proposed in this resource consent application. This should be interpreted as an indicative length (with approximately 5 % margin of variance) as the exact length of the Ara will be determined following detailed design as adjustments to the alignment within the consent corridor will be made. It is acknowledged that there are 358 km accounted for in the Tracker – this is due to the Tracker accounting for total walking distance (i.e., return sections of the Ara).

[30] Wayfinding is considered to be where the Ara follows an unformed or existing formed ara through natural terrain that requires limited construction (generally limited to the installation of intermittent trail markers).

- Sand dune crossings and wayfinding along beaches.
- Gravel trails.
- Formed boxed steps.
- Boardwalks.

The Ara concept alignment has been designed to align with the existing natural environment to minimise the extent of earthworks, land disturbance and vegetation clearance required for Ara construction (i.e., by using wayfinding and following existing tracks and roads where possible).

It is estimated that approximately 75 % of the alignment (260 km) will require no physical works (i.e., wayfinding only, with wayfinding markers).[31] Across the remaining 25 % (85 km) of the alignment, earthworks and land disturbance will be required for trail construction across steep terrain, sections of gravel, steps, low bench cuts, sections leading up to road and waterbody crossings, reinforcement in the road corridor, and other trail-related construction activities. Vegetation clearance (and subsequent land disturbance) will occur during the construction of low impact bush tracks and trails through plantation forestry. Boardwalks may be used where this would enable an adverse effect to be avoided or minimised (e.g., to avoid an area of cultural significance).

The CMP (Appendix F) includes descriptions and concept drawings of the indicative cross sections of typical trail types that can be expected. These will be updated during detailed design of the Ara.

3.3 Waterbody crossings

Six types of waterbody crossings are proposed (Table 3.1).[32] The crossing type proposed at each waterbody is based on the terrain, waterbody width, location and proximity to the local (GDC) or NZTA road corridor of the crossing site and specifically taking into account safety considerations such as vehicle volumes, crossing length, pedestrian visibility and crossing geometry.

Table 3.1: Waterbody crossings

Crossing type	Description	Total
Crossing Option 1 – Use of Existing Bridge or Culvert with Warning Signage	Ara users will utilise the existing crossing, with proposed warning signage to inform motorists of shared use of the bridge with pedestrians. This option has been selected where the risk is low due to the short length and high intervisibility of the crossing, and where simple signage is sufficient to alert both drivers and Ara users.	63
Crossing Option 2 – Use of Existing Bridge or Culvert with Push Button	Ara users will utilise the existing crossing, which will be installed with a push button system that pedestrians will activate before they enter the bridge and which will signal to motorists that a pedestrian is crossing the bridge. Signal will advise motorists to give way to pedestrians. This option has been used where increased crossing length or reduced visibility necessitates an enhanced alerting system to notify drivers when pedestrians are present.	25

[31] This is a conservative estimate as the Tracker uses upper limit values for earthworks, land disturbance and vegetation clearance. Further, the identification of the final Ara alignment during detailed design within the Standard Consent Corridor (or Sensitive Area Consent Corridor) will intended to further minimise the amount of required earthworks, land disturbance and vegetation clearance required. It is therefore anticipated that the proportion of the Ara that will be wayfinding only will be higher following detailed design.

[32] The Trust and the traffic expert are currently engaging with NZTA on these crossing options and the wider interaction of the Ara with the road networks operated by NZTA.

Crossing type	Description	Total
Crossing Option 3 – Use of Existing Bridge with Traffic Light	Ara users will utilise the existing crossing, which will be installed with a traffic light system which will signal to motorists that a pedestrian is crossing the bridge. The traffic light will transition to red to stop vehicle traffic to allow the pedestrian to cross the bridge. This option has been used where high exposure risk due to bridge length and visibility constraints requires active systems to improve safety without the need for physical separation.	3
Crossing Option 4 – Swing Bridge	Ara users will utilise a new proposed swing bridge. This option has been selected where waterbody crossings are inaccessible by foot and no safe option can be provided utilising existing infrastructure (i.e., a bridge or culvert).	8
Crossing Option 5 – Timber Bridge	Ara users will utilise a new proposed timber bridge crossing. This option has been selected where waterbody crossings are inaccessible by foot and no safe option can be provided utilising existing infrastructure, and where the area and width of the river is accessible for construction of a timber bridge.	7
No structure – cross waterbody on foot	Waterbody crossings that are accessible by foot and do not require any physical structures.	103[33]
Alternative Crossing Proposed Consent Condition	Provide for waterbody crossings at the Waiapu River (km 151) and Mangaoporo River (km 158) which are wide and would therefore require substantial new bridge structures and the existing bridge structures are not able to safely accommodate Crossing Options 1 – 3. An alternative safe crossing option will be provided, such as a shuttle service that can be booked.	2
		211[34]

As demonstrated in Table 3.1, natural stream crossings on foot and existing infrastructure will be utilised where suitable to minimise construction near streambeds, rivers and coastal environments. Wayfinding marker posts will be installed on each side of the waterbody to avoid multiple crossing points.

Where crossing on foot or utilising existing infrastructure is not possible or safe, low impact timber foot bridges or swing bridges will be constructed. Timber foot bridges will be used where the span is up to 20 m. These will be 1.5 m wide and constructed using timber and stainless steel.

Swing bridge decks will be 1.5 m in width and will be set at a height that will not be overtopped by the 2 % annual exceedance probability (50 year) flood event, with a minimum clearance height of 0.5 m. They will have a safety railing 1.2 or 1.4 m in height and will consist of fusion-bonded PVC-coated galvanised chain link side mesh. Deadman anchors will be made from either H5 tanalised timber or concrete. The approximate dimensions of each swing bridge are outlined in Section 4 and the CMP (Appendix F) provides further information about the design components of the single-span bridges.

No permanent works will occur within intermittent and permanently flowing streams. Some works may be required within riparian zones to establish the single-span bridge approaches, including installation of piles on the upper embankment, minor earthworks, land disturbance and

[33] The exact number of waterbody crossings on foot is subject to change during detailed design if additional unmapped waterbodies are identified.

[34] In the Waterbody Crossing spreadsheet, there are 213 waterbody crossings documented. Two crossings (Crossing No. 23 and 46) have been removed from the proposal following adjustments to the alignment of the Trail, however, they remain in the spreadsheet to ensure that the numbering of the 211 waterbody crossings included in the Proposal match those marked on the GIS map.

vegetation removal. The proposed single-span bridges will be designed to avoid vegetation clearance and earthworks within 10 m of a natural inland wetland.

At two waterbody crossing locations – Waiapu River (km 151) and Mangaoporo River (km 158) – an 'Alternative Crossing Proposed Consent Condition' is proposed. This is due to crossing options 1 – 3 not being able to provide for safe pedestrian crossing and the width of the riverbed means substantial new bridges would be required to provide a separated path. At these sites, an alternative crossing option will be provided, such as a shuttle service that can be booked.

The construction methodology for timber bridges and swing bridges will adhere to best practice guidelines for operating within these areas, and details will be provided in the CMP submitted for certification for each segment. As outlined in the CMP, this will include implementation of appropriate erosion and sediment control measures prior to construction being undertaken, and regular monitoring to ensure measures remain effective, particularly following heavy rainfall events. Upon completion of construction, all disturbed sites will be rehabilitated to prevent ongoing erosion and sediment generation.

The specific waterbody crossings proposed within each segment of the Ara are summarised in Table 3.2, and further detail on the specific locations and characteristics of each crossing is provided in Section 4 and the Waterbody Crossing spreadsheet (Appendix E). Indicative concepts for crossing options are included within the CMP (Appendix F).

3.4 Toilets

Existing public toilets will be utilised where available along the Ara, the location of which are identified in the Tracker (Appendix D). In addition, where there are no existing toilet facilities, new toilets are proposed.

The proposed toilet locations for this application are indicative only, selected based on logical spacing between existing facilities. Final locations will be confirmed in agreement with landowners through the easement process[35].

The proposed toilets are planned to be fully self-contained and compostable. They will also be raised off the ground, out of any wet conditions following rain events. Hand sanitiser will be the washing facility provided with no potable water proposed. There will be no new liquid or solid discharges to the surrounding environment from the toilets.

A service and maintenance agreement will be implemented to ensure these facilities are maintained at regular intervals. This is provided for in the OMMP (Appendix G).

Example imagery for the toilets is included within the CMP (Appendix F). Final designs, which shall be developed based on the concept designs, will be included in the final CMP for certification.

3.5 Earthworks and land disturbance

Earthworks and land disturbance may be required across the 25 % (approximately 85 km) of the Ara where physical works are required for the construction of a trail (described in Section 3.2) or new structures (described in Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

Removal of topsoil and some subgrade, if required, will be completed prior to backfilling and compacting with the selected clean engineered fill material. Topsoil and excavated material will be utilised on site for landscaping, or recontoured and re-grassed where possible. Low bench cuts less than 1.5 m in height will be the preferred construction methodology. Larger cuts (greater

[35] In the event that final locations are not generally in accordance with the information submitted in this application, a change of conditions under section 127 or a separate resource consent will be sought, as required.

than 1.5 m in height) and retaining structures will be avoided wherever possible by following natural contours of the land.

Erosion, sediment and dust control measures will be established in accordance with site / stage specific Erosion and Sediment Control Plan(s) (ESCP), which will be prepared in accordance with the Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines for Land Disturbing Activities in the Auckland Region – June 2016 (GD05). Erosion and sediment control measures, to be detailed in the ESCP, will include:

- Silt fences, contour drains/drainage channels, diversion bunds and grass clearways for stormwater filtration.
- Riprap protection.
- Keeping excavated material stockpiled on site away from overland flow paths, water courses and the road corridor (unless otherwise authorised by the Road Controlling Authority).
- Topsoiling and re-grassing will be completed in stages after completion of earthworks, in accordance with timeframes detailed in the ESCP to minimise the potential for sediment discharge and dust emission.

Dust control measures, to be detailed in the ESCP, will include matters such as such as covering loads, compacting stockpiles, use of bunds to protect exposed areas from high winds, use of water carts and regressing/revegetation as soon as possible.

Excavated materials that are required to be removed from the site will be transported to an appropriate facility for disposal. In the event that a Hazardous Activities and Industries List (HAIL) site is identified during detailed design, works will be managed in accordance with the relevant permitted activity conditions set out in the Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulations 2011 (NES Soil) where possible. If compliance with the conditions is not achievable, a separate resource consent under the NES Soil will be sought.

No earthworks and land disturbance within 10 m of natural inland wetlands are proposed. In the event that works within 10 m of a natural inland wetland are identified during detailed design, a separate resource consent will be sought.

3.6 Vegetation clearance

Vegetation clearance will be avoided where possible by designing the Ara concept alignment to weave through existing vegetation, as enabled by the Standard Consent Corridor and Sensitive Area Consent Corridor approach. Where vegetation clearance is required to construct a trail or new structure, the following methods[36] and parameters will apply as set out in the Ecological and Survey Management Plan Protocol (ESMPP) (Appendix H):

- The width of vegetation clearance will not exceed 1.5 m, except for at single-span bridge approaches, bridge installation, sections of gravel, steps, low bench cuts and toilets, as required.
- In ecologically sensitive areas[37], the width of any clearance will be limited to 1 m, with the exception of areas outlined in the CMP where this is not possible which includes single-

[36] These restrictions have been developed to manage the ecological effects of the Project.

[37] Ecologically sensitive areas are:
- The following TRMP mapped areas: Protection Management Areas, Terrestrial Areas of Significant Conservation Value and Marine Areas of Significant Conservation Value.
- Ngā Whenua Rāhui Kawenata covenanted areas.
- QEII National Trust covenanted areas.

span bridge approaches, bridge installations, sections of gravel, steps, low bench cuts and toilets, as required.
- No indigenous trees over 30 cm d.b.h[38] will be removed, except for within the road corridor where required.
- Indigenous trees over 15 cm d.b.h will only be removed if no alternative route is possible within the relevant consent corridor.
- In ecologically sensitive areas, all indigenous vegetation removal will occur by hand held tools.
- Felled vegetation will be placed beside the Ara, except in road corridors, floodplains, or near waterways, where it will be removed or appropriately mulched.
- No machine mulching will occur outside road corridors.

These vegetation clearance restrictions reflect a precautionary and best practice approach to avoid unnecessary disturbance. Where avoidance is not practicable, these measures mitigate adverse effects on ecology, as well as on other values such as landscape, visual and natural character (refer to Section 3.12 below and the Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects (LVA) (Appendix I)).

Full protocols and further ecological restrictions around vegetation clearance are described in the CMP (Appendix F) and the EcIA (Appendix H).

3.7 Stormwater management

In areas of the Ara that do not require any earthworks or land disturbance (i.e., wayfinding trails), no stormwater management measures are proposed as the natural contours of the land will not be altered and existing crossfall and drainage channels will be utilised.

Areas of the Ara that require earthworks and land disturbance will be designed to allow stormwater to flow across the trail towards the nearest natural drainage channel, including through the installation of culverts where necessary.

During construction, the natural drainage channels will be preserved with any introduced structures allowing flow paths for water to continue to flow at pre-development levels. No existing stormwater flows will be restricted.

Additional roofed surfaces are limited to the proposed toilets, which will be small scale (anticipated to be less than 9 m^2 each), and therefore no specific stormwater management is considered necessary and an appropriate discharge location will be determined during detailed design.

3.8 Works in the road corridor

Along SH35, the Ara will typically be located at a minimum of 4 m from the carriageway utilising shoulders and verges where possible. In constrained locations where a 4 m buffer cannot be provided, safe-hit posts, roadside guardrails or other suitable delineation devices may be installed (see Appendix A of the CMP (Appendix F) for cross sections of road crossings). Proposed pedestrian crossing points will be uncontrolled crossings with static signage and wayfinding markers located at sites that provide at least 165 m of forward visibility in both directions on sections of SH35 with a 100 km/h speed limit. Aside from at crossings, there will be no walking within the SH35 live carriageway.

Where the Ara follows low traffic volume local roads, users will be encouraged to use existing non-grassed or metalled verges, however in some instances pedestrians and vehicles will share

[38] Diameter at Breast Height.

the carriageway under a Safe System approach, with safety and warning signage including to manage co-use (i.e., “Pedestrians Sharing Road” signs). All crossing points along local roads will be located to provide at least 100 m to 120 m of forward visibility in both directions.

Physical works in the road corridor are expected to generally be limited to pedestrian crossing tie ins, installation of signage and safety barriers, and minor vegetation clearance. It is noted that no pavement works or streetlighting is proposed. Boardwalks will not be used in the road corridor.

A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be prepared to manage traffic during construction. It is noted that there will be no full detours but there is the potential for lane closures.

Any work within the State Highway or Local Road corridor will be carried out as per the relevant guidelines (NZTA and GDC guidelines). These works will be confirmed during detailed design, and subject to a Safe Systems Audit (SSA).

3.9 Concrete work

The construction of structures may require concrete work. All works that need installation of concrete near waterbodies will require site specific plans, to be prepared under the CMP, to ensure that the risk of discharge is avoided.

Construction and design of such structures will comply with the Building Act and Building Code (as applicable) and the conditions of any building consents that may be required/obtained.

3.10 Laydown areas

Indicative locations for temporary construction laydown areas along the Ara have been identified based on their current use by civil contractors on the East Coast, their proximity to the Ara and their suitability for short-term operational needs such as material storage, vehicle turnaround and equipment staging. Many of the identified sites are already functioning as work depots or are undeveloped paddocks, which minimises the need for earthworks or site alterations. The use of each area will depend on securing landowner approval and will be finalised during the detailed design phase.

The location of the proposed laydown areas are identified on the attached PDFs of the alignment (Appendix B) and the online GIS map (Appendix C).

3.11 Signage

Wayfinding markers will be installed at regular intervals along the Ara as directional markers on trees or other nearby existing structures. Their size and location frequency along the Ara will be determined during detailed design to support natural wayfinding. Where this is not possible, wayfinding marker posts will be installed at sightline level via driven pole. These posts will be used predominantly across open farmland.

Wayfinding markers and signage will be installed in the road corridor for pedestrian road and bridge crossings as outlined in Section 3.3 and Section 3.8. The design specifications of signage for each of these crossings is detailed in Appendix A of the CMP (Appendix F). All signage in the road corridor will be confirmed during detailed design and will be subject to a SSA.

The wayfinding markers and posts will be co-designed with landowners and hapu to reflect local context and hapu identity, with consistent Te Ara Tipuna theme maintained. Markers will be designed and located to be clearly visible, low impact, and built to suit remote, coastal conditions.

3.12 Landscaping

The Ara is proposed to include extensive planting and landscaping measures. These are detailed in the draft Ecological Survey and Management Plan Protocol (ESMPP) and draft Landscape Management Plan Framework (LMPF) attached as part of Appendix H and Appendix I, respectively. The mitigation measures are summarised as follows:

- Grassing of any earth-worked areas on the Ara where this is intended as the final surface.
- Rehabilitation grassing or planting of cut and fill batters (off the Ara) with 'like for like' i.e. grass where adjacent to pasture, and with indigenous species where the works are adjacent to dune, riparian or bush areas.
- Relocation of rare plant species (if identified in the confirmatory surveys) where the Ara alignment cannot avoid the plants, or where relocation is not possible, replanting at a ratio of 3:1 to mitigate any unavoidable removal of such species (i.e., 1 m^2 habitat loss requires 3 m^2 habitat restoration).[39] Details of how this ratio is proposed to operate are included in the EcIA and ESMPP (Appendix H).
- Rehabilitation planting in contiguous areas of indigenous forest, where a greater width of vegetation than the ara width is required for construction, to reinstate the cleared area that is not required for the ara post-construction.

In addition to the above mitigation measures, the following voluntary planting (which is confirmed in a condition of consent proposed on a Augier basis (Proposed Condition 108 in Appendix T)) is proposed by the Trust:

- Ecological enhancement planting of any permanently removed indigenous vegetation from identified Ecologically Sensitive Areas, is proposed at a ratio of 2:1 (i.e., 1 m^2 habitat loss requires 2 m^2 habitat restoration). Details of how this ratio is proposed to operate are included in the EcIA and ESMPP (Appendix H).
- It is important to emphasise that this enhancement planting is proposed by the Trust on a voluntary basis and is not required to address any residual adverse ecological effect. Rather, the voluntary proposal reflects the Trust's commitment to enhancing the values of the whenua.

3.13 Operation and maintenance of the Ara

The procedures, responsibilities and requirements necessary to maintain and operate the Ara will be outlined in the OMMP. A draft OMMP has been prepared (Appendix G) and will be developed further prior to commencement of operation of the Ara. Key components of the OMMP include:

- Inspection procedures for trail surfaces, structures, drainage, signage and landscaping, and documentation and reporting requirements.
- Requirements for damage and defects repair, maintenance of trail edging, drainage works, graffiti removal, weeding[40] and trimming or removing overgrown vegetation, revegetating disturbed areas adjacent to the track, pest control and rubbish removal.
- Health and safety documentation prior to the commencement of any construction or operational works.
- Training requirements for contractors and personnel completing the works.
- Management of Ara users through an Arawhenua passport system.
- Emergency procedures including injury response and track closures.
- Administration of a complaints register.

[39] Proposed Condition 101 (Appendix T)
[40] While the OMMP states that herbicides will be used, these will not be used in the CMA.

3.14 Summary of proposed works

Table 3.2 provides an overview of the construction requirements, including waterbody crossings, new structures, earthworks and land disturbance, and vegetation removal proposed within each segment of the Ara (refer to the Km Tracker Guidance Document (Appendix D) that outlines the methodology and assumptions used for identifying the different ara types and associated works anticipated).

The information in Table 3.2 has been produced using the km marker columns in the Tracker spreadsheet for each segment outlined in Table 1.2.

Table 3.2: Summary of proposed works by segment

Proposed works		Segment 1: Titirangi (km 1 – km 50)	Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru (km 51 to km 94.7)	Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria (km 94 to km 149)	Segment 4: Kopuaroa (km 1 to km 10.6 t)	Segment 5: Hikurangi (km 1 to km 53)	Segment 6: Port Awanui (km 1 to km 39.2 Port Awanui Loop)	Segment 7: Waiapu (km 150 to km 206)	Segment 8: Matakaoa (km 207 to km 239)
Trail	% Wayfinding only	95 %	79 %	23 %	65 %	86 %	88 %	89 %	72%
	Number (%) of km within segment with gravel sections required	6 (11 %)	12 (27 %)	50 (84 %)	2 (20 %)	6 (11 %)	5 (19 %)	17 (30 %)	11 (33 %)
	Number (%) of km within segment with new steps required	5 (9 %)	13 (30 %)	-	-	-	-	-	2 (6 %)
	Number (%) of km within segment with low bench cut required	7 (13 %)	4 (9 %)	34 (59 %)	-	-	-	-	4 (12 %)
Waterbody crossings	New swing bridge	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	3
	New timber foot bridge	1	-	-	6	-	-	-	-
	Traffic light	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-
	Push button	-	-	6	-	12	-	4	3
	Warning signage	5	5	10	1	7	8	23	4
	No structure – cross on foot	16	16	18	5	9	3	24	12
	Alternative crossing condition	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Buildings	Toilet	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
Earthworks and land disturbance	Total area (m^2)	8,630	16,170	63,010	4,240	10,120	4,200	10,430	23,870
	Average area per km (m^2)	160	360	1,080	400	180	160	180	720
	Maximum area in any km (m^2)	1,400	1,500	3,250	1,400	1,500	1,275	1,200	4,400
	Number (%) of km within segment with no earthworks	36 (67 %)	24 (55 %)	6 (10 %)	3 (30 %)	34 (62 %)	20 (77 %)	29 (51 %)	11 (33 %)

Proposed works		Segment 1: Titirangi (km 1 – km 50)	Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru (km 51 to km 94.7)	Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria (km 94 to km 149)	Segment 4: Kopuaroa (km 1 to km 10.6 t)	Segment 5: Hikurangi (km 1 to km 53)	Segment 6: Port Awanui (km 1 to km 39.2 Port Awanui Loop)	Segment 7: Waiapu (km 150 to km 206)	Segment 8: Matakaoa (km 207 to km 239)
Vegetation removal	Total area (m^2) in PMA/TASCV/SVMA[41]	240	6,650	9,990	0	2,900	930	770	11,950
	Average area per km (m^2) in PMA/TASCV/SVMA	5	150	170	-	50	40	15	360
	Maximum area (m^2) in any km – PMA/TASCV/SVMA	200	1,500	1,500	-	1,500	930	550	4,400
	Total area (m^2) – 'other' vegetation[42]	3,110	9,220	43,460	4,240	7,220	3,580	8,560	11,930
	Average area per km (m^2) – 'other' vegetation	60	210	740	400	130	140	150	360
	Maximum area (m^2) in any km – 'other' vegetation	1,200	1,500	3,250	1,400	1,500	1,275	1,200	3,445
	Number (%) of km within segment with no vegetation removal	43 (80 %)	25 (57 %)	12 (21 %)	3 (30 %)	34 (62 %)	20 (77 %)	34 (60 %)	11 (33 %)

Note: The km columns in the Tracker that have been used for each segment are outlined in Table 1.2 in Section 1.7.2 of this AEE. Partial kms were excluded from calculations of % wayfinding only, the number/proportion of kms with gravel sections, new steps and low bench cut required and the number/proportion of kms with no earthworks and no vegetation removal. This table should be interpreted as approximate estimates of the indicative amount or scale of works required for the construction of the Ara, noting that these numbers are based on conservative upper limits and are subject to change during detailed design.

[41] Where vegetation removal is required within a km that has a PMA/TASCV/SVMA within the km, all vegetation removal within that km has been assumed to be within a PMA/TASCV/SVMA on a conservative basis.

[42] Where vegetation removal is required within a km that does not have a PMA/TASCV/SVMA within the km, all vegetation removal within that km has been assumed to be indigenous on a conservative basis. As such, 'other' vegetation removal includes all indigenous and non-indigenous vegetation removal within km that do not have a PMA/TASCV/SVMA.

4 Te Ara Tipuna segments

The following sections of this AEE report provide a detailed, site-specific description of the environmental setting and indicative works anticipated within each segment of the Ara.[43] Specific TRMP overlays and notations that are within the Standard Consent Corridor (e.g. 50 m corridor) within each segment are identified in green in the respective environmental setting tables below.[44]

Specific ecological and landscape values of scheduled and protected areas identified within each segment are outlined in detail in the EcIA (Appendix H) and the LVA (Appendix I). Similarly, the cultural and heritage values are detailed in the Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) (Appendix M) and Historic Heritage Assessment (Appendix J).

It is noted that aspects of the works are indicative and will be subject to change during detailed design. For example, maximum areas and volumes are approximate estimates only, based on the assessment and assumptions included in the Tracker (Appendix D). These details will be confirmed during detailed design, in accordance with the requirements of the conditions of consent to ensure that effects are no greater than those assessed.

4.1 Segment 1: Titirangi

4.1.1 Description of route

Segment 1: Titirangi constitutes approximately 55 km (Day 1 to 4) of the Ara, briefly described below:

- Day 1 begins at Makorori, traversing over the Makorori headland through Tatapouri and Turihau before finishing in Pouawa.
- Day 2 continues along the coastline, traversing cliffs and the Waiomoko River before ending in Whangara where Whangara Marae is located. Whangara is a settlement of cultural significance to Ngati Porou and Ngati Konohi, recognised as the place of the ancestor, Paikea.
- Day 3 follows the Pakarae River and diverges inland across the cliffs of Waiharehare Bay, finishing at Waihau Bay.
- Day 4 follows the beach, ascending Opoutama Point before descending into Uawa (Tolaga Bay), the largest township between Gisborne and Potaka. This area has several marae; Hauiti Marae, Te Poho o Rawheoro Marae, Puketawai Marae and Hinemaurea ki Mangatuna Marae. The township is also home to the Tolaga Bay Wharf, a prominent historical structure, and several existing local walks.

4.1.2 Environmental setting and values

The specific environmental setting and values within the Standard Consent Corridor for Segment 1: Titirangi are outlined in Table 4.1 below.

[43] Refer to Table 1.2 in Section 1.7.2 for the columns used in the Tracker (Appendix D) that have been used for each segment of the Ara.

[44] There may be minor inconsistencies between the TRMP overlays and notations identified in this AEE report and the technical assessments as a conservative approach was taken when identifying values that were in very close proximity to the Standard Consent Corridor (but not directly within). There are other TRMP overlays and notations within the Sensitive Area Consent Corridor that have not been identified in this AEE report.

Table 4.1: Environmental setting and values within Segment 1: Titirangi

Ecological values (vegetation, indigenous biodiversity)	Segment 1: Titirangi is located within the Waiapu ED. MASCV areas are located at: • Waiomoko Estuary (05-025) in Whangara (km 20). • TASCV areas are located at: • Makarori Point Recreation Reserve (WP20) (km 4); • Pouawa River Mouth (WR58) (km 13 – 14); • Whangara Beach (WR55) (km 22 – 23); and • Waihau Road Wetland (WR49) (km 37). • PMA areas are located at: • Pouawa River Mouth (WR58) (km 13 – 14); • Whangara Beach (WR55) (km 22 – 23); and • Waihau Road Wetland (WR49) (km 37). There is a QEII covenant at km 12 – 13 and a Ngā Whenua Rāhui covenanted area (Pukehapopo) at km 21.
Freshwater (wetlands, streams and rivers)	The Ara crosses (and is adjacent to) three Scheduled Rivers and Streams, being: • Pouawa River (G15B) (km 13); • Waiomoko River (G15B) (km 20); and • Uawa River (G15B) (km 50). Waihau Road Wetland (b) (G17) (km 37) is a Scheduled Waterbody. A number of non-scheduled mapped wetlands[45] are present within the Standard Consent Corridor.
Coastal environment values	SVMA areas are located in coastal areas at/between: • Makorori headland to Tatapouri (km 2 – 6); • Turihau headland to Pouawa headland (km 10 – 16); • Waiomoko River to North Whangara Beach (km 20 – 23); • Waihau Bay (km 37 and 40 – 41); and • Tolaga Bay (km 48 – 49). The Standard Consent Corridor is within the CMA at Makorori (km 2 – 4), Turihau (km 9 – 10), Pouawa (km 12 – 14), Waiamoko River (km 20), Whangara (km 22 – 24), Waihau Bay (km 40 – 42) and Kaitawa Stream (km 48).
Natural hazards	Coastal Hazard Overlay areas (Safety Buffer, Moderate Risk and Extreme Risk) apply to the Ara at Wainui (km 1). The areas where the Ara follows the coastline between Wainui and Whangara (km 1 – 18 and 22 – 24), along Waihau Bay (km 38 – 43) and at Tolaga Bay (km 48 – 49) are ASCH.

[45] Identified by the GDC Provisional Regional Wetland Assessment 2022 GIS map layer. These can be viewed in relation to the Ara concept alignment on the GIS map (Appendix C).

	At Tolaga Bay, the Standard Consent Corridor is within the F1 (River and Floodway) Flood Hazard Overlay at Kaitawa Stream (km 48) and Uawa River (km 50). The Geotechnical Assessment (Appendix N) identifies two key areas of potential coastal erosion (km 1 and km 5) and two key areas of potential instability (km 17 and km 43).
Landscapes, natural character and features, and amenity values	ONFL areas are located at: • Makorori (Unit 14) (km 2 – 6); • Turihaua (Unit 13) (km 10 – 12); • Pouawa (Unit 13) (km 14 – 16); • Whangara (Unit 13) (km 20 – 21); • Waihau Bay (Unit 12) (km 40 – 41); and • Pourewa and Tolaga Bay (Unit 11 and Unit 10) (km 48 – 49).
Cultural and heritage values	The following Archaeological and Waahi Tapu sites are mapped within (or adjacent to) the Standard Consent Corridor: WP174, Y18/442, Y18/346, Y18/15, Y17/326, Z17/28, Z17/325, Z17/20, Z17/157, Z17/19, Z17/144, Z17/145, Z17/33. The Ara traverses a mapped Waahi Tapu Area (WY5) at Makorori headland (km 5) and the Standard Consent Corridor traverses a mapped Post European Contact Schedule - Historic Sites (P59) at Tolaga Bay (km 50).

4.1.3 Proposal

Further to the information in Section 3, and in particular Table 3.2, specific details relating to the proposed works within Segment 1: Titirangi are as follows:

Bridges

Two new swing bridges[46] are proposed to cross the Pouawa River at Pouawa (km 13) (Figure 4.1) and the Waimoko River at Whangara (km 20) (Figure 4.2).

- The Pouawa River swing bridge (CMA) will be approximately 36 m in length, with 4.5 m timber suspension uprights and 14 m back stay.
- The Waimoko River swing bridge will be approximately 40 to 50 m in length, with 5.5 m timber suspension uprights and 17 m back stay.

Both swing bridges are expected to be constructed with timber deadman anchors.

[46] Waterbody Crossings No. 4 and 8 (Appendix E); refer to the images of the Waitekohe Bridge and Totara Bridge provided by Abseil Access in Appendix F for concept designs.

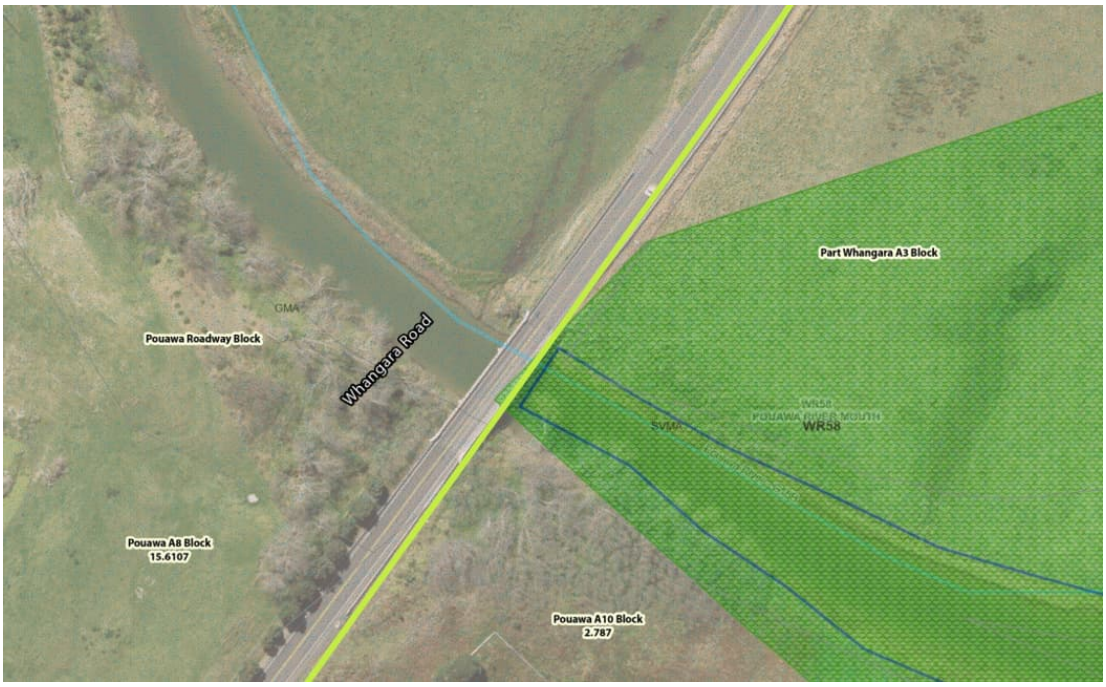

Figure 4.1: Pouawa River Swing Bridge (km 13) (Source: TRMP, 2025)

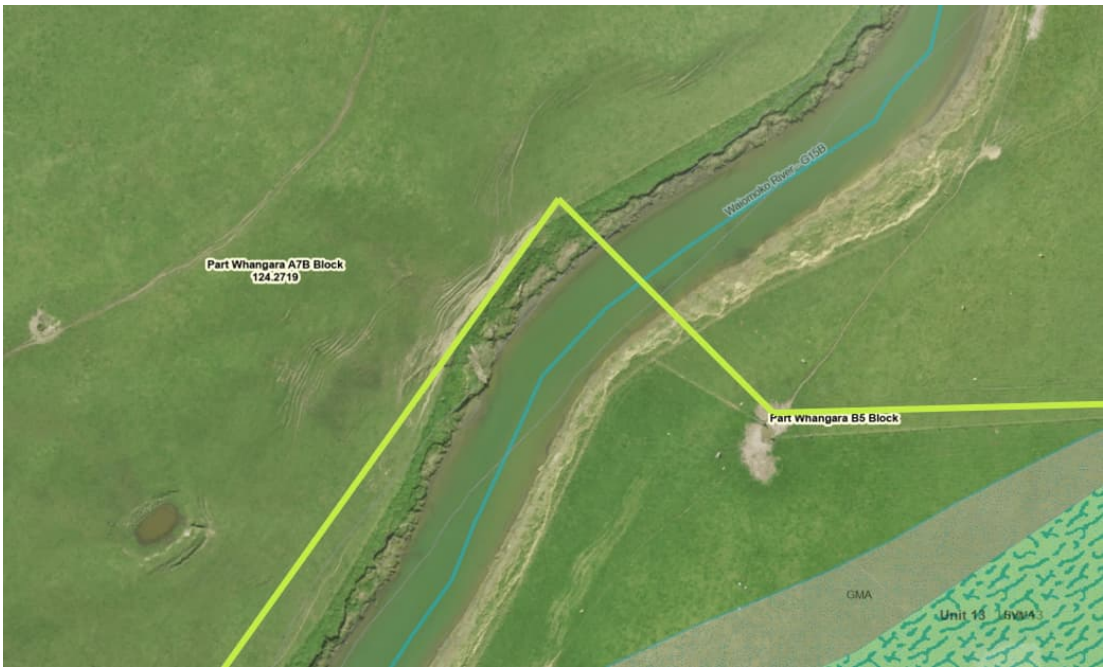

Figure 4.2: Waimoko River Swing Bridge (km 20) (Source: TRMP, 2025)

One new single span timber bridge[47] is proposed to cross the Kaitawa Stream to Tolaga Bay Estuary (CMA) (km 48) (Figure 4.3).

[47] Waterbody Crossing No. 24 (Appendix E); refer to the images of Bucklerburn Bridge provided by Abseil Access in Appendix F for concept designs.

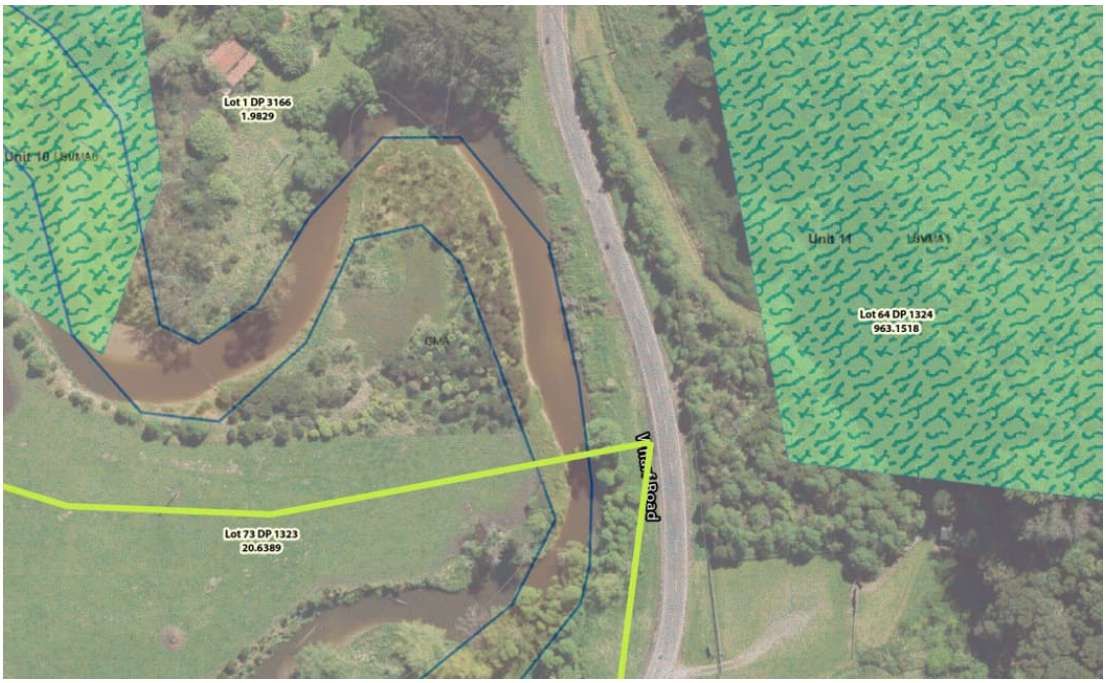

Figure 4.3: Kaitawa Stream Timber Bridge (km 48) (Source: TRMP, 2025)

Toilets

One new toilet is proposed between Whangara and Waihau Bay (km 30).

Earthworks and vegetation clearance

Based on conservative estimates, the maximum anticipated area of earthworks across approximately 55 km of ara is 8,630 m^2 and the maximum anticipated area of indigenous vegetation removal within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA is 240 m^2. Additionally, up to 3,110 m^2 of vegetation[48] not within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA may be cleared.

4.2 Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru

4.2.1 Description of route

Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru constitutes approximately 45 km of the Ara (Day 5 to 7) between Tolaga Bay and Tokomaru Bay, briefly described below:

- Day 5 begins by ascending the Earnest Reeve Walkway to the northern cliffs of Tolaga Bay, traversing farmland before descending into Karaka Bay. The Ara then follows the cliff line to the west, finishing in Kaiau Bay.
- Day 6 continues along the beach, through a valley and across Marau Point, leading to Anaura Bay where Anaura Marae is located.
- Day 7 begins with a climb out of Anaura Bay, crossing Mawhai Point into Tokomaru Bay. Local businesses such as Te Puka Tvern and Cafe 35 (known for paua pies) are popular stops and reflect the unique local character of the area. Tuatini Marae, Pakirikiri Marae, Waiparapara Marae and Te Ariuru Marae are located in Tokomaru Bay.

[48] Referred to in the Tracker as 'other' vegetation

4.2.2 Environmental setting and values

The specific environmental setting and values within the Standard Consent Corridor for Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru are outlined in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Environmental setting and values within Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru

Ecological values (vegetation, indigenous biodiversity)	Segment 2 is located within the Waiapu ED. MASCV areas are located at: • Anaura Bay (05-021) (km 71 – 72 and km 76). TASCV areas are located at: • Tolaga Bay (WP12) (km 52 – 53); • Kaiau Bush (WR35) (km 65); • Raponga Stream (WR34) (km 66); • Anaura Bay Scenic Reserve (WP6) (km 74 – 76); and • Waipare and Nuhiti Q Scenic Reserve (WP7) (km 84 – 87). PMA areas are located at: • Kaiau Bush (WR35) (km 65); and • Raponga Stream (WR34) (km 66). There is a QEII covenant (Tatarahaka Point) at km 51 – 53 and Ngā Whenua Rāhui covenanted areas (Arauna and Nuhiti Q Ngā Whenua Rāhui) at km 64 and km 82 – 87.
Freshwater (wetlands, streams and rivers)	The Ara crosses (and is adjacent to) two Scheduled Rivers and Streams, being: • Waipare Stream (G15B) (km 73); and • Mangahauini River (G15B) (km 94.7). A number of non-scheduled mapped wetlands[49] are present within the Standard Consent Corridor.
Coastal environment values	SVMA areas are located in coastal areas at/between: • Tolaga Bay (km 52 – 53); • North of Kaiaua Bay (km 65 – 66); • Anaura Bay (km 71 – 72 and km 74 – 76); and • Waipare and Nuhiti Q Scenic Reserve (km 84 – 86). The Standard Consent Corridor is within the CMA at Kaiaua Bay (km 61 – 62), Anaura Bay (km 71 – 72 and km 76), Anaura Road (km 79) and Tokomaru Bay (km 94a – 94.7).
Natural hazards	Coastal Hazard Overlay areas (Safety Buffer, Moderate Risk, High Risk and Extreme Risk) apply to the Ara at Tolaga Bay (km 52), Anaura Bay (km 71 – 73) and Tokomaru Bay (km 94a – 94.7). The areas where the Ara follows the coastline at Tolaga Bay (km 52 – 53), Karaka Bay (km 56), Kaiaua Bay (km 60 – 63), Anaura Bay (km 71 – 81) and Tokomaru Bay (km 94a – 94.7) are ASCH.

[49] Identified by the GDC Provisional Regional Wetland Assessment 2022 GIS map layer. These can be viewed in relation to the Ara concept alignment on the GIS map (Appendix C).

	The Standard Consent Corridor is within the F4 (Areas Liable to Flooding) Flood Hazard Overlay at Tolaga Bay (km 54) and the F1 (River and Floodway) and F4 Flood Hazard Overlays at Tokomaru Bay (km 94a – 94.7). The Geotechnical Assessment (Appendix N) identifies a key area of significant stability risk (km 53), a key area of coastal erosion and sea cliff stability risk (km 75) and a key area of stability risk along moderate to steeply sloping vegetated hills (km 84).
Landscapes, natural character and features, and amenity values	ONFL areas are located at: • North Tolaga Bay (Unit 10) (km 52 – 53).
Cultural and heritage values	The following Archaeological and Waahi Tapu sites are mapped within (or adjacent to) the Standard Consent Corridor: Z17/160, Z17/12, Z17/13, Z17/15-WP175, Z17/17-WP176, Z16/41, Z16/39, Z16/32, Z16/136, Z16/55, Z16/163, Z16/17, Z16/193, Z16/156, Z16/178, Z16/190, Z16/188, Z16/185. The Ara traverses a mapped Waahi Tapu Area (WY12) at Kaiaua Bay (km 62) and the Standard Consent Corridor traverses or is adjacent to a mapped Post European Contact Schedule - Historic Sites at Tolaga Bay (P60 and P61) (km 51), Anaura Bay (P66 and P99) (km 71 and 73) and Tokomaru Bay (P73) (km 93).

4.2.3 Proposal

Further to the information in Section 3, and in particular Table 3.2, specific details relating to the proposed works within Segment 2: Uawa to Tokomaru are as follows:

Toilets

Two new toilets are proposed at Kaiaua Bay (km 60) and north of Anaura Bay (km 82).

Earthworks and vegetation clearance

Based on conservative estimates, the maximum anticipated area of earthworks across approximately 45 km of ara is 16,170 m^2 and the maximum anticipated area of indigenous vegetation removal within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA is 6,650 m^2. Additionally, up to 9,220 m^2 of vegetation not within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA may be cleared.

4.3 Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria

4.3.1 Description of route

Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria constitutes approximately 60 km of the Ara (Day 8 to 11) between Tokomaru Bay and Ruatoria, briefly described below:

- Day 8 starts in Tokomaru Bay township, passing the Tokomaru Bay Wharf before following the cliffs and dropping down into Waipiro Bay where Iritekura Marae is located. There is also the option to walk inland to Te Puia Springs.
- Day 9 passes Taharora Marae and Kiekie Marae and ends at Whareponga, where Whareponga Marae is located.
- Day 10 follows farmland and cliff areas, passing through Tuparoa before ending at Reporua, where Reporua Marae is located.
- Day 11 goes then goes inland, passing Ruataupare and Umuariki Marae, Mangahanea Marae and Uepohatu Marae before ending in Ruatoria.

4.3.2 Environmental setting and values

The specific environmental setting and values within the Standard Consent Corridor for Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria are outlined in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Environmental setting and values within Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria

Ecological values (vegetation, indigenous biodiversity)	Segment 3 is located within the Waiapu ED. TASCV areas are located at: • Tauhiti (WR19) (km 99 – 102); • Waimahuru Bay Scenic Reserve (WP5) (km 102 – 103); and • Mataahu (WR16) (km 125 – 127). PMA areas are located at: • Tawhiti (WR19) (km 99 – 102); • Whareponga Stream (WR15) (km 125); • Mataahu Stream (WR16) (km 125 – 126 and 128); and • Mahora Swamp (WR11) (km 143). There is a Ngā Whenua Rāhui covenanted area (Hakurenga Kawenata) at km 118 – 119.
Freshwater (wetlands, streams and rivers)	The Ara crosses (and is adjacent to) seven Scheduled Rivers and Streams, being: • Waipiro Stream (G15B) (km 117); • Te Maire Stream (G15A) (km 123); • Whanreponga Stream (G15A) (km 128); • Wharekaha Stream (G15A) (km 128 and 129); • Mangareia Stream (G15A) (km 145); • Kopuaroa Stream (G15A) (km 147); and • Mangaharei Stream (G15A) (km 149). • The Ara crosses (and is adjacent to) two Protected Watercourses (G21), being: • Mangaropa Stream (Tributaries) (km 105); and • Waikawa Stream (km 109). Waipiro Swamp (G15C) (km 115) and Mahora Swamp (G17) (km 143) are Scheduled Waterbodies. A number of non-scheduled mapped wetlands are present within this segment.
Coastal environmental values	SVMA areas are located in coastal areas at: • North of Tokomaru Bay (km 99 and km 102 – 103). The Standard Consent Corridor is within the CMA at North Tokomaru Bay (km 94 to 97), Waipiro Bay (km 110) and Tuparoa (km 135 – 136).
Natural hazards	Coastal Hazard Overlay areas (Safety Buffer, Moderate Risk and Extreme Risk) apply to the Ara at Tokomaru Bay (km 94 – 97).

	The Waiapu River at Ruatoria (km 147 – 153) is also identified as an area liable to flooding.[50] The areas where the Ara follows the coastline at Tokomaru Bay (km 94 – 97), Waipiro Bay (km 110 and 117) and Tuparoa (km 135) are ASCH. The Geotechnical Assessment (Appendix N) identifies two key areas of potential instability risk (km 104 and km 124).
Landscapes, natural character and features, and amenity values	ONFL areas are located at: • Koutunui Head to Koutunui Point (Unit 5) (km 99 and 102 – 103).
Cultural and heritage values	The following Archaeological and Waahi Tapu Sites are mapped within (or adjacent to) the Standard Consent Corridor: Z16/5, Z15/83, Z15/70, Z15/71, Z15/74, Z15/75, Z15/32, Z15/62. The Standard Consent Corridor traverses a mapped Post European Contact Schedule - Historic Sites at Tokomaru Bay (P73) (km 94).

4.3.3 Proposal

Further to the information in Section 3, and in particular Table 3.2, specific details relating to the proposed works within Segment 3: Tokomaru to Ruatoria are as follows:

Bridges

Two new swing bridges[51] are proposed to cross the Waikawa Stream to the South of Waipiro Bay (km 109) (Figure 4.4) and the Whareponga Stream located southwest of Whareponga (km 128) (Figure 4.5).

- The Waikawa Stream (Coastal Environment Overlay) swing bridge will be approximately 80 m in length, with 9 m steel suspension uprights, 25 m back stay and expected to have concrete deadman anchors.
- The Whareponga Stream swing bridge will be approximately 40 m in length, with 5 m timber suspension uprights, 14 m back stay and expected to have timber deadman anchors.

[50] Tairāwhiti Maps – Flood Hazard (Non Plan) layer

[51] Waterbody Crossings No. 55 and 64 (Appendix E); refer to the images of Bucklerburn Bridge provided by Abseil Access in Appendix F for concept example designs.

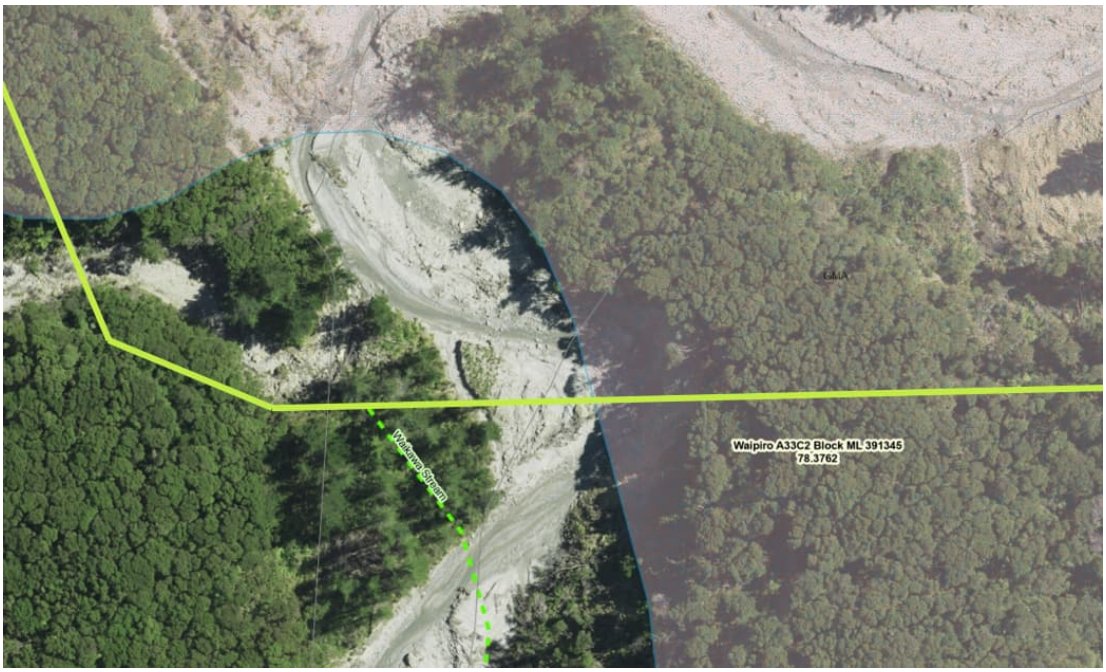

Figure 4.4: Waikawa Stream Swing Bridge (km 109) (Source: TRMP, 2025)

Figure 4.5: Whareponga Stream Swing Bridge (km 128) (Source: TRMP, 2025)

Toilets

Two new toilets are proposed at Waipiro Bay (km 116) and Whareponga (km 128).

Earthworks and vegetation clearance

Based on conservative estimates, the maximum anticipated area of earthworks across approximately 58 km of ara is 63,010 m^2 and the maximum anticipated area of indigenous

vegetation removal within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA is 9,990 m^2. Additionally, up to 43,460 m^2 of vegetation not within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA may be cleared.

4.4 Segment 4: Kopuaroa

4.4.1 Description of route

Segment 4: Kopuaroa constitutes approximately 11 km of the Ara and serves as a connection between the Hikurangi Loop at SH35 and the main Ara at Waipiro. Along the Ara, walkers will follow Kopuaroa Road alongside the Makatote Stream and Kopuaroa Stream.

4.4.2 Environmental setting and values

The specific environmental setting and values within the Standard Consent Corridor for Segment 4: Kopuaroa are outlined in Table 4.4 below. This entire segment is located outside the coastal environment.

Table 4.4: Environmental setting and values within Segment 4: Kopuaroa

Ecological values (vegetation, indigenous biodiversity)	Segment 4 is located within the Waiapu ED. No PMA are mapped within the Standard Consent Corridor.
Freshwater (wetlands, streams and rivers)	The Ara crosses (and is adjacent to) one Scheduled Rivers and Streams, being: • Makatote Stream (G15B) (km 1 – 6). The Ara crosses one Protected Watercourse (G21), being: • Makatote Stream (Tributaries) (km 6). • A number of non-scheduled mapped wetlands are present within this segment.
Landscapes, natural character and features, and amenity values	No ONFL are mapped within the Standard Consent Corridor.
Cultural and heritage values	No cultural or historic heritage sites or areas are mapped within the Standard Consent Corridor.

4.4.3 Proposal

Further to the information in Section 3, and in particular Table 3.2, specific details relating to the proposed works within Segment 4: Kopuaroa are as follows:

Bridges

One new swing bridge[52] is proposed to cross the Makatote Stream adjacent to SH35 (km 6 SH to Waipiro Connect). The swing bridge will be approximately 30 m in length, with 4 m timber suspension uprights, 10 m backstay and expected to have timber deadman anchors.

[52] Waterbody Crossing No. 6 (Appendix E); refer to the images of the Waitekohe Bridge provided by Abseil Access in Appendix F for concept designs.

Figure 4.6: Makatoke Stream Swing Bridge (km 6 SH to Waipiro Connect) (Source: TRMP, 2025)

Six new single span timber bridges[53] are proposed to cross the Makatote Stream (Tributaries) and other small streams (km 2, 4 and 6 SH to Waipiro Connect).

Toilets

One new toilet is proposed along Kopuaroa Road (km 7).

Earthworks and vegetation clearance

Based on conservative estimates, the maximum anticipated area of earthworks across approximately 11 km of ara is 4,240 m^2. No indigenous vegetation removal is anticipated or proposed within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA. Up to 4,240 m^2 of vegetation not within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA may be cleared.

4.5 Segment 5: Hikurangi

4.5.1 Description of route

Segment 5: Hikurangi is the Hikurangi Loop (HL), which is approximately 53 km of the Ara (HL Day 1 to 4).

- HL Day 1 begins by passing Rongohaere Marae, following inland valleys and farmland before finishing at Waingakia Station.
- HL Day 2, walkers climb the base of Mt Hikurangi and have the option of taking an additional side ara, Te Ara ki Hikurangi (2 km) to view Te Takapau a Maui Carvings, carved by Sir Derek Lardelli and students from Toihoukura, EIT Tairawhiti's Maori School of Arts for the 2000 dawn ceremony celebrations.
- HL Day 3 descends the northern side of Mt Hikurangi to Pakihiroa and follows the Tapuaeroa River.

[53] Waterbody Crossings No. 7 – 12 (Appendix E).

- HL Day 4 continues along the Tapuaeroa River, passing through Takamore before rejoining the Ara at Rotokautuku.

4.5.2 Environmental setting and values

The specific environmental setting and values within the Standard Consent Corridor for Segment 5: Hikurangi are outlined in Table 4.5 below. This entire segment is located outside the coastal environment.

Table 4.5: Environmental setting and values within Segment 5: Hikurangi

Ecological values (vegetation, indigenous biodiversity)	Segment 5 is located within both the Waiapu ED and the Motu ED. PMA areas are located at: • Mangatiti Stream (WR120) (km 10 – 12); • Aupouri Bush No. 2 (WR123) (km 20); • Hikurangi (WR125) (km 2 Te Takapau Return and km 33 HL); and • Aorangi (WR122) (km 36 – 38).
Freshwater (wetlands, streams and rivers)	The Ara crosses (and is adjacent to) four Scheduled Rivers and Streams, being: • Waiorongomai River (G15A) (km 10); • Raparapaririki River (G15A, G15E) (km 20); • Tapuaeroa River (G15A) (km 21); and • Mata River (G15A) (km 50). The Ara crosses two Protected Watercourses (G21), being: • Mangahoanga Stream (km 13); and • Mata River (Tributaries) (km 43 and 45). The Ara also follows the Umukokako Stream and Mangatangaruru Stream as noted in the EcIA (Appendix H). There is one non-scheduled mapped wetlands present within the Standard Consent Corridor.
Landscapes, natural character and features, and amenity values	No ONFL are mapped within the Standard Consent Corridor. Mount Hikurangi is recognised in the LVA (Appendix I) for its outstanding landscape values.
Cultural and heritage values	No cultural or historic heritage sites or areas are mapped within the Standard Consent Corridor.

4.5.3 Proposal

Further to the information in Section 3, and in particular Table 3.2, specific details relating to the proposed works within Segment 5: Hikurangi are as follows:

Toilets

Two new toilets are proposed at Mangahoanga Stream (km 13) and Waingakia (km 45).

Earthworks and vegetation clearance

Based on conservative estimates, the maximum anticipated area of earthworks across approximately 55 km of ara is 10,120 m^2 and the maximum anticipated area of indigenous vegetation removal within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA is 2,900 m^2. Additionally, up to 7,220 m^2 of vegetation not within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA may be cleared.

4.6 Segment 6: Port Awanui

4.6.1 Description of route

Segment 6 is the Port Awanui Loop, which is approximately 26 km of the Ara (40 km total walking distance including the return). At the start of the loop, walkers will pass Reporua Marae at Reporua before following the river to Wairoa. The Ara then briefly follows the Waiapu River before diverging east towards Waiomatatini where Waiomatatini (Porourangi) Marae is located. Walkers then take a loop track to Port Awanui and along the beach, passing Te Horo Marae and Tikapa Marae before returning inland towards the main Ara.

4.6.2 Environmental setting and values

The specific environmental setting and values within the Standard Consent Corridor for Segment 6 are outlined in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Environmental setting and values within Segment 6: Port Awanui

Ecological values (vegetation, indigenous biodiversity)	Segment 1 is located within the Waiapu ED. TASCV areas are located at: • Port Awanui (km 17). PMA areas are located at: • Port Awanui (WR6) (km 17).
Freshwater (wetlands, streams and rivers)	A number of non-scheduled mapped wetlands are present within the Standard Consent Corridor.
Coastal environmental values	SVMA areas are located in coastal areas at: • Port Awanui (km 17). The Standard Consent Corridor is within the CMA at Reporua (km 3) and Port Awanui (km 17 – 21).
Coastal hazards	The areas where the Ara follows the coastline at Reporua (km 2 – 3) and Port Awanui (km 17 – 21) are ASCH. The Waiapu River (km 25 – 30) is identified as an area liable to flooding.[54] The Geotechnical Assessment (Appendix N) identifies a key area of potential stability risk (km 5).
Landscapes, natural character and features, and amenity values	No ONFL are mapped within the Standard Consent Corridor.
Cultural and heritage values	The following Archaeological and Waahi Tapu Site is mapped within the Standard Consent Corridor: Z15/11.

[54] Tairāwhiti Maps – Flood Hazard (Non Plan) layer.

	The Standard Consent Corridor traverses a mapped Post European Contact Schedule - Historic Sites (P84) at Reporua (km 3).

4.6.3 Proposal

Further to the information in Section 3, and in particular Table 3.2, specific details relating to the proposed works within Segment 6: Port Awanui are as follows:

Toilets

One new toilet is proposed at Reporua (km 3).

Earthworks and vegetation clearance

Based on conservative estimates, the maximum anticipated area of earthworks across approximately 26 km of ara is 4,200 m^2 and the maximum anticipated area of indigenous vegetation removal within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA is 930 m^2. Additionally, up to 3,580 m^2 of vegetation not within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA may be cleared.

4.7 Segment 7: Waiapu

4.7.1 Description of route

Segment 7: Waiapu constitutes approximately 55 km of the Ara (Day 12 to 15) between Ruatoria and Te Araroa, briefly described below:

- Day 12 begins by passing near Kariaka (Ngati Porou) Marae and Rauru (Taumata O Mihi) Marae, crossing the Waiapu River and Mangaoporo River before ending at Tinetoka Marae.
- On Day 13, the Ara passes Rahui Marae in Tikitiki, ending in Rangitukia where Hinepare and Ohinewaiapu Marae are located. The Ara is also in the vicinity of Putaanga Marae and Kaiwaka Marae.
- On Day 14, the Ara continues on Rangitukia Road, through Te Kautuku and Haha Stations inland of the East Cape lighthouse to East Cape Road. This stretch passes Te Ara o Paikea, an ancestral trail of deep cultural significance.
- Day 15 follows East Cape Road along the coastline through Horoera to Te Araroa, passing Matahi o Te Tau Marae and finishing near Hinerupe Marae.

4.7.2 Environmental setting and values

The specific environmental setting and values within the Standard Consent Corridor for Segment 7: Waiapu are outlined in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Environmental setting and values within Segment 7: Waiapu

Ecological values (vegetation, indigenous biodiversity)	Segment 7 is located within both the Waiapu ED and the Pukeamaru ED. MASCV areas are located at: • Kakanui (05-016) (km 204 – 205). TASCV areas are located at: • Hautai (PR19) (km 191 – 194); and • Kakanui (PR2) (km 205). PMA areas are located at:

	• Tutara (WR5) (km 163 – 164); • Taumataomiro (PR26) (km 181 – 182); • Haha (PR11) (km 183); • Hautai (PR19) (km 191 – 194); and • Kakanui (PR2) (km 205 – 206). There are the following Ngā Whenua Rāhui covenanted areas: • Wharau A1 & A1B Ext (km 164); • Te Kautuku Station (km 180 – 181); • Haha Trust (km 183); and • Haha Trust Ext (km 185 – 188). Hochstetter's frog have been recorded on the East Coast at around km 190 and near Te Araroa.
Freshwater (wetlands, streams and rivers)	The Ara crosses (and is adjacent to) twenty-three Scheduled Rivers and Streams, being: • Mangakinionui Stream (G15A) (km 150); and • Waiapu River (G15A, G15C) (km 152). • Whakatu Stream (G15A) (km 155); • Mangaporo River (G15A) (km 159); • Mangaiwi Stream (G15A) (km 162); • Poroporo River (G15A) (km 171); • Maraehara River (G15A) (km 176); • Waikaka Stream (G15A, G15B) (km 178); • Te Kanapa Stream (G15A) (km 180); • Te Awha Stream (G15A) (km 181); • Te Waiau Stream (G15A) (km 184); • Mangapuia Stream (G15A) (km 187); • Te Parera Stream, (G15A) (km 187); • Mangatuhara Stream (G15A) (km 189); • Waipapa Stream 1 (G15A) (km 194); • Nohomanga Stream (G15A) (km 195); • Taikawakawa Stream (G15A) (km 197); • Orutua River (G15A) (km 199); • Waipohatuhatu Stream (G15A) (km 202); • Te Waipuhake Stream (G15A, G15B) (km 202); • Te Pito Stream (G15A) (km 204); • Pohoenui Stream (G15A) (km 204); and • Awatere River (G15A, G15C) (km 206). The Ara crosses one Protected Watercourses (G21), being: • Whakatu Stream (km 155). A number of non-scheduled mapped wetlands are present within the Standard Consent Corridor.
Coastal environmental values	SVMA areas are located in coastal areas between: • East Cape (km 191 – 206). The Standard Consent Corridor is within the CMA at Horoera (km 194 and 198), Orutua River (km 199), East Cape Road and Awatere River (km 200 – 206).
Coastal hazards	The areas where the Ara follows the coastline along the East Cape to Te Araroa (km 192 – 198 and 200 – 206) are ASCH.

	The areas along the Waiapu River from Ruatoria to Rangitukia (km 154 – 174) and at the Awatere River (km 206) are identified as areas liable to flooding.[55]
Landscapes, natural character and features, and amenity values	ONFL areas are located between: • East Cape (Unit 3) (km 191 – 206).
Cultural and heritage values	The following Archaeological and Waahi Tapu Sites are mapped within the Standard Consent Corridor: Z15/122, Z15/124. The Standard Consent Corridor traverses mapped Post European Contact Schedule - Historic Sites (P85, P86 and P88) at Tikitiki (km 169) and Rangitukia (km 174).

4.7.3 Proposal

Further to the information in Section 3, and in particular Table 3.2, specific details relating to the proposed works within Segment 7 are as follows:

Toilets

Two new toilets are proposed between Rangitukia and Hororea (km 183) at the Orutua River (km 199).

Earthworks and vegetation clearance

Based on conservative estimates, the maximum anticipated area of earthworks across approximately 58 km of ara is 10,430 m^2 and the maximum anticipated area of indigenous vegetation removal within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA is 770 m^2. Additionally, up to 8,580 m^2 of vegetation not within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA may be cleared.

4.8 Segment 8: Matakaoa

4.8.1 Description of route

Segment 8: Matakaoa constitutes approximately 33 km of the Ara (Day 16 and 17) between Te Araroa and Potaka, briefly described below:

- Day 16 begins by walking alongside the beach passing in the vicinity of Paerauta Marae, up across farmland and past Punaruku Marae, over the point and dropping down at Onepoto Bay, finishing at Wharekahika (Hicks Bay). The marae in the area is Hinemaurea ki Wharekahika Marae.
- On Day 17, the Ara passes through bush and farmland, following along the Wharekahika River before finishing in Potaka near Potaka Marae. This marks the northern and western end of Te Tairawhiti and the rohe of Ngati Porou, forming a natural transition point between Iwi boundaries and the next proposed phase of the Ara.

4.8.2 Environmental setting and values

The specific environmental setting and values within the Standard Consent Corridor for Segment 8: Matakaoa are outlined in Table 4.8 below.

[55] Tairāwhiti Maps – Flood Hazard (Non Plan) layer.

Table 4.8: Environmental setting and values within Segment 8: Matakaoa

Ecological values (vegetation, indigenous biodiversity)	Segment 8 is located within the Pukeamaru ED. MASCV areas are located at: • Karatuwhero Estuary (05-015) (km 209); and • Hicks Bay (05-014) (km 221). TASCV areas are located at: • Te Araroa (PR6) (km 209 and 212 – 214); • Te Koau (PR1) (km 215 – 218); and • Hicks Bay Dunes (PR10) (km 218.4 – 219). PMA areas are located at: • Te Araroa (PR6) (km 209 and 212 – 214); • Te Koau (PR1) (km 215 – 218); • Hicks Bay Dunes (PR10) (km 219); and • Oxbow (PR30) (km 228 – 229). Hochstetter's frog have been recorded near Potaka at around km 232.
Freshwater (wetlands, streams and rivers)	The Ara crosses (and is adjacent to) seven Scheduled Rivers and Streams, being: • Karakatuwhero River (G15A, G15C) (km 212); • Oruakarahea Stream (G15A) (km 214); • Te Kapa Stream (G15A) (km 219); • Wharekahika River (G15A) (km 221, 232 and 234); • Makarae Stream (G15A) (km 223); • Tapirau Stream 1 (G15A) (km 224); and • Oweka Stream (G15A) (km 238). Te Whare Wetlands (G17) (km 209 and 212 – 214) is a Scheduled Waterbodies. • A number of non-scheduled mapped wetlands are present within the Standard Consent Corridor.
Coastal environmental values	SVMA areas are located in coastal areas between: • Te Araroa and Hicks Bay (km 207 – 222). The Standard Consent Corridor is within the CMA at Te Araroa (km 207 – 208), Karakatuwhero River (km 212), Onepoto Bay (km 218 – 218.4) and Wharekahika River (km 221).
Coastal hazards	The areas where the Ara follows the coastline at Te Araroa (km 207 – 209 and 211 – 212), Onepoto Bay and Hicks Bay (km 218 – 221) are ASCH. Areas at Te Araroa (km 207) are identified as areas liable to flooding.[56] The Geotechnical Assessment (Appendix N) identifies a key area of potential slope instability (km 215).

[56] Tairāwhiti Maps – Flood Hazard (Non Plan) layer.

Landscapes, natural character and features, and amenity values	ONFL areas are located between: • Te Araroa and Hicks Bay (Unit 2) (km 207 – 222)
Cultural and heritage values	No cultural or historic heritage sites or areas are mapped within the Standard Consent Corridor.

4.8.3 Proposal

Further to the information in Section 3, and in particular Table 3.2, specific details relating to the proposed works within Segment 8: Matakaoa are as follows:

Bridges

Three new swing bridges[57] are proposed to cross the Karakatuwhero River at Te Araroa Road (km 212) (Figure 4.7), the Wharekahika River near the Potaka route toilet (km 234) (Figure 4.8) and the Oweka Stream adjacent to SH35 (km 238) (Figure 4.9).

- The Karakatuwhero River swing bridge (CMA) will be approximately 100 m in length, with 12 m steel suspension uprights, 33 m back stay and concrete deadman anchors.
- The Wharekahika River swing bridge will be approximately 40 m in length, with 5 m timber suspension uprights, 14 m back stay and timber deadman anchors.
- The Oweka Stream swing bridge will be approximately 50 m in length, with 5.5 m timber suspension uprights, 17 m back stay and timber deadman anchors.

[57] Waterbody Crossing No. 138, 155 and 158 (Appendix E); refer to the images of Bucklerburn Bridge provided by Abseil Access in Appendix F for concept designs.

Figure 4.7: Karakatuwhero River Swing Bridge (km 212) (Source: TRMP, 2025)

Figure 4.8: Wharekahika River Swing Bridge (km 234) (Source: TRMP, 2025)

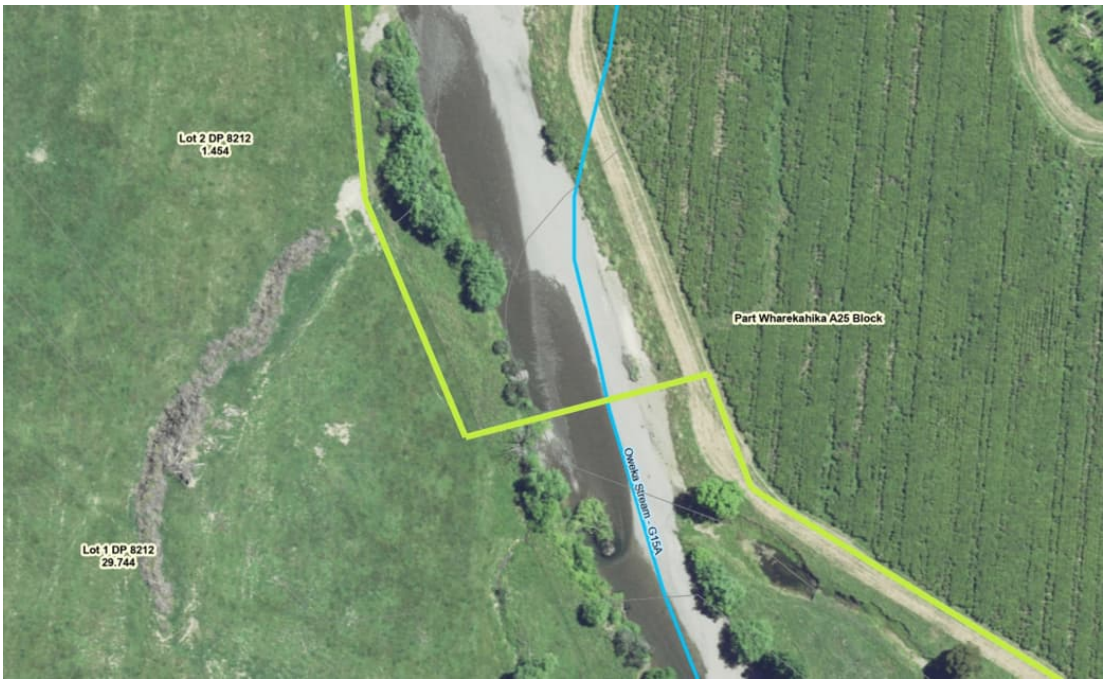

Figure 4.9: Oweka Stream Swing Bridge (km 238) (Source: TRMP, 2025)

Toilets

One new toilet is proposed to the east of Potaka (km 234).

Earthworks and vegetation clearance

Based on conservative estimates, the maximum anticipated area of earthworks across approximately 33 km of ara is 23,870 m^2 and the maximum anticipated area of indigenous vegetation removal within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA is 11,950 m^2. Additionally, up to 11,930 m^2 of vegetation not within a PMA, TASCV or SVMA may be cleared.

5 Resource consent requirements

5.1 Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan

Resource consents are being sought under the TRMP to enable the project as described in this AEE. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the reasons for consent and Appendix R provides a more detailed assessment.

The resource consent requirements included in this AEE have been refined through the amendment process and therefore vary from the application as lodged. However, the overall activity status and the nature and scale of the effects has not changed.

The rules relevant for this project have been identified on a conservative basis, meaning that consent is sought under some rules where it is likely consent will not be required once the detailed design has been finalised. Specifically, the consent corridor approach enables the Ara to be aligned during detailed design in a way that avoids or reduces certain works which would otherwise be a reason for consent. In addition, in some instances, consent is sought under a higher activity status rule (e.g. discretionary as opposed to controlled or restricted discretionary) on a conservative basis. The assessment in Appendix R identifies where this logic has been applied.

This application intends to include all necessary consents to enable the project (as described in this AEE), even if not specifically identified in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Resource consent requirements under the Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan

Proposed activity	Rule reference	Activity status
Rule Table C3.14.3 – Rules for Coastal Environment Overlay		
Vegetation clearance in the Coastal Environment Overlay	3.14.3(9)	Restricted Discretionary
Land disturbance associated with construction and maintenance of the Ara, including in relation to single-span bridges, in the Coastal Environment Overlay	3.14.3(10)	Restricted Discretionary
Construction of single-span bridges in the Coastal Environment Overlay	3.14.3(11)	Restricted Discretionary
Tree planting, vegetation clearance and land disturbance for ara and single-span bridges within 200 m of MHWS	3.14.3(13)	Discretionary
Rule Table C4.1.12 – Rules for Cultural Heritage Overlays		
Land disturbance within the buffer area of an archaeological site within Heritage Overlay 2	4.1.12(2)	Discretionary
Land disturbance within the buffer areas of a waahi tapu site within Heritage Overlay 3	4.1.12(6)	Discretionary
Works within Heritage Overlay 4	4.1.12(12)	Restricted Discretionary
Rule Table C6.2.12 – Rules for Solid Discharges		
Deposition of clean fill material (gravel/clean fill)	6.2.12(7)	Discretionary
Rule Table C6.3.5 – Rules for Vegetation Clearance and Establishment [in bed of stream]		

Proposed activity	Rule reference	Activity status
Vegetation removal in beds of rivers and streams associated with single-span bridge or culvert construction.	6.3.5(3)	Discretionary
Rule Table C6.4.5 – Rules for Riparian Management Areas		
Vegetation clearance within the Riparian Management Area of Schedule G15 waterbody	6.4.5(16)	Restricted Discretionary
Vegetation clearance within other riparian management areas	6.4.5(19)	Restricted Discretionary
Land disturbance for construction of the Ara and structures	6.4.5(20)	Restricted Discretionary
Construction of new single-span bridge structures and signage within the riparian margin area	6.4.5(21)	Restricted Discretionary
Vegetation clearance within 10 m of the bank of a Protected Watercourse identified in Schedule G21	6.4.5(23)	Discretionary
Rule Table C7.1.6 – Rules for Land Disturbance and Vegetation Clearance		
Earthworks, land disturbance and vegetation clearance in Land Overlay 1	7.1.6(9)	Discretionary
Earthworks, land disturbance and vegetation clearance in Land Overlay 2	7.1.6(20)	Discretionary
Earthworks, land disturbance and vegetation clearance in Land Overlay 3	7.1.6(32)	Discretionary
Rule Table C8.2.3 – Regional Rules for Flood Hazard		
Earthworks associated with the construction of the Ara, and in particular the timber bridge at Kaitawa Stream	8.2.3(5)	Restricted Discretionary
Installation of timber bridge at Kaitawa Stream	8.2.3(9)	Restricted Discretionary
Earthworks in F4 Flood Overlay	8.2.4(27)	Restricted Discretionary
Rule Table C8.5.7 – Regional Rules for Coastal Hazards (Coastal Hazard Overlay)		
Construction of beach transitions in CHZ1 (Extreme Risk)	8.5.7(3)	Discretionary
Construction of beach transitions in CHZ2 (High Risk)	8.5.7(9)	Discretionary
Construction of beach transitions in CHZ3 (Moderate Risk)	8.5.7(13)	Discretionary
Construction of beach transitions in CHZ54 (Safety Buffer)	8.5.7(15)	Discretionary
Rule Table C9.1.6 – Rules for Natural Heritage Overlay		
Outstanding Landscape Area Overlay		
Vegetation clearance in ONFL	9.1.6(10)	Restricted Discretionary
Land disturbance in ONFL	9.1.6(12)	Restricted Discretionary
Construction of a new single-span bridge and toilets in ONFL	9.1.6(13)	Restricted Discretionary
Protection Management Overlay Area		
Vegetation clearance in PMA	9.1.6(23)	Restricted Discretionary

Proposed activity	Rule reference	Activity status
Land disturbance in PMA	9.1.6(25)	Restricted Discretionary
Construction of a new single-span bridge in PMA	9.1.6(26)	Restricted Discretionary
Indigenous Vegetation Clearance Outside the Protection Management Area		
Indigenous vegetation clearance outside the PMA	9.1.6(36) 9.1.6(37) 9.1.6(38) 9.1.6(39) 9.1.6(40) 9.1.6(41) 9.1.6(42) 9.1.6(43)	Restricted Discretionary Restricted Discretionary Restricted Discretionary Restricted Discretionary Restricted Discretionary Discretionary Discretionary Discretionary
Rule Table C11.1.6 – Rules for Display of Signs – All Zones		
Installation of wayfinding markers and signage	11.1.6(8) 11.1.6(10)	Discretionary Discretionary
Rule Table C11.1.11 – Rules for Display of Signs – Rural Zones		
Installation of wayfinding markers and signage	11.1.11(2) 11.1.11(3) 11.1.11(4)	Restricted Discretionary Discretionary Discretionary
Rule Table DC1.6.1 – Rules for Structures [in the SVMA]		
Temporary structures in the SVMA for construction purposes	1.6.1(11)	Controlled
Minor alteration or maintenance of existing bridges in SVMA	1.6.1(15)	Discretionary
Construction of new single-span bridge structure in SVMA	1.6.1(22)	Discretionary
Rule Table DC1.6.3 – Rules for the Occupation of Space in the CMA [in the SVMA)		
Occupation for single-span bridge structures SVMA	1.6.3(5)	Discretionary
Rule Table DC2.6.1 – Rules for Structures [in the GCMA]		
Minor alteration or maintenance of existing bridges in the GCMA	2.6.1(15)	Discretionary
Construction of new single-span bridge structure in the GCMA	2.6.1(21)	Discretionary
Rule Table DC2.6.3 – Rules for the Occupation of Space in the CMA [in the GCMA]		
Occupation for single-span bridge structure	2.6.3(5)	Discretionary
Rule Table DD4.6.1A – All Rural Zones		
Establishment of the Ara and associated buildings, structures and temporary construction laydown areas	4.6.1A(22)	Discretionary
Rule Table DD5.6.1C – Heritage Reserve Zone – *Applies to the Ara at Okitu (km 1) and Pouawa (km 13 and 14).*		
Vegetation clearance in the Heritage Reserve Zone	5.6.1C(9)	Discretionary
Construction of ara structure (single-span bridge) that does not comply with standards	5.6.1C(8)	Restricted Discretionary

Overall, resource consent is required under the TRMP as a discretionary activity.

5.2 National environmental standards

5.2.1 Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020

There are two aspects of the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 (NES-F) that are relevant to the Project, being works in and in proximity to natural inland wetlands and the placement of culverts. These are addressed in turn below.

The Ara concept alignment has been developed to avoid mapped wetlands wherever possible. In some limited cases, the ara traverses or is directly adjacent to mapped wetlands. In such locations the ara is generally limited to wayfinding only and no physical works that would trigger the requirement for consents under the NES-F are proposed or anticipated (including vegetation clearance or earthworks[58]). The one potential exception to this is the Te Whare Wetlands at Te Araroa (km 212 to km 214), where minor earthworks associated with guardrails and vegetation clearance to enable appropriate sightlines may be undertaken. In the event that physical works are required, the Trust will work together with NZTA to agree the manner in which the works will be undertaken.[59] These activities are not proposed or sought to be authorised by this consent. Consequently, if required, separate consent will be sought.

During detailed design there will be an assessment of whether any unmapped wetlands are present. As enabled by the consent corridor approach, the Ara will either be designed to avoid any activities that would trigger NES-F consent obligations (i.e., vegetation clearance or earthworks within or within 10 m of any wetland), or any resource consents required under the NES-F will be sought separately.

The CMP identifies that culverts will be avoided in permanent or intermittent streams wherever possible as this will minimise effects and costs. If required following confirmation of the detailed design, culverts will be designed to meet the permitted activity conditions set out under regulation 70 of the NES-F.

Accordingly, no resource consents are sought under the NES-F.

5.2.2 Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulations 2011

There are two aspects of the NES Soil that are relevant to the Project, being disturbing soil and change of use. These are addressed in turn below.

In regard to disturbing soil, in the event that a HAIL site is identified during detailed design, works will be managed in accordance with the relevant permitted activity conditions set out under regulation 8(3) the NES Soil, to be confirmed by a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Practitioner (SQEP) as a part of a Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) that will be completed for each stage of works. If compliance with the conditions is not achievable, a separate resource consent under the NES Soil will be sought.

[58] Any physical works would be limited to the installation of wayfinding markers that are equivalent to fence posts and therefore do not fall within the definition of "earthworks" in the National Planning Standards 2019.

[59] These works may be required to ensure safety for Ara users and users of SH35 as it travels through the Te Whare Wetlands in this location and the proposed alignment of the Ara here is within the road corridor. If the works are necessary, as they are located within the NZTA corridor, NZTA may undertake the works itself as part of normal road maintenance activities. On this basis, the Trust would not need to seek consent to authorise this activity.

In regard to change of use, in the event that a HAIL site is identified during detailed design, a PSI will be prepared and submitted to GDC in accordance with regulation 8(4).

If compliance with regulations 8(3) or 8(4) is not achievable, a separate resource consent under the NES Soil will be sought.

Accordingly, no resource consents are sought under the NES Soil.

5.3 Permitted activities

An assessment of permitted activities is provided in Appendix R.

5.4 Other regulations

No other regulations apply.

5.5 Other consents and approvals required

5.5.1 Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Modification or destruction of an archaeological site requires an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. Although the final Ara alignment will aim to avoid recorded sites (whereby the exact location of the Ara within the consent corridor is confirmed during detailed design to avoid the relevant place or site), given the proximity of the Ara to a number of archaeological sites an application for an archaeological authority will be made prior to the commencement of works.

5.5.2 Wildlife Act 1953

A number of species that are present, or may be present, along the Ara are protected under the Wildlife Act 1953 and therefore a wildlife permit is required from DOC to hold, catch, handle or release wildlife. To the extent required under the Wildlife Act, and to give effect to the mitigation measures proposed in the draft management plans and the EcIA (Appendix H), the Trust will apply to DOC for a Wildlife Act Authority (WAA) to authorise any disturbance, handling and relocation of protected species prior to the commencement of works.

5.5.3 Building consent

The Trust will obtain building consents as required for new structures.

5.5.4 Corridor Access Request

The Trust will apply for a Corridor Access Request as required for works within the road corridor.

5.5.5 Easements

The Trust will continue to meet with landowners as required to negotiate a legal easement to traverse their property. This includes landowners of multiply-owned whenua Maori blocks, who are the majority along the Ara, with sensitivity to the collective nature of decision-making and the requirements of the Te Ture Whenua Maori Act 1993. In the event that an easement cannot be obtained, either that ara will go into abeyance while others are prioritised or the Ara will be realigned, and any additional consents or a change of conditions under section 127 of the RMA will be sought as required.

5.5.6 Reserves Act 1977

The Ara traverses public conservation land at Nuhiti Q Scenic Reserve to the south of Tokomaru Bay. The Trust will obtain relevant concessions from DOC before commencing any works or the Ara becoming operational in the relevant location.

6 Consultation

A Consultation Summary is provided in Appendix Q which provides an overview of the extensive engagement that has been undertaken to-date. Te Ara Tipuna Proposal 2021 and Te Ara Tipuna Trust Deed are also provided in Appendix U and Appendix V, respectively. The engagement process carried out to-date is outlined below.

6.1 Background

Regarding the overall approach, Te Ara Tipuna has been developed by those who whakapapa to the whenua and live within the rohe. Specifically, the Trustees and project team are engaging from within, forming part of the very communities, marae, and land groupings that others typically seek to consult. This position carries both deeper responsibility and understanding, and has shaped the approach to engagement, consultation, and ongoing relationship-building throughout the life of the project.

The overarching vision of Te Ara Tipuna is to create a 657 km multi modal trail - hiking, biking and horse trekking – between Gisborne and Opotiki. This involves four Iwi and three territorial authorities. Ngati Porou was always the first priority of the project, and the cultural relationships and imperatives drove the invitation for our neigbouring Iwi, our tuakana, karangatanga maha, to be included – Te Whanau-a-Apanui, Ngai Tai ki Torere, and Te Whakatohea.

In 2024, Trustees and the Project Manager met with the leadership of Te Whanau-a-Apanui, Ngai Tai ki Torere, and Te Whakatohea to discuss the proposal. While there was general interest in the kaupapa, it became clear that the timing and priorities of those iwi did not align with the proposed resource consent process. As a result, and consistent with the project's original intention, the team made the decision to focus solely on the Ngati Porou section of the Ara, which accounts for approximately 345 km of the total route. This approach was communicated to and largely agreed with by iwi leadership prior to being formalised in the reduced extent letter circulated to submitters and the public in March 2025.

The scale and ambition of the full vision became increasingly clear through consultation, and the decision to reduce the scope of this application reflects both that practical reality and a respect for iwi-led timing.

6.2 Key engagement activities

On 17 August 2021, Te Ara Tipuna was presented to the Board of Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou, the legal representative of the Iwi, the single Iwi authority for the rohe between its traditional boundaries Te Toka-a-Taiau (Gisborne) and Potikirua (Potaka) and therefore across the entire 345 km length of the Ara. The project was unanimously endorsed by the Runanganui. Ongoing support, including fundholding by TRONP 2022-202460 culminated in a letter of support dated 4 December 2024.

On 6 September 2022, Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou prioritised Te Ara Tipuna for engagement at its first post-Covid Hui Taumata with the Prime Minister and Ministers. Strong support for the Kaupapa translated into a successful grant application and approved public funding to get Te Ara Tipuna underway in 2023. Government support through public funding has continued through to July 2025.

On 29 April and 1 May 2023, the pre-introductory hui of Te Ara Tipuna were held at the two central Iwi meeting venues, Te Tini o Porou in Kaiti, Gisborne and Uepohatu Hall at Whakarua Park, Ruatoria. Between 7 and 18 June 2023, a series of seven hui were held from Tolaga Bay to

[60] Until the establishment of *Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust* in March 2024.

Opotiki. These hui represent the commencement of a comprehensive consultation process carried out across a two-year period from April 2023 to June 2025, and which is proposed to be ongoing.

The consultation process ensured opportunities for participation at every level, in single or several capacities, in person and online, informally and formally, generated by the Trust, in response to requests and invitations, marae AGMs, at significant local and regional events, Pa Wars and Tamararo, Regional Economic Summit, Council, joining regional roadshows on health, community development, pest control, education. Notably, an online communication plan was developed to support in-person engagements. The project's website, launched on 10 June 2024, also serves as a central platform for sharing project information and updates.

Participation was invited by Hapu, Rohenga Tipuna, Marae, hui whenua, landowners, their governance entities (incorporations and trusts), government agencies (Te Puni Kokiri, Te Tumu Paeroa), institutions (Te Kooti Whenua Maori, Te Herenga-a-Nuku) individuals and groups, schools and kura, sectors, farmers, hunters, hikers, cyclists, nature-based workers (Raukumara Pae Maunga).

Venues included the fire brigade in Tolaga Bay, the rugby clubrooms in Tokomaru Bay, the RSA in Tikitiki, the kura at Whangaparaoa, the Runanga offices at Opotiki, the business offices at BDO Gisborne, the meeting rooms at the Gisborne District Council, Poho-o-Rawiri, Iritekura, Kariaka, Mangahanea, Hinerupe marae. Private homes, cafes, the library, many times on the side of the road, rugby fields, netball courts, the Four Square, Raglan Roast, and along the 1km model track at Ruatoria.

6.3 Summary

Since 2021, the Te Ara Tipuna project team has actively engaged with iwi, hapu, landowners, communities, and government entities across Tairawhiti. Between November 2021 and April 2025, over 195 landowner engagement, 138 community engagements and 89 Iwi, Hapu and stakeholder engagements were carried out.

Landowners continue to be identified in the Consultation Summary (Appendix Q) as the primary stakeholders in the engagement process, with the project team maintaining a commitment to supporting their aspirations and priorities. Strategic partnerships with central government, regional working groups, and relevant agencies have also been a consistent focus.

Engagement is proposed to continue over the course of this project, including in accordance with engagement as set out in a Stakeholder and Communication Engagement Management Plan (SCEMP) which forms part of the Proposed Conditions (Appendix T).

7 Assessment of effects on the environment

7.1 Introduction

Section 104(1)(a) and Clause 2(3) of Schedule 4 of the RMA require an assessment of the activity's effects on the environment. The detail of this assessment should correspond with the scale and significance of the effects that the activity may have on the environment.

The assessment in the following sections identifies and assesses the types of effects that may arise from the proposed activity provided for under this application. This assessment also outlines the measures that the Trust proposes to avoid, remedy or mitigate any potential adverse effects on the environment.

The application falls for consideration overall as a discretionary activity. This assessment draws on information provided in the technical reports contained within Appendix F to Appendix Q and addresses the following effects:

- Positive effects;
- Ecological effects;
- Landscape, visual and natural character effects;
- Natural hazard effects;
- Coastal processes;
- Cultural effects;
- Historic heritage and archaeological effects;
- Traffic effects;
- Noise and vibration effects;
- Navigation effects; and
- Operational effects.

It should be acknowledged that the assessment of effects in this section and within the technical reports has been undertaken on a conservative, worst-case scenario basis. Specifically, the Tracker (Appendix D) has estimated the anticipated nature and scale of works by applying a set of assumptions informed by terrain characteristics, gradients, and environmental features within each segment of the Ara concept alignment.

While the detailed design phase may result in refinements to the specific nature and scale of works, it is expected that the final scope will be less extensive than what has been assessed, due to the conservative nature of the initial estimates.

To ensure that the actual effects of the Project do not exceed those assessed, upper limits on potential impacts will be secured through specific restrictions as reflected in the Proposed Conditions (Appendix T), for example maximum ara widths.

These constraints effectively confine the envelope of effects, providing assurance that the final implementation will remain within the bounds of what has been evaluated.

7.2 Positive effects

Te Ara Tipuna will enable a number of positive effects including cultural, economic and recreational benefits across Te Tairawhiti. Broadly, the Ara is expected to provide cultural/relational connections, stimulus for businesses and employment services, as well as unique experiences for both the uri (descendants) of the land and the tu-waewae (guests) who visit. These positive effects are detailed further below.

As detailed in the CIA provided in Appendix M, Te Ara Tipuna is a multi-layered project which currently centres around the whanau and whenua of Ngati Porou. The key focus of this Project is

restoring relationships between people, whenua, and shared histories. Broadly, this outcome will be enabled by reconnecting and maintaining accessway infrastructure for pedestrians. More specific opportunities available to whanau, landowners, hapu, and iwi as a result of Te Ara Tipuna are outlined in the CIA and summarised below:

- Provide mana whenua, other landowners and communities with the ability to practically apply rangatiratanga and mana over the areas under their direct control.
- Enhancing cultural knowledge by enabling and providing information on the sites of significance, including their matauranga, ecology and eco-systems. This information along with other narratives/ information are planned to be designed collaboratively and captured in the track signage and Arawhenua passport system.
- Opportunity to deepen the relationship whanau, hapu and iwi have with their land and therefore their natural resources.

As outlined in the Social Impact Assessment (Appendix P),[61] the Ara will deliver a number of economic benefits to Te Tairawhiti. The construction of the Ara will create new employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers and will support local contractors. Once operational, ongoing employment opportunities will be created through maintenance, hospitality, tourism and ara operations, including social enterprises and local tourism ventures led by hapu and whanau, and increased tourism will stimulate economic activity.

In terms of recreational benefits, the Project will significantly enhance public access to and along the CMA and rivers (refer to the Recreation Assessment in Appendix O). [62] Specifically, where practicable the track will be aligned with, and connect to existing recreation tracks, beach areas above high tide, farm tracks and unformed legal (paper) roads. In other areas it will be located alongside SH35 and formed local roads. Accordingly, the Ara will provide for greater immersive experience of the coastal and river environments, for whanau and visitors alike. In some instances, the Ara may also provide an alternative accessway in civil emergency situations.

As stated in Section 3.12, while not required to offset or compensate for residual ecological effects, ecological restoration enhancement planting is proposed for any permanently removed indigenous vegetation from identified ecologically sensitive areas at a ratio of 2:1. As such, the Ara will have environmental benefits related to indigenous biodiversity.

Overall, a range of significant positive effects are enabled through the development, construction and maintenance of the proposed ~345 km ara between Makorori near Gisborne and Potaka (and additional Port Awanui Loop and Hikurangi Loop tracks).

7.3 Ecological effects

7.3.1 Introduction

As described in Section 2.4, Te Tairawhiti is a diverse ecological setting with a variety of "Threatened" and "At Risk" indigenous plants and fauna species known to occur within the vicinity of the proposed Ara. An EcIA and draft ESMPP (Appendix H) have been prepared by Virdis Environmental Consultants to provide a broad assessment of terrestrial, freshwater and coastal

[61] This technical assessment has not been updated to reflect the changes to the Proposal, including the changes to the alignment.
[62] This technical assessment has not been updated to reflect the changes to the Proposal, including the changes to the alignment.

ecology effects across the whole Ara, as well as site-specific assessments for identified areas of protected ecological significance.[63,64]

An effects management framework has been developed within the EcIA which includes an ecological values traffic light system that highlights areas of the proposed Ara that require higher levels of ecological effects restrictions. Under the traffic light system, areas of the Ara with ecological values that have been assessed as high or moderate are categorised as 'red' or 'orange', respectively.

Areas of protected ecological significance with no existing track or road, indigenous forest and broadleaved indigenous hardwoods without existing tracks, sand dunes where a new crossing may need to be formed, large river crossings (bed width > 20 m) requiring new single-span bridges, and locations where the Ara crosses a potential wetland[65] have been categorised as red areas.

Areas protected for ecological values with an existing track or road, indigenous forest and broadleaved indigenous hardwoods where tracks or roads are present, kānuka and/or mānuka dominated forest without existing access, stream and river crossings less than 20 m wide using new single-span bridges or wayfinding, locations near water bodies scheduled in the TRMP, areas where existing roads or paths may affect adjacent wetlands during construction, sections of the Ara that follow along beaches, and shrubland have been categorised as orange areas.

The assessment identified 8% of the Ara as 'red' and 27% as 'orange' as shown in Appendix B of the EcIA.

The ESMPP outlines a methodology for pre-construction ecological surveys and provides guidance for developing stage specific Ecological Management Plans (EMPs). These measures, as required by the Proposed Conditions (Appendix T), have been developed on a precautionary basis and will ensure that the conservative envelope of ecological effects that has been assessed will be appropriately managed and mitigated in light of the ecological values that are confirmed through the surveys to achieve EcIA objectives and outcomes. The EcIA and ESMPP are summarised in the following sections.

7.3.2 Effects on terrestrial ecology

Potential adverse construction effects on terrestrial ecology include loss of vegetation extent and rare plants through vegetation clearance, fauna habitat loss and fragmentation including edge effects[66], loss of connectivity between flora and fauna communities, effects on vegetation and fauna health, spread of weed species, mortality and injury of fauna, and disturbance of fauna from noise and vibration.

The Ara has been designed to minimise ecological impact by setting a maximum clearance width of 1.5 m where indigenous vegetation clearance is required, and a narrower, more restrictive width of 1 m in identified ecologically sensitive areas where possible.[67] These maximum vegetation clearance widths may only be exceeded in limited areas where low bench cuts, single-

[63] PMA, TASCV, MASCV, Ngā Whenua Rāhui Kawenata covenanted areas and QEII National Trust covenanted areas.
[64] It is noted that a conservative approach was taken to identifying and assessing the potential ecological values that may be affected by the Project in lieu of a full walkover of the Ara and that the likelihood of encountering the flora and fauna identified by the EcIA varies across the extent of the Ara. Pre-construction confirmatory surveys will be undertaken during detailed design to provide a more detailed assessment of ecological values.
[65] Identified by the GDC Provisional Regional Wetland Assessment 2022 GIS map layer
[66] Edge effects are defined in the EcIA as "indirect, typically adverse effects that result from changes to an area of vegetation or habitat as a result of adjacent impacts (e.g., increased light, desiccation)."
[67] The locations along the Ara where the 1 m vegetation clearance limit is not possible are identified in Section 4.7 of the CMP (Appendix F).

span bridges, toilets and steps are proposed to be constructed. No toilets are proposed in ecologically sensitive areas.

Based on these parameters, it is estimated that up to 12.5 ha[68] of indigenous vegetation (approximately 360 m^2 per km)[69] will be cleared to form the Ara along its entire 345 km length. The EcIA notes that the adverse ecological effects of linear vegetation clearance on flora and fauna connectivity are less than the effects of compact clearance within a single area and are unlikely to result in significant edge effects or habitat fragmentation as canopy cover above the ara will be maintained. Additionally, the potential vegetation clearance represents a small proportion (0.018%) of the approximately 68,000 ha of indigenous vegetation within 5 km of the ara.

To mitigate the actual or potential construction effects of the Ara on terrestrial flora and fauna, the following measures have been recommended in the EcIA and ESMPP on a conservative basis to constrain the envelope of effects that have been assessed:

- Avoid removing native trees with a dbh of 30 cm or greater outside of the road corridor, and native trees with a dbh of 15 cm or greater unless there is no practical alternative ara location within the consent corridor;
- Conduct confirmatory pre-construction surveys in 'red' and in some 'orange' areas identified in the EcIA to:
- Confirm ecological values and effects on vegetation and fauna are consistent with that assessed in the EcIA;
  - Identify additional sensitive areas where a 1 m ara width should apply;
  - Note and avoid removal of rare plant species (if avoidance is not possible, relocate, and if relocation is not possible, replant at a 3:1 ratio); and
  - Inform the alignment of the ara within the consent corridor during detailed design;
- Prepare an Ecological Management Plan (EMP) for each construction stage to summarise confirmatory survey findings, outline specific mitigation measures and confirm ecological effects, after mitigation, will not exceed assessed levels;
- Each EMP will include the following stage-specific measures:
  - Ensure ara location avoids rare plant species, or plants are relocated. Where avoidance or relocation are not possible, 3:1 replanting will be provided close to the area of removal with eco-sourced stock from the same ecological district;
  - Where clearance exceeds the 1 m width in sensitive areas for construction but is not needed for operational purposes, native vegetation will be replanted at a ratio of 1:1 with eco-sourced species suitable for the environment and ecological district at a minimum density of 1.4 metre centres;
  - Areas of rehabilitation planting will be subject to monitoring and maintenance during the establishment phase (five years following planting), with any identified dead or diseased trees during that period required to be replaced;
  - Any rehabilitation planting shall be completed within the first full planting season (April–September) following completion of Ara construction within the identified ecologically sensitive area; and
  - Implement fauna management during vegetation clearance (e.g., pre-clearance surveys for bats and birds, lizard relocation);
- The CMP requiring the use of hand-held tools for vegetation removal in sensitive areas to reduce impacts on fauna.

[68] Upper conservative estimate based on information provided in the Tracker.
[69] This is approximately 5.1 % of the area of a rugby field, per km.

Additionally, ecological enhancement planting is proposed at a 2:1 ratio for any permanently removed indigenous vegetation within identified Ecologically Sensitive Areas. As outlined in the EcIA (Appendix H), this enhancement planting is a voluntary initiative by the Trust and is not required to address any residual adverse ecological effects.

The EcIA also notes that there may be adverse effects due to the ongoing operation of the Ara, including ongoing damage to vegetation and effects on fauna associated with ara maintenance, spread of plant pathogens and weed species, increase in predators, and noise and physical disturbance from increased human and dog activity. Dog access management, waste management procedures, pest control, user education and boot cleaning stations are recommended in the EcIA as mitigation measures to mitigate actual or potential effects resulting from the ongoing operation of the Ara. These are addressed in the OMMP (Appendix G).

Subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures outlined above, the EcIA concludes that the overall magnitude of effect on terrestrial ecological values, including both vegetation and fauna, during construction and once operational is expected to be low.

7.3.3 Effects on freshwater ecology

Potential direct or indirect adverse effects on freshwater habitats may occur during construction, including loss of riparian margin, discharge of sediment or other contaminants, and disturbance of fauna surrounding wetlands.

The installation of new infrastructure for waterbody crossings has been minimised by prioritising the use of wayfinding posts to mark crossing points by foot or existing infrastructure and road crossings where practicable. Seven timber bridges and eight swing bridges have been proposed at crossing locations where crossing by foot or by use of existing infrastructure is not possible. These single-span bridges will be designed and constructed to minimise vegetation clearance and footprint requirements and avoid instream works, as outlined in the CMP (Appendix F). While the general approach of the Ara is to avoid culverts where possible, in the event that culverts are required, they will be installed to meet the permitted activity standards of the NES-F and TRMP to ensure that fish passage is maintained.

The Ara concept alignment has been designed to avoid works directly in, or within 10 m of, natural inland wetlands. In areas where the ara is close to an indicative mapped wetland, or a wetland area is identified in pre-construction surveys, the ara will be realigned within the consent corridor.

The Ara concept alignment has been developed to avoid mapped wetlands where possible. In some limited cases, the ara traverses or is directly adjacent to mapped wetlands. In these locations, the ara is generally limited to wayfinding only and no physical works within 10 m of wetlands are proposed. The exception to this is the Te Whare Wetlands at Te Araroa (km 212 to km 214), where minor earthworks associated with guardrails and vegetation clearance to enable appropriate sightlines may be undertaken. As discussed above, in the event that physical works are required, the Trust will work together with NZTA to agree the manner in which the works will be undertaken.

As recommended in the EcIA and ESMPP, the following measures will be implemented to mitigate the actual or potential construction effects of the Ara on freshwater ecology:

- Implement stage-specific confirmatory pre-construction surveys and the EMP approach as outlined in Section 7.3.2 above, adapted for freshwater ecosystems;
- If culvert installation is unavoidable, confirmatory surveys must be undertaken for fish and Hochstetter's frog habitat;
- Each EMP will include the following stage-specific measures:

- If culvert installation or stream works affect fish habitat, a fish management plan will be prepared for relocation and exclusion;
- If Hochstetter's frogs are present, no in-stream works will occur;
- If required, culverts will meet permitted activity standards and will be designed in accordance with the New Zealand Fish Passage Guidelines to avoid fish passage effects;
- Where the ara follows a stream or river (outside the bed), the path will be located as far as practicable from the edge of the waterbody within the consented corridor; and
- Pre-construction bird surveys will be conducted within 30 m of a wetland for prior to any works that are to be undertaken within 30 m of a wetland during nesting season.

Once operational, minimal sediment discharge from the track is expected and the narrow design of the Ara in conjunction with runoff management protocols detailed in the CMP (Appendix F) will prevent changes to hydrology that would affect freshwater ecosystems in nearby streams, rivers and wetlands. However, there is the potential for adverse effects associated with disturbance of in-stream fauna from foot traffic and human activity through or along streams and riverbeds. It is proposed that these effects will be mitigated by installing wayfinding markers at stream or river crossing sites to concentrate foot traffic, and educating ara users about wildlife and the risk of disturbing nesting birds in these areas. Increased dog activity could result in physical disturbance and sometimes mortality of indigenous fauna. These effects will be mitigated by managing dog access along the Ara (addressed in the OMMP (Appendix G)), particularly in ecologically sensitive areas including the Hikurangi Loop portion traversing the Mangatangaruru and Umukokako Streams (approximately km 29 to km 33).

Subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures outlined above, the EcIA concludes that the overall magnitude of effect on freshwater ecological values during construction and once operational is expected to be low.

7.3.4 Effects on coastal ecology

Construction activities within the coastal environment have potential direct and indirect adverse effects on coastal habitats, including disturbance, mortality or injury of coastal fauna and loss of habitat.

Works proposed within the coastal environment are very limited. Where the ara follows the beach in fourteen sections, wayfinding will be used, and no track construction is required. In twelve of these sections where the ara transitions from the terrestrial environment through sand dunes onto the beach, existing crossings will be utilised and the effects on coastal ecology are expected to be negligible to low.

Two beaches – Te Wharau Beach (km 17 Port Awanui Loop) and Hautai Beach (km 191-194) – have a potential need for new crossings[70] to be established, which may disturb dune or coastal vegetation and fauna. In these locations, and other sensitive areas, the following mitigation measures will be implemented to address potential ecological effects on coastal habitats during both the construction and operation phases of the Ara:

- Realign the Ara within the Sensitive Area Consent Corridor to reduce disturbance as far as practicable;
- Implement stage-specific pre-construction surveys and EMP approach as outlined in Section 7.3.2 above, adapted for coastal ecosystems, particularly where new beach transitions are proposed;

[70] New dune crossings may be required where there is not an existing track. Works will be restricted to minor vegetation clearance.

- Each EMP will include the following stage-specific measures:
  - Ensure ara location avoids rare plant species or plants are relocated. Where avoidance or relocation are not possible, 3:1 ratio replanting will be provided; and
  - Implement measures during coastal vegetation clearance to avoid disturbance to bats and nesting birds, provide for the translocation of katipo spiders where dune vegetation clearance is required, and lizard relocation where lizard habitat is affected and there is a risk of lizard mortality;
- Manage dog access along the Ara through the OMMP,[71] particularly in ecologically sensitive coastal areas; and
- Educate Ara users regarding coastal wildlife, the risk of disturbing nesting birds and dune vegetation, and the importance of staying on the designated Ara route.

The construction of single-span bridges in the coastal environment also has the potential to result in adverse effects on marine mammals and birds in terms of construction noise and vibration generated from piling and associated works. In this case, this is primarily related to effects on little blue penguin[72]. To avoid and mitigate these effects, the EcIA recommends the following management and mitigation measures:

- Cease or delay works if a penguin is sighted near the piling area;
- Check upstream areas prior to in-water piling to ensure no penguins are trapped by works or underwater noise;
- Use soft starts to deter penguins and aim to complete piling in a single operation;
- Visually confirm absence of penguins before recommending piling, ideally from the piling location;
- Reduce noise levels where practicable by using a dolly atop the piles;
- Install noise screening near sensitive areas (e.g., burrows) with ecologists input to avoid obstructing access; and
- Adopt a cautious approach when using high-vibration equipment near penguin habitats.

Subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures outlined above, the EcIA concludes that the overall magnitude of effect on coastal ecological values during construction and once operational is expected to be low.

7.3.5 Effects on protected areas of ecological significance

Further to the assessment of effects on terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecology broadly across the entire Ara, the EcIA provides a specific assessment of construction and operational effects on each of the identified protected areas of ecological significance. The potential construction and operational effects for these areas, as well as the recommended mitigation measures, are considered to be the same as those outlined for terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecological values (discussed in Sections 7.3.2 to 7.3.4 above) as relevant to the protected area. Subject to the implementation of these mitigation measures as appropriate to the protected area, the EcIA concludes that the overall magnitude of effect on the ecological values associated with the protected areas of ecological significance is expected to be low.

7.3.6 Effects of stormwater discharges on ecosystems

It is expected that the construction and operation of the Ara will result in negligible impervious surface, and appropriate management measures that will be outlined in the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP), which will be developed prior to the commencement of

[71] Dog access is required to be managed through the OMMP in accordance with Proposed Condition 126.b.vi.
[72] Acknowledging feedback from the Trust is that no little blue penguin have been sighted in Te Tairawhiti.

construction activities. As such, the effects of stormwater runoff on ecosystems are anticipated to be less than minor.

7.3.7 Summary

Overall, it is considered that the assessment methodology for identifying ecological values along the Ara, including the ecological traffic light system, and the recommended management measures that correspond to these values provided in the EcIA and ESMPP have been adopted and are incorporated into the proposed conditions of consent to ensure that actual and potential adverse effects on ecological values are avoided or mitigated. Accordingly, the ecological effects of the Ara will be minor.

7.4 Landscape, visual and natural character effects

7.4.1 Introduction

The LVA provided in Appendix I, details the potential effects of the Ara on identified outstanding natural features and landscapes (ONFL – as identified on the TRMP planning maps), as well as potential effects on other landscapes, visual amenity and natural character.

Firstly, the LVA outlines the existing environment, policy context and proposal description to determine the scope of potential adverse effects and the key management measures across the Ara. These findings are summarised in Section 7.4.2 below.

The LVA subsequently assesses these identified potential adverse effects and proposed management measures, by breaking the total length of the Ara into four sections. These sections were selected based on their natural/built patterns and reflect the underlying landscape character areas and varying experience along the trail. The Sections are (from south to north):

- Section 1: Tairawhiti, Makorori Headland to Cooks Cove Walkway, Tolaga Bay, Uawa- assessed and total journey length 52.5km.
- Section 2: Cooks Cove Walkway Tolaga Bay, Uawa to Waipiro Bay - assessed length 72.45km, total journey 74.45km, with Te Puia return.
- Section 3: Waipiro Bay to East Cape assessed length 168km, including Mount Hikurangi Loop, total journey 183km with Te Takapau and Port Awanui returns.
- Section 4: East Cape to Potaka assessed length and total journey 48.4km.

The findings of the assessment for each section are summarised below in Section 7.4.3.

7.4.2 Overall effects and mitigation measures

As detailed throughout this AEE, the effects envelope has been determined using indicative maximum estimates of earthworks and vegetation clearance across the approximately 345 km Ara. Accordingly, the LVA has conservatively considered the expected maximum potential scale of the Project on landscape, visual and natural character values.

7.4.2.1 Landscape and visual amenity effects

The LVA identifies that the actual and potential adverse landscape and visual amenity effects will relate to:

- Earthworks and vegetation removal across up to 25% of the Ara to achieve a continuous ara through highly variable terrain, including areas with geotechnical and natural hazards. Specifically, the project footprint is expected to be between less than 1 – 1.5 m in width (up to a maximum 8 m width for installation of some structures and low bench type tracks, as conservatively estimated by the Tracker).

- Visual amenity effects resulting from earthworks (until rehabilitation is complete).
- Proximity of required earthworks and vegetation removal (independent of the scale) to sensitive environments including wetlands, streams and rivers, and dune habitats.
- The potential for the Ara to cause severance such as where it interacts with existing patterns of movement and sites (archaeological, historical, and contemporary community connections and associations).
- The proposed location, appearance and scale of any structures including single-span bridges, toilet facilities and steps, and wayfinding and safety signage.
- Residual 'hot spots', where the proposed works have the potential for greater adverse effects and there is a recommendation for site specific pre-construction management plans.[73]

A number of features of the Project are identified which the LVA considers will have positive effects, including:

- The ecological enhancement planting of any permanently removed indigenous vegetation from identified Ecologically Sensitive Areas, proposed at a ratio of 2:1. The LVA states that this presents a significant opportunity to enhance indigenous vegetation, and likely natural character values where planting is undertaken near waterways and areas within the coastal environment.
- Low-impact improvements made by connecting existing ara or replacing adhoc/informal routes.
- Improved access and connectivity to the coastal environment and other valued destinations, for both local communities and visitors.
- Enhanced visual amenity in particular locations due to the standard/typical details and planting proposed as rehabilitation, compared to the existing environment.
- Improved visual access to features that are appreciated in views such as the coastal environment and natural and built/landscape features.

7.4.2.2 Natural character effects

The LVA identifies that the actual and potential adverse effects of the Project on natural character due to works in the coastal environment and margins of streams, rivers and wetlands, include:

- The modification of natural landforms and vegetation removal (particularly indigenous vegetation) in the coastal environment and waterways, hydrological patterns, and habitats.
- The location and design of the Ara in the coastal environment and where it interacts with waterbodies, such the integration of new single-span bridges into the surrounding landscape.
- The nature and extent of other proposed new structures, such as steps, single-span bridges and toilet facilities and their relative dominance and qualities/fit within the existing context.
- The nature and extent of any new planting and how it fits with naturalised patterns in the environment, including known historical habitat types.
- Where there is a loss or reduction to visual or physical access to the coastal environment and waterways, for example, due to the ara design, structures or proposed planting including severance.

Similar to the landscape and visual scope, aspects are also identified which the LVA considers will have positive effects, including:

[73] Noting that the overall adverse effects for each section in the LVA are assessed as being no more than low moderate and this evaluation does not rely on the site-specific construction management plans.

- Enhancement of natural patterns of indigenous vegetation. This includes the proposed enhancement planting which will likely improve natural character, including the logical siting, as required to be considered in the LMPF.
- Improved visual and physical access to the coastal environment and waterways.

7.4.2.3 Overarching management and mitigation measures

The management plans required by the Proposed Conditions (Appendix T) will provide for the measures outlined in Section 7.4.2.1 and 7.4.2.2 above. Notably, the LMPF (provided in Appendix I) sets out specific landscape mitigation measures to be implemented during further/detailed design and construction stages, and a specific Landscape Management Plan (LMP) will be prepared for each stage, to give effect to the LMPF, ensuring the effects of the Project are appropriately managed. As set out in the Proposed Conditions (Appendix T), the stage specific LMPs will relate to those areas where physical works are proposed within the Sensitive Area Consent Corridor and the TRMP Coastal Environment Overlay. The CMP, ESMPP and OMMP are also relied on in the effects assessment undertaken for each section of the Ara, as outlined below.

7.4.3 Landscape, visual and natural character effects by section

7.4.3.1 Section 1 – Makorori to Cooks Cove Walkway, Tolaga Bay, Uawa (km 1 to km 48)

The LVA states that 96% of this section requires no or minimal works. Notably, within ONFL areas the ara will follow existing farm and recreation tracks, such that the Ara can be integrated with limited or very limited earthworks and no indigenous vegetation removal is expected. This low-impact route through a coherent headland sequence enhances associations with natural science, sensory, and shared values. Should the concept Ara alignment change so that vegetation removal is required in the ONFL, the LVA notes that enhancement planting (2:1 ratio) would further support natural character values.

Outside ONFL areas, earthworks are mainly for low bench tracks with increased footprints but remain limited. Vegetation removal is also required, but the Ara concept alignment currently avoids the Terrestrial Areas of Significant Conservation (TASCV)[74] overlay. Based on the concept alignment and design information provided in the CMP, the LVA considers the Ara will integrate well with natural and built landscapes.

Proposed new structures include swing bridges at Pouawa (km 13) and Waiomoko (km 20) Rivers, and a timber bridge over Kaitawa Stream (km 48). The built works proposed in this section are consistent with the character of existing facilities and recreation tracks in the wider context in terms of scale, materials, and location within bush, coastal, small- scale community as well as rural areas. Accordingly, they will not detract from existing landscape values and instead provides an immersive landscape experience.

Viewing audiences and visibility of the ara vary, with the greatest range and numbers of viewers associated with the beach and highway through to Pouawa (km 13). At Turihau (km 9), a low bench ara over steep terrain will be visible from SH35 and popular beaches. However, the LVA considers that the mitigation measures in the CMP and LMPF will limit the extent of works, integrate the ara into the surrounding environment, and help retain privacy for individual properties, and thereby appropriately manage the potential visual amenity effects.

Natural character effects mainly relate to stream and river crossings. Existing road bridges will be used where possible, and where this is not practicable, new stream crossings are proposed. New crossings will be predominantly 'natural' (i.e., on foot, with no structures), and where structures are proposed, the concept design information included in the CMP will ensure they are

[74] Abbreviated in the LVA as 'TaoSC'.

appropriate for the surrounding environment. For example, swing bridges are a less visually dominant option for wider crossings compared to rigid deck and pier design. Swing bridges will also not detract from the natural patterns of the coastal environment and can be well integrated, particularly when considering the improved visual and physical access provided by the ara to the coastal environment. Moreover, the LMPF seeks to rehabilitate areas impacted by localised earthworks.

No residual 'hot spot' locations are identified in this section given the localised nature of works and provision of fit for context structures.

The LVA concludes that the management plan measures are sufficient to manage the adverse effects to be less than low moderate for this section.

It is also noted in the LVA that the Ara will positively impact landscape, visual, and natural character by offering a diverse journey from beach to bush, panoramic coastal views, and a low-impact Pa-to-Pa link connecting significant marae and landmarks.

7.4.3.2 Section 2 – Tolaga, Uawa to Waipiro Bay (km 49 to km 116)

Nil or limited earthworks are required across approximately 57% of this section to establish the ara. A greater level of earthworks and vegetation removal is required (when compared with section 1) due to steep terrain in some areas, and to provide an all-weather route north of Tokomaru Bay. The LVA notes that the suite of management plan requirements will provide for effective mitigation and fit for context concept design and implementation.

There are several ONFLs along this section, however, there are generally no works proposed within these extents. In one instance at Ernest Reeves escarpment (km 53), low bench type ara, steps and indigenous vegetation removal may be required to reestablish an existing formed ara. However, in this location the LVA considers that there are options to refine the alignment to avoid or minimise impacts within the ONFL through the detailed design stage.

In terms of natural and built landscapes outside ONFL areas, several new structures are proposed including an 80 m[75] swing bridge over the Waikawa Stream (km 109) which will impact lower value indigenous vegetation. Existing road bridges and 'natural' waterbody crossings (i.e., on foot, with no structures) are also proposed. Toilet facilities are also proposed in this section, adding to the amenity of two popular beaches at Waipiro (km 116). The LVA considers that the concept design information for the structures (provided in the CMP) which will be further refined through the detailed design stage, and the proposed management plans (provided for in the Proposed Conditions) will mean the structure fits well within the landscape.

Viewing audiences and visibility of the ara will be limited along much of this Section, given the population is more dispersed and the ara passes through farms and regenerating bush to remote beaches. Moreover, where viewing audiences are greatest the locations are generally wayfinding.

This section of the Ara is located within the coastal environment, follows or crosses several waterways and provides beach access (above high tide). Through the low-impact design approach and integration of varied types of 'natural' ('cross on foot') waterbody crossings (such as at km 66-67), the ara is expected to be well integrated.

The LVA conservatively considers that following mitigation measures there are two residual 'hot spot' areas North of Nuhiti at (km 80-88) and North of Tokomaru Bay (km 98-103). There are PMAs and other ecologically sensitive vegetation at these locations. Accordingly, while no additional information is required for the overall assessment, the LVA recommends the

[75] We note that all measurements are indicative, including figures provided in the Landscape and Visual Effects (Appendix I).

development of site-specific pre-construction management plans at these sites. This process will confirm the landscape values assessed in the LVA and provide specific methods or design approaches to be incorporated into detailed design. For example, refining the alignment within the consent corridor, confirming the cross-section design, materials and extent of ara-types. This approach is provided for in the Proposed Conditions (Appendix T).

Overall, the LVA considers that the adverse effects on landscape values for this Section of the ara will be low moderate or less.

Regarding positive effects, the Ara will make an important contribution to the overall perceptual and experiential - associative benefits between Uawa to Waipiro Bay. The Project's proposed enhancement of indigenous vegetation and on-trail pest management (as provided for in the OMMP) in an area which has been historically cleared will also provide for landscape improvement.

7.4.3.3 Section 3 – Waipiro to East Cape (km 117 to km 191)

Approximately 57% of this section of the ara requires no or minimal works. Notably, ONFL areas are largely avoided, with the exception of East Cape Road (km 191). However, no works are expected to be required in the East Cape Road ONFL as the ara will follow existing tracks. Additionally, while inland ONFL are not identified in the TRMP, it is assumed Mount Hikurangi would be identified as such. The ara is located within that landscape between km 20 to km 45– river to river. In keeping with the overall low-impact design approach and ecological bottom lines (refer to the Proposed Conditions in Appendix T), the Project is sensitive to the maunga. For example the use of existing tracks has been prioritised in the concept alignment and the Ara has been narrowed where possible to reduce vegetation loss and earthworks.

In terms of natural and built landscapes outside ONFL areas, earthworks are proposed along 55% of the route, with around 18% of that coded as 'Extensive' (more than 2000 m^2 in that km). These areas of disturbance reflect the steep terrain such as between Whareponga and Tuparoa, and the Kopuroa Connection. This disturbance is also associated with the provision of all-weather access areas, wider footprint areas around single-span bridge structures, and to provide safe passage near SH35. Around 13% of indigenous vegetation removal in this section is required in ecologically sensitive areas (such as PMAs mapped in the TRMP). This removal is primarily within the Mangatiti Stream block, Whareponga, and Tutara PMAs, but is not expected within Mount Hikurangi. The number of additional proposed structures (6 new toilets, 1 swing bridge and 5 single span timber bridges) in this section have been refined through site observations and discussions with NZTA and GDC. In terms of mitigation measures on natural and built landscape values, the LVA highlights that project shaping phases have been used to test alternative alignments and narrow the ara where practicable to minimise required earthworks and vegetation removal. Detailed design will be in accordance with the requirements in the Proposed Conditions which include maximum widths of vegetation clearance and disturbance, and the Sensitive Area Consent Corridor enables vegetation clearance and earthworks to be minimised. Furthermore, any permanently removed indigenous vegetation from identified Ecologically Sensitive Areas is subject to the proposed enhancement planting at a 2:1 ratio.

In terms of visual amenity, the Waipiro to East Cape ara will establish a sequence of coastal, rural and bush views that are previously inaccessible including to vantage points featuring ONFL and regenerating indigenous vegetation with structures that can be well integrated into the environment. Additionally, the single-span bridge over the Whareponga Stream (km 128) is likely to be the only structure visible from a public road.

Although the Ara is generally located outside of the coastal environment in the Waipiro to East Cape ara section, natural character matters apply along parts of the all-weather 'event response'

pathway, within the overlay and multiple river and stream crossings. The LVA states that both the biophysical and perceptual aspects of natural character will be appropriately addressed.

There are no residual 'hot spot' locations identified in this section.

The LVA concludes that the adverse effects on landscape values for this section of the ara will be no more than low moderate.

The LVA also notes that there will be at least low moderate positive effects. Positive landscape effects will be at least low-moderate given the Waipiro to East Cape section enhances connectivity between coastal communities through varied and highly valued landscapes, including the continuous loop connection around the maunga. The Ara also provides an all-weather pedestrian alternative from Tokomaru to Ruatoria, bypassing SH35 closures. Additionally, enhancement planting and on-trail pest control contributes to broader restoration efforts.

7.4.3.4 Section 4 – East Cape to Potaka (km 192 to km 239)

The LVA states that 65% of this section requires no or minimal works. In this section, the Ara is predominantly located within or adjacent to the East Cape ONFL. However, within the ONFL extent the ara primarily uses existing tracks through dune land areas, and the road reserve associated with East Cape Road. The exception relates to a potential 'hot spot' discussed below.

Regarding natural and built landscapes, the ara runs alongside the Wharekahika River (km 234) with relatively few new structures. The concept design information for the proposed structures (provided in the CMP) is considered 'fit for purpose', meaning they will be well integrated into this landscape. However, a greater level of earthworks and vegetation removal is required in distinct bands alongside SH35 where there is ecologically sensitive vegetation identified and over Haupara Point (an ONFL Unit 2) (km 215-216).

The greatest range and numbers of viewing audiences to experience the ara will be through the Te Araroa, Onepoto and Hicks Bay townships and the Potaka settlement, including the sequence of marae, coastal edge campgrounds. For the most part, where there are open views of the ara by greater numbers of people, the works are generally wayfinding only, minimising the potential adverse visual amenity effects.

Potential natural character effects are relevant to this section, in particular where the ara is within the coastal environment or in the Wharekahika River area. Notably, works are required to construct the Haupara Point ara and parts of the ara along the Wharekahika River (km 227 to km 234). While notable in terms of biophysical impacts, the LVA states that the works will generally not detract from overall perceptions of natural character, given they are limited in extent and will be largely screened from existing public viewpoints.

When considering the nature and scale of the works in the environmental setting, the LVA identifies two residual 'hot spots'. Firstly, at Haupara Point (km 215-216) where earthworks and vegetation removal are proposed within an ONFL and mapped PMA. The second 'hot spot' is associated with the 100 m swing bridge crossing at Karakatuwhero River (km 212). While the LVA states that further information is not required to reach the assessment of low effects in the ONFL for this section, in accordance with the conservative approach taken to ensure every practicable measure is used to reduce adverse effects, the LVA recommends that a site-specific pre-construction confirmatory investigation should be undertaken to confirm the landscape values for these areas, and to provide specific input into the CMP. The LVA also considers that the suite of management plans and embedded mitigation measures (refer to Section 7.4.2.3) are also appropriate for limiting potential adverse effects in these areas.

Overall, the LVA deems that adverse effects on landscape values for this section of the ara will be low moderate or less.

There will also be at least low moderate positive effects associated with enhanced visual and physical access to the coastline and landscape improvements through enhancement planting. Furthermore, the Ara reinstates connections between local communities including along the Wharekahika River.

7.4.4 Summary

The LVA implemented a precautionary and best practice approach to this assessment of landscape, visual and natural character effects. Based on this methodology, the LVA concludes that with the implementation of concept design information and mitigation provided for by the CMP, LMPF and ESMPP, the effects of the Ara on ONFL, landscape, visual amenity and natural character effects will be no more than low moderate adverse with at least low positive effects. Accordingly, the adverse effects of the Ara on landscape, visual amenity and natural character are appropriately managed.

7.5 Natural hazard effects

7.5.1 Coastal hazard effects

The Coastal Hazard Report (Appendix L) provides an assessment of the potential effects of the proposed Ara on coastal hazards. The report notes that some sections of the Ara located directly adjacent to the beach may be vulnerable to coastal hazard over the next 50 years, including short term fluctuations and long-term trends in shoreline change, coastal inundation, and the potential effect of projected sea level rise. Therefore, inappropriate positioning, construction or management of the Ara could exacerbate the existing coastal hazard risk.

To reduce the potential for exacerbating coastal hazards and risk of damage to the Ara itself, a number of methods are proposed including:

- Minimising earthworks in sand dunes (unless for the purposes of dune restoration or improvement of dune stability), such as by marking the Ara with wayfinding posts.
- As far as practicable, the Ara avoids areas likely to be impacted by coastal erosion hazard over the next 50 years.
- New stretches of ara on cliff shorelines are aligned to avoid areas likely to be impacted by coastal cliff instability. Slope instability in cliff areas has been addressed in more detail in the geotechnical assessment (see Section 7.5.3 below).
- Where sections of the Ara are located in identified coastal hazard areas, the ara width is expected to be adapted, and the construction methods/materials limited to avoid large investment within the hazard area and ensure adaptability (i.e., simple design).
- The Ara will either avoid or be designed to withstand occasional coastal inundation in low-lying coastal margins.
- If the Ara is threatened or damaged by coastal erosion, management actions aim to prioritise avoidance and adaptation of the ara alignment over the construction of protection works.

Overall, the proposed earthworks and coastal structures are generally located outside the CMA. Where new structures are proposed in close proximity to the CMA, they are located well landward of the beach. Based on the above, the Coastal Hazard Report (Appendix L) concludes that the establishment of the Ara on coastal hazards is likely to be less than minor. The proposed conditions provide for the implementation of the above measures during detailed design (refer to Proposed Condition 16). Additionally, Appendix A of the CMP (Appendix F) states that the implementation of the typical cross-sections will take into account terrain hazards (slips/ cliffs), stability, cost/feasibility, and slope. On this basis, any effects are considered to be appropriately managed.

7.5.2 Stormwater and flooding effects

In order to manage any actual and potential stormwater runoff and flood events, several measures are proposed in the CMP (Appendix F).

Approximately three quarters of the Ara will be wayfinding with no earthworks or land disturbance proposed. Given wayfinding will not alter the natural contours of the land, the existing drainage and crossfall will be retained. Stormwater management measures are expected to be required only in locations where the need for drainage improvements is identified during detailed design.

The remaining approximately 25% (85 km) of the Ara will also be designed to maintain a level of cross fall that will allow stormwater to flow towards the nearest natural drainage channel. It is not anticipated that any attenuation will be required because there is minimal increase in impervious surfaces and no piped reticulation is expected to be required. Riprap or erosion protection may be installed to prevent scour, this will be confirmed during the detailed design process.

During construction, natural drainage channels will be preserved, and any introduced structures will maintain flow paths close to pre-development levels. Erosion and sediment controls will be used following best practice to ensure that earthworks are appropriately managed.

Stormwater and flooding have also been considered in the design of all swing bridges and structures related to waterbody crossings. Specifically, the height of the deck of the structure is designed to help ensure it is not overtopped by the 2% annual exceedance probability (50-year) flood event, with a minimum clearance height of 0.5 metres. These measures are included in Proposed Condition 82 and accordingly, the potential for downstream environmental impacts resulting from structural failure is appropriately managed.

Overall, considering the management approaches outlined above, the effects of the Ara on stormwater and flooding are considered to be less than minor.

7.5.3 Geotechnical effects

A geotechnical site investigation was undertaken by an engineering geologist to inform the proposed Ara concept alignment, which has been designed to avoid surface geohazards such as landslips and avoid excavation on slopes which may create instability. At coastal cliffs, the alignment has been positioned inland to avoid undermining unstable landforms and eliminate the need for additional coastal and geotechnical intervention.

During detailed design, further adjustments will be made to the alignment if required to avoid geotechnical hazards and mitigate effects based on additional geotechnical input (refer to Proposed Condition 18). The appropriate level of geotechnical input to ensure that adverse geotechnical effects are avoided or mitigated will be informed by the conservative preliminary risk ratings provided for each day of the Ara, outlined in the Geotechnical Report (Appendix N). Site-specific geotechnical investigations will also be conducted for single-span bridge locations and different track types where required. The Geotechnical Report concludes that the Ara is feasible with the correct geotechnical consultation through the design stage and significant engineering solutions are not anticipated to be required to create the Ara.

The CMP (Appendix F) outlines the responsibilities for the Project geotechnical engineer, which includes undertaking the proposed site investigations and soil verification to ensure the Ara meets the required bearing capacity and compaction requirements for the foundations of any structures and requires that the geotechnical engineer is consulted to determine natural regeneration capability and Ara resilience suitability.

By refining the alignment during detailed design to reduce or avoid physical works in areas where geotechnical hazards exist in accordance8with Proposed Condition 18, and implementing measures to mitigate geotechnical risks where required, the geotechnical effects of the Ara are expected to be less than minor.

7.6 Coastal processes

Four new single-span bridges are proposed within or adjacent to the CMA, however the abutments of these bridges will be in the upper embankment of the river or stream and therefore no permanent physical works are proposed within the CMA in these locations.

The Coastal Hazard report (Appendix L) provides an assessment of the potential effects of the proposed Ara on coastal processes where the alignment is located on or directly adjacent to the beach (approximately 35 km). The report concludes that the establishment of the Ara is unlikely to affect coastal processes as it will not create a barrier to natural coastal processes as it will avoid or be designed to withstand occasional coastal inundation in low-lying coastal margins, and no earthworks will occur in sand dune areas unless for the purposes of dune restoration or improvement of dune stability. Management measures in relation to coastal erosion will prioritise avoidance and adaptation of the alignment as opposed to the construction of protection works which can alter natural coastal processes.

The proposed Arawhenua passport system will inform Ara users about appropriate behaviour in relation to sensitive habitats or features. This will include advice on avoiding unnecessary damage in sand dune environments by following defined accessways and ara.

As there are no permanent physical works proposed along beaches or in the CMA, and users will be advised to follow defined accessways and ara, it is expected that effects on coastal processes will be less than minor.

7.7 Cultural effects

A CIA (Appendix M) was prepared by Pahou and Associates Ltd. The CIA states that this organisation is familiar with the region, having been raised in East Coast and participated and contributed to a number of cultural activities and events across Ngati Porou.

This report provides a framework that identifies high-level impacts with corresponding preventative or management, as follows:

- It is noted that mana whenua hold rangatiratanga and mana over their whenua. Other landowners also have the authority over decisions affecting their land, including restricting access for cultural, safety, or activity-based reasons at any time. Accordingly, it is proposed that limitations be identified and turned into a schedule that will inform users of any restrictions, kawa and tikanga that needs to be adhered to.
- Visitors to the track may lack the cultural knowledge necessary to respectfully engage with different sites and waahi tapu on the track. Accordingly, an Arawhenua passport system, with an Oati ‘Oath’ to adhere to identified Tikanga and Kawa is proposed.
- Any construction on identified sites of significance has the possibility of damaging the site. The consent corridor approach allows for the exact ara location to be confirmed during detailed design in order to help avoid the relevant place or site. However, where avoidance is not possible, the CIA states that a risk appetite statement will be developed alongside whanau, landowners, hapu and iwi and relevant agencies (where applicable) to determine an acceptable risk tolerance for construction on, in and around specific sites.
- Construction, traffic and other such activities could impinge on the intrinsic relationship between people and the land. Therefore, the CIA proposes that construction and design

work are carried out in consultation with landowners, whanau, hapu, and iwi where applicable.

Engagement with mana whenua, other landowners, hapu and communities is proposed to continue over the course of this project, including in accordance with requirements to be set out in a Stakeholder and Communication Engagement Management Plan (SCEMP) which is proposed as a condition of consent.

It is proposed that the management measures identified in the CIA, together with inputs from ongoing engagement, will be further developed and detailed in a Cultural Monitoring Plan. The Preparing and implementing a Cultural Monitoring Plan forms part of the Proposed Conditions provided in Appendix T. Accordingly, cultural effects will be addressed appropriately.

7.8 Historic heritage and archaeological effects

As stated in Section 2.7, Te Tairawhiti is a rich archaeological landscape, containing evidence from all periods of human history in Aotearoa. Specifically, the Historic Heritage Assessment of Te Ara Tipuna (Appendix J) identified sixty-eight recorded heritage sites within the Standard Consent Corridor (50 m) along the proposed Ara.

The assessment methodology used in the Historic Heritage Assessment establishes zoning along the Ara based on the level of potential adverse effect on recorded sites (green, yellow or red zones). The classification of these zones determines if a site can be avoided or otherwise what appropriate management measures will be deployed in that location to manage effects. Within the yellow zones, further investigations will be undertaken to determine whether the area should be classified as green or red, and therefore what management measures will be implemented.

Regarding heritage sites scheduled in the TRMP and/or listed on Rārangi Kōrero, eight sites were identified as being within the Ara Standard Consent Corridor. However, these sites are located in urban areas and contained within land parcels adjacent to the Ara, with features that are unlikely to extend into the construction footprint (e.g., buildings). Due to the nature of the features and given that no ara formation is expected to be required in these urban areas, the Ara adjacent to these sites is assessed in the Historic Heritage Assessment as low risk (i.e., 'Green Zones'). The exception to this is P66 and P69, next to which the Ara is coded as 'Yellow', due to the presence of archaeological sites, rather than the scheduled sites themselves. Accordingly, the potential effect of the Ara on these sites is considered to be less than minor.

Approximately 213 km (61.5%) of the proposed Ara is zoned as green because there are no observed archaeological sites or historic heritage places and, there is a low possibility of encountering intact features during track formation and low potential for cumulative effects. Despite this low risk, Archaeological Site Discovery Protocols are proposed within the green zones. Accordingly, the potential for effects on historic heritage values in these areas are assessed as being less than minor.

The Historic Heritage Assessment identifies 29 areas as yellow zones, across approximately 103 km (29.7%) when calculated along the length of the Ara. This zone applies where landscape features suggest the presence of unrecorded archaeological sites, or areas where wayfinding is proposed in proximity to, but not within, a recorded site. For example, at Anaura Bay historical sketches suggest Maori gardening and beachfront erosion is revealing archaeological evidence, but the exact extent is not known. Accordingly, areas zoned as yellow require further investigation through a site visit that will be undertaken during the detailed design phase, to confirm whether archaeological sites are in fact present in the final Ara alignment (and if so, their relevant extent). This investigation will determine whether areas currently designated as yellow in this assessment are reassigned to either the green (where there are no archaeological sites) or red zones (where there are confirmed archaeological sites).

There are 60 recorded sites captured within 17 red zones, which cover approximately 30 km (8.6%) of the Ara when calculated along its proposed length. These sites consist of Maori archaeological sites and a small number of post-European sites. Areas are zoned red where the Ara intersects with known archaeological or historic heritage sites, or where remote sensing indicates the presence of unrecorded sites. For example, Kaiora Pa and Midden Site (Y18/346) are shown as being located within a red zone because the Ara concept alignment passes through visible features like ditches and storage pits, and ground disturbance could damage these features. Similarly, although only wayfinding is proposed within the identified extent of Ridge-top Site (Y18/442), increased foot traffic may cause cumulative damage to subsurface features without appropriate management. Accordingly, the following methods are proposed, and captured in a Historic Heritage Management Plan (HHMP) (Appendix J):

- Avoiding sites as far as practicable within the consent corridor (whereby the exact location of the Ara within the corridor is confirmed during detailed design to avoid the relevant place or site).
- Minimising effects such as ground disturbance by using low impact construction techniques such as building up the track surface and/or establishing boardwalks instead of excavating, and the use of ground screw anchoring techniques rather than conventional hand or mechanical digging.
- Mitigating effects of the application using the measures set out in Sections 4.2 and 6 of the Historic Heritage Management Plan (HHMP), as follows:
  - Appropriate monitoring, archaeological investigation and recording as required by the provisions of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.
  - Archaeological authorities being sought for any archaeological sites identified as affected during the development of detailed design.
  - Long-term condition monitoring of sites to assess impacts and provide appropriate solutions if negative impacts are identified.
- Other management methods include training and induction for contractors, the implementation of accidental discovery protocols and to address cumulative effects such as the potential for erosion of archaeological features due to increased foot traffic, on-going monitoring and a kawa or ‘code of conduct’ shall be provided for ara users through the Arawhenua passport system.

Overall, it is considered that the assessment methodology and corresponding management measures for each zone provided in the HHMP will suitably avoid or minimise actual and potential adverse effects on historic heritage sites. On this basis, it is considered that the effects of the Ara on historic heritage and archaeological sites will be appropriately managed by the proposed conditions of consent.

7.9 Traffic effects

The Ara has the potential to result in traffic and safety effects resulting from increased pedestrian use within the road corridor, as well as construction traffic effects. These effects are identified and assessed in the Transport Safety Assessment and Management Plan (Appendix K) for sections of the Ara traversing SH35 and local roads.

The Trust has actively engaged with NZTA following its submission on the original application lodged in 2023, and this engagement has informed several aspects of the proposal to manage potential effects on NZTA’s network and operations, which is documented in Section 4 of the Transport Safety Assessment and Management Plan. Realignments have been made primarily for safety reasons, based on expert advice and feedback received through both the submission and direct discussions with NZTA. The Trust and its traffic expert continue to work collaboratively with

NZTA to refine crossing options and address the broader interaction of the Ara with the state highway network.

7.9.1 Construction traffic effects

Potential construction traffic effects, including temporary increases in vehicle movements, potential lane closures and short-term disruption near laydown areas, will be manged through a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). No full road detours are expected, however if lane closures are required, this will be addressed in the CTMP, and appropriate traffic management will be provided, supervised by a qualified Site Traffic Management Supervisor (STMS).

Temporary construction laydown areas have been identified based on their current or previous use by civil contractors as work depots, proximity to the consent corridor, and their suitability for short-term functions such as material storage, equipment staging and vehicle turnaround. These locations are situated at various points along the corridor, which will distribute construction-related traffic and avoid concentrated impacts across the road network. While these areas will generate additional vehicle movements during construction, the effects will be temporary and consistent with the effects of the current use of the sites, and will be appropriately managed by the CTMP to ensure that any effects from construction traffic will be less than minor.

7.9.2 Operational traffic effects

7.9.2.1 State Highway 35

Potential effects include increased exposure for pedestrians and multi-modal users due to proximity to fast-moving vehicles. While SH35 has a 100 km/h speed limit along the majority of sections where the Ara is adjacent to the highway, traffic volumes are relatively low which reduces the overall risk to pedestrians and motorists relative to highways with higher traffic volumes. It is also understood that areas of SH35 within the Project area are currently used by pedestrians and other multi-modal users.

The Project does not propose any pavement widening, speed limit reductions or state highway closures along the SH35 road corridor.

Interactions between the Ara and SH35 principally consist of:

- Pedestrian crossing points from one side to the other of SH35;
- Locations where the Ara follows alongside SH35 in the road corridor; and
- SH35 bridges assessed as being able to safely accommodate pedestrian traffic subject to mitigation measures where pedestrians will cross.

Each are addressed below.

7.9.2.1.1 Pedestrian crossings

Based on recommendations from NZTA and the traffic expert, the Ara's proposed road pedestrian crossing points along these sections of SH35 will provide at least 165 m of visibility in both directions (Proposed Condition 18.d.iii) and be designed with high-visibility signage and wayfinding markers to increase motorist awareness and provide pedestrians with a safe crossing opportunity. Vegetation clearance and regrading will be undertaken as required to improve sight lines and crossings will be realigned where required to achieve at least 165 m of visibility. The CMP (Appendix F) outlines two options for road crossing approaches (Pedestrian Road Crossing Option 1 for roads with traffic volumes of less than 250 vehicles per day and Pedestrian Road Crossing Option 2 for roads with traffic volumes of more than 250 vehicles per day) in alignment with the safety recommendations set out in the Transport Safety Assessment and Management Plan.

7.9.2.1.2 Locations where the Ara follows alongside SH35

Where the Ara follows the road corridor, the Ara will be located as far away from the road as practicable (i.e., at a minimum of 4 m from the live lane). Where the Ara follows the road in constrained locations (i.e., where there is no or only a very constrained formed berm), the Ara may be located in closer proximity to the road (i.e., within 4 m of the live lane), but it is proposed to install safe-hit posts or other flexible delineation devices (or, where the constrained area is greater than 50 m in length, guard rails) to ensure that there is no pedestrian activity in live lanes.

The design of the sections of the Ara the following the SH35 corridor will be developed in detail during the detailed design stage and will be subject to a Safe System Audit (SSA). The detailed design, including the SSA, will be submitted to NZTA for input and comment (as outlined in the Proposed Conditions in Appendix T). The Trust is currently engaging with NZTA on these conditions and the wider interaction of the Ara with the road networks operated by NZTA.

7.9.2.1.3 Ara pedestrian use of SH35 bridges

All SH35 bridges along the Ara have been assessed by the traffic expert for their ability to support safe co-use and appropriate treatments have been proposed based on site-specific factors such as traffic volume, bridge length, alignment and available sight distance. Cross sections for each bridge crossing option and the assessments and recommendations made by the traffic expert are documented in Appendix A of the Transport Safety Assessment and Management Plan.

Various mitigation options were considered to provide for appropriate vehicle and pedestrian safety. The various bridge crossing mitigation options are set out in the waterbody crossing document (Appendix E).

For bridges that can support safe co-use, as assessed by the traffic expert, static warning signage, user-activated electronic warning signage or traffic light crossing systems will be implemented at bridge approaches to enhance safety for both pedestrians and motorists. The proposed application of these measures to each of the relevant SH35 bridges (based on the safety assessment included in the Transport Safety Assessment and Management Plan) are addressed in Table 3.1 above.[76]

As noted in Table 3.1, at bridges that are unable to support safe co-use, new single-span bridges will be constructed or an alternative crossing option (e.g., a shuttle service) will be provided.

The design of the pedestrian safety measures to be applied to relevant SH35 bridges will be developed in detail during the detailed design stage and will be subject to a Safe System Audit (SSA). The detailed design, including the SSA, will be submitted to NZTA for input and comment (as outlined in the Proposed Conditions in Appendix T). The Trust is currently engaging with NZTA on these conditions and the wider interaction of the Ara with the road network operated by NZTA.

In addition, a post construction SSA will be carried out in accordance with Proposed Conditions 113 to 115 to confirm that the ara has been constructed in a manner that will not result in hazards or have deficiencies that will result in pedestrian and traffic safety concerns.

7.9.2.1.4 Summary of operational traffic effects for SH35

Overall, the mitigation measures proposed for SH35 will ensure that the Ara provides for safe pedestrian use and potential operational effects on pedestrians will be less than minor.

[76] The implementation of these recommended mitigation measures is subject to further discussion with NZTA and GDC. Where approval is not obtained, a new swing bridge will be constructed or an alternative crossing option will be provided.

7.9.2.2 Local roads

Local roads tend to have lower speed limits and volumes than SH35. As for SH35, it is understood that local roads within the Project area are currently used by pedestrians and other multi-modal users. By utilising local roads, the overall effects derived from these aspects is reduced.

Interactions between the Ara and local roads principally consist of:

- Pedestrian crossing points from one side to the other of local roads;
- Locations where the Ara follows along local roads in the road corridor; and
- Local road bridges assessed as being able to safely accommodate pedestrian traffic subject to mitigation measures where pedestrians will cross.

Each are addressed below.

7.9.2.2.1 Pedestrian crossings

Based on the recommendations in the Transport Safety Assessment and Management Plan, pedestrian crossings on local roads will be located to maximise visibility with at least 100 – 120 m sight distance in both directions. All crossings will be uncontrolled and supported by advance warning signage such as "Pedestrian Crossing" signs, along with passive design cues (e.g., informal narrowing or landscaping) to slow approaching vehicles. These treatments are considered appropriate given the low traffic volumes and rural character of the local road network.

7.9.2.2.2 Locations where the Ara follows along local roads

Where the Ara follows local roads, shared use of the carriageway is proposed in areas with very low traffic volumes (typically fewer than 200 vehicles per day). Pedestrians will use mown or metalled grass verges where available, and where verges are constrained or unavailable, shared use of the live lane will be supported by mitigation measures including "Pedestrians Sharing Road" signage, speed advisory signs and informal road narrowing. The traffic report notes that this approach aligns with accepted practice for walking routes.

The trail alignment will be optimised to follow the most practical side of the road, taking into account visibility, topography and available shoulder space. These design treatments will be refined during the detailed design stage and subject to a SSA, with input from GDC as the RCA.

7.9.2.2.3 Ara pedestrian use of local road bridges

Local road bridges along the Ara have been assessed for their suitability for shared pedestrian use. Given the low traffic volumes and generally short bridge lengths, shared use is considered appropriate in most cases. Advance warning signage will be installed to alert drivers to potential pedestrian presence. Where bridge width, alignment, or visibility presents a higher risk, additional treatments such as user-activated warning lights, pull-over bays, or trail realignment may be implemented. The need for higher-order controls (e.g., traffic signals or new pedestrian structures) is not anticipated. Each bridge will be assessed individually during detailed design, and the proposed treatments will be subject to a SSA and engagement with GDC.

7.9.2.2.4 Summary of operational traffic effects for local roads

Overall, the mitigation measures proposed for local roads will ensure that the Ara provides for safe pedestrian use and potential operational effects on pedestrians will be less than minor.

7.9.2.3 Traffic effects conclusion

Overall, the traffic impacts of the Ara are expected to be minimal, provided that recommended site-specific design and safety measures are implemented, pre- and post-construction SSA are

undertaken, and Road Controlling Authorities are engaged throughout the detailed design process. With such measures in place, any effects on traffic will be less than minor.

7.10 Noise and vibration effects

The main source of noise and vibration will be from the construction of new single-span bridges. Construction noise and vibration will also be generated by mobile plant and machinery where earthworks and vegetation clearance are required.

Only 25% of the Ara is expected to require physical works, and this is likely to be further reduced during detailed design by adjusting the alignment within the consent corridor to avoid earthworks and vegetation clearance where possible. Additionally, a large portion of the Ara requiring physical works is located remotely or in rural areas away from residential activities and other environments likely occupied by sensitive receivers.

In addition to the mitigation measures outlined in Section 7.3.4 for coastal sites in proximity to marine mammals and birds, noise and vibration generated in proximity to residential dwellings will be managed by implementing the following mitigation measures as outlined in the CMP (Appendix F):

- Undertake works in accordance with the relevant construction noise and vibration limits in the TRMP;
- Use the most appropriate access routes and maintain safe speeds to minimise noise and vibration (as well as dust) from cartage vehicles;
- Record and manage all noise and vibration complaints in a complaints register;
- Switch off machinery when not in use for extended periods to reduce idle noise;
- Complete daily pre-start and weekly checks on machinery to ensure efficient and quiet operation; and
- Notify sensitive receivers in advance of high-noise activities occurring nearby.

The implementation of these mitigation and management measures will ensure that noise and vibration levels do not adversely affect human health and that the acoustic environment remains consistent with the character of the surrounding zone or area. Construction noise and vibration in any one location will be for a short duration. Based on this assessment, it is considered that noise and vibration effects will be less than minor.

7.11 Navigation effects

As outlined in Section 3.3, eight swing bridges are proposed along the Ara where waterbodies are inaccessible by foot or no safe option can be provided by utilising existing infrastructure. It is possible that some of these streams and rivers may be traversable by vessels.

Although the Tairāwhiti Navigation Safety Bylaw 2024 does not preclude the construction of swing bridges above waterbodies, it seeks to manage obstructions or restrictions on maritime users. We note that the construction and operation of the swing bridges is not expected to obstruct or restrict the passage of any small vessels. In particular, the swing bridges over the Waimoko River (km 20), Waikawa Stream (km 109), Whareponga Stream (km 128), Wharekahika River (km 234), Oweka Stream (km 238), and Makatote Stream (km 6 SH to Waipiro Connect) will be located in sections of the respective waterbodies that are understood to be unnavigable due to their width and/or depth. The swing bridges over the Pouawa River (km 13) and Karakatuwhero River (km 212) will be located adjacent to existing SH35 bridges; therefore, any restrictions on navigation access are not expected to exceed those of the current situation.

Moreover, the swing bridges will be designed and constructed to enhance public access, particularly to the CMA. Building consent is also required for these structures and shall be required to comply with those requirements.

Overall, given that no actual or potential adverse effects on navigation in waterbodies are expected as a result of the swing bridges, no further management measures are proposed, and the effects are considered to be less than minor.

7.12 Operational effects

As detailed in Section 7.2, establishing a ~345-kilometre network of interconnected pedestrian pathways between Gisborne and Potaka has a number of positive effects, however the Ara also introduces potential risks to and from ara users that require management. The draft Operational and Maintenance Management Plan (OMMP) (Appendix G) sets out the mechanisms for the ongoing administration of the Ara and essential operational management requirements, including maintenance, management of users, monitoring of effects of use and a complaints procedure. The Proposed Conditions set out in Appendix T include a requirement for the OMMP to be reviewed and updated after the completion of the first 12 months of operation of the Ara, taking into account the recommendations of the first Annual Operations Report, and reviewed annually thereafter. This will ensure that it can evolve over time and respond to issues as they arise. The potential effects addressed by the OMMP and relevant management measures are described below.

7.12.1 User health and safety effects

There are several health and safety risks posed to users by increasing access through the natural environment regardless of whether they are local, out-of-region or international visitors. For example, the Ara may expose users to hazards such as isolated areas, waterways, and extreme weather.

The primary tool proposed to mitigate this risk is the Arawhenua passport system. As detailed in the OMMP, ara users will be required to register with the Trust, and their access agreement will take the form of a 'passport'. This system is proposed to be provided in a downloadable app which will contain the following key information:

- The Kawa (Code of Care) and Oati (Oath of Conduct).
- Ara maps, identifying specific features.
- Contact details for emergencies and to report damage or misuse of the Ara.
- Regularly updated maps showing potential hazards (e.g., this may be coastal, or due to weather events, which have created slips).
- Any restrictions on the use of the Ara due to landowner requirements, NZTA or local road maintenance, fire bans, etc.

In terms of other direct health and safety measures, the OMMP details potential alternatives for safe crossing options, and will include a certified Emergency Response Plan (ERP) and other provisions for emergency procedures.

In addition to the Arawhenua passport system, the CMP (Appendix F) details the types of signage/ markers proposed. Given the majority of the Ara will be wayfinding across grassed areas, directional markers will be provided at regular intervals either on trees, nearby structures or via a driven pole. Additional user-safety signage will be installed as required, including for warning motorists about pedestrian crossings/ shared bridge use (see Table 3.1 above and the Transport Safety Assessment and Management Plan (Appendix K)).

Regular inspections including of the ara surface, structures, drainage, signage and landscaping are proposed. These inspections will be undertaken by appropriately qualified and trained personnel and/or contractors at the frequency set out in Table 1 of the OMMP, and after weather events that are anticipated to have caused potential material damage to the Ara. Any repairs identified as being required during the inspections will be recorded in a maintenance works register and completed in a timely manner by an appropriately qualified and experienced contractor as set out in Table 2 of the OMMP. All documentation required under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 shall completed before any works are carried out on the ara network (including but not limited to inspections, repairs and maintenance).

Overall, the OMMP is considered to include methods and practices that help provide certainty that once established, the Ara is kept in a safe and well-maintained condition and that the users understand their responsibilities whilst walking the ara. The regular review of the OMMP will ensure that it remains relevant and effective. Accordingly, the adverse effects of the operational Ara on users will be appropriately managed.

7.12.2 Public use effects

During operation of the Ara, there are potential for adverse public use effects without appropriate mitigation, such as damage to surrounding areas/ vegetation, disturbing wildlife, generally leaving traces of the presence of people in the natural environment (i.e., rubbish and food scraps). While the disturbance effects of users are generally assessed in the applicable sections above, the specific management measures for users are described further below.

The overall low-impact Ara design approach enables avoidance and minimisation of potential user disturbance effects. For example, the use of existing accessways to cross over dune systems helps limit new areas of potential disturbance.

Prior to accessing the Ara, the users will be required to obtain and use the Arawhenua passport system. As noted in Section 7.12.1 above, the passport will contain a Kawa (Code of Care) that will provide information about the importance of using formed accessways, respecting the coastal margin, not littering, and setting out other relevant behavioural expectations.

Where appropriate, signage will be established to indicate sensitive areas such as ecological or cultural sites. While the overarching purpose of the project is to increase connectivity, the aim of this signage will be to limit access to specified areas in order to maintain the values of the sites, while also enhancing user knowledge.

Effective physical restrictions and/or real-time monitoring are not practicable given the scale of the Ara. However, active monitoring of user effects is provided for as part of the proposed site inspections (refer to the OMMP). For example, during the signage inspection, the track shall be checked for graffiti damage and if any graffiti is identified it shall be promptly removed. Similarly, during the landscaping inspection, any vegetation adjacent to the Ara that has been disturbed during public use will be replanted in a timely manner to avoid erosion, and any litter found on, or adjoining the ara, will be removed.

It is considered that the potential adverse effects associated with public use of the Ara will be suitably addressed through the management hierarchy and the OMMP. As above, the regular review of the OMMP will ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

7.12.3 Neighbouring community effects

During operation of the Ara, there are potential for adverse effects on the neighbouring community/ landowners.

Detailed design and the final alignment of the Ara within the consent corridor will be guided by negotiations with landowners in places the route crosses through whenua Maori and general title landholdings. The Ara will only cross land where landowner agreement has been provided and only in accordance with the terms of that agreement. Individual landowner preferences are proposed to be provided for through detailed design and the Arawhenua passport system, where practicable.

The Ara will be regularly monitored to ensure that visitor numbers are not having an adverse impact on the ara or its surrounds. If it becomes apparent that the visitor numbers are of a level that is having an adverse impact, numbers will be managed by the restriction of issuing of passports.

As part of the OMMP, a register will be established and held by the Trust where complaints will be recorded. Complaints can be received via the Te Ara Tipuna Website or the specified contact details. The register will record those complaints and outline any steps that were taken to remedy those issues. This register could be provided to the Gisborne District Council upon requested.

Given the consultation process, that the Ara remains subject to landowner approvals, the proposed management measures contained in the OMMP, and the regular review of the OMMP as discussed above, the effects of the Ara on neighbouring communities can be appropriately managed.

7.13 Summary of effects

Overall, the effects will be subject to extensive management and mitigation measures, as set out in the technical reports and Proposed Conditions (Appendix T), such that the effects on the environment can be appropriately avoided, managed and mitigated.

In addition, the Project will result in significant positive cultural, economic and social/ recreational contributions to the whanau and whenua of Te Tairawhiti, as set out in Section 7.2, while Sections 7.3 to 7.12 assess the potential impacts.

8 Statutory assessment

8.1 Consideration of applications

Section 104(1) of the RMA sets out the matters to which a consent authority must have regard to, subject to Part 2 of the RMA, when considering an application for resource consent. These are:

- Any actual and potential effects on the environment of allowing the activity.
- Any measure proposed or agreed to by the applicant for the purpose of ensuring positive effects on the environment to offset or compensate for any adverse effects on the environment that will or may result from allowing the activity.
- Any relevant provisions of:
  - a national environmental standard
  - other regulations
  - a national policy statement
  - a New Zealand coastal policy statement
  - a regional policy statement or proposed regional policy statement
  - a plan or proposed plan
- Any other matter the consent authority considers relevant and reasonably necessary to determine the application.

The actual and potential effects on the environment have been assessed in Section 7 above. The resource consent requirements have been assessed in Appendix R and in Section 5 above. The reasons for consent included in this AEE have been refined through the amendment process and therefore vary from the application as lodged. However, the overall activity status and the nature and scale of the effects has not changed.

The remaining matters are addressed below.

Appendix S contains a copy of the full provisions that are considered relevant to this application.

8.2 National environmental standards

8.2.1 Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020

As outlined in Section 5.2.1, the Ara concept alignment has been developed to avoid mapped wetlands where possible.

In limited cases where the ara traverses or is adjacent to wetlands, it is generally limited to wayfinding only and no physical works (including vegetation clearance or earthworks) are proposed or anticipated within 10 m of a wetland that would trigger the requirement for consents under the NES-F.

The CMP identifies that culverts will be avoided in permanent or intermittent streams wherever possible. If required following confirmation of the detailed design, culverts will be designed to meet the permitted activity conditions set out under regulation 70 of the NES-F.

Accordingly, no resource consents are sought under the NES-F for the Project and therefore an assessment of the provisions of the NES-F is not applicable.

8.2.2 Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulations 2011

As outlined in Section 5.2.2, in the event that a HAIL site is identified during detailed design, soil disturbance will be managed in accordance with the permitted activity conditions under

regulation 8(3) where practicable or a separate resource consent will be sought where compliance with the conditions is not achievable.

For any change of use on a HAIL site, a Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) will be prepared and submitted to GDC in accordance with regulation 8(4).

At this stage, no resource consents are sought under the NES Soil and therefore an assessment of the provisions of the NES Soil are not applicable.

8.3 National policy statements

8.3.1 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010

The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) states objectives and policies to achieve the purpose of the RMA in relation to the coastal environment of New Zealand.

The NZCPS is relevant to the parts of the proposed Ara that are located in the CMA and those parts of the proposal that have the potential to affect the coastal environment, including vegetation removal and land disturbance.

An assessment of the proposal against key relevant provisions in the NZCPS is provided in Table 8.1 below. An assessment of the works against the relevant coastal environment provisions of the TRMP is provided in Section 0.

Table 8.1: New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement Assessment

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
Sustainable management of natural and physical resources	Objective 1, Policy 3, 6, 22, 23	As discussed in Section 7.6, the low-impact design of the Ara allows for natural function and processes in the coastal environment to be maintained. Given the scale of the project, a precautionary approach has been applied to the design and consenting process by seeking consent for a 50 m corridor along the entire extent of the Ara and a wider 'Sensitive Area Consent Corridor' for those areas that are ecologically or landscape sensitive. This approach aims to help avoid specific areas/ features identified through to the detailed design and construction stages. This allows the individual effects to be understood and managed, including in the coastal environment. As detailed in Section 7.2, the Ara will enable the community to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing through enhancing recreational, tourism and employment across Te Tairawhiti, including within the coastal environment. Physical works are avoided within the CMA and sand dune areas, unless for the purposes of dune restoration or improvement of dune stability. Along beaches, the Ara is wayfinding only and existing crossings will be utilised at beach transitions where possible. Where construction works are required to establish new single-span bridges in proximity to the CMA, appropriate contaminant and sediment and

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		erosion control measures will be implemented to ensure that water quality is maintained and adverse effects on receiving waters are appropriately managed. As such, the project is in accordance with these objectives and policies of the NZCPS.
Natural character of the coastal environment	Objective 2, Policy 1, 13, 14, 15	As detailed in Section 7.4, the Ara is designed to be as natural, unobtrusive and harmonious with its location as possible. Notably, approximately 75% of the track is wayfinding, including along beaches, and existing crossings will be utilised at beach transitions where possible. Several new structures are proposed above the CMA where alternatives were not practicable. While this is a deviation from the existing natural character of the coastal environment, the LVA (Appendix I) considers that the swing bridge design has a relatively low visual dominance compared to alternative designs (rigid deck and pier design), will not detract from the natural patterns of the coastal environment, and can be well integrated, particularly when considering the improved visual and physical access provided by the ara to the coastal environment. Overall, it is considered that the Project will preserve the natural character as far as practicable during construction. Moreover, where enhancement planting is proposed, it is expected to restore and enhance the natural character of the coastal environment. On this basis, the Project is considered to be generally consistent with the relevant objectives and policies.
Treaty of Waitangi principles	Objective 3, Policy 2	The Trust is comprised of active Ngati Porou working in service of the best outcomes for Ngati Porou whanau, whenua, and wellbeing[77]. As such have been actively involved in the planning and design of the Ara. Additionally, as demonstrated by the management measures outlined in Section 7.7, the proposal is guided by the principles of partnership, protection and participation. On this basis, the Project gives effect to the Treaty of Waitangi Principles and is consistent with these objectives and policies of the NZCPS.
Public access and open space	Objective 4, Objective 6, Policy 18, 19	As stated in Section 7.2, the Project will significantly enhance public access to and along the CMA. Specifically, where practicable the track will be aligned with, and connect to existing recreation tracks, beach areas above high tide, farm tracks and unformed legal (paper) roads. Accordingly, the Ara will provide for greater immersive experience of the coastal environment, for whanau and visitors.

[77] The Ara is wholly within the Ngati Porou rohe. See: Trust Deed Purpose

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		Recreational use is also enhanced through features such as proposed toilet facilities. For example, the installation of these features at Waipiro (km 116) adds to the amenity of two popular beaches. The Ara will enable the community to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing through enhancing recreational, tourism and employment across Te Tairawhiti. This is discussed further in Section 7.2. While the proposed earthworks and coastal structures are generally located outside the CMA, where new structures enable access, they have been designed considering coastal processes so as not to compromise future access. For example, as outlined in the CMP (Appendix F), all swing bridges and structures related to waterbody crossings will be installed so that the height of the deck of the structure will not be overtopped by the 2% annual exceedance probability (50 year) flood event. In terms of the operation of the Ara, the proposed Arawhenua passport system will inform users of potential natural hazards, ensuring the safety and protection of users. Accordingly, the Ara is consistent with these objectives and policies of the NZCPS.
Coastal hazards	Objective 5, Policy 25, 26	The Coastal Hazard Report (Appendix L) provides an assessment of the potential effects of the Ara on coastal hazards. The envelope of effects is guided by the Km-by-Km tracker. As detailed in Section 7.5.1, the proposed earthworks and coastal structures are generally located outside the CMA. Where new structures are proposed in close proximity to the CMA, they are located well landward of the beach. A number of proposed management measures are outlined and supported by the Proposed Conditions (Appendix T) and Appendix A of the CMP (Appendix F), which states that the implementation of the typical cross-sections will take into account terrain hazards (slips/ cliffs), stability, cost/feasibility, and slope. On this basis, the environmental risk in the coastal environment is also considered to be appropriately managed. In terms of the potential health and safety risks posed to users of the Ara, the proposed Arawhenua passport system aims to inform users of potential natural hazards, helping manage their safety and protection. Additionally, in some instances, the Ara may also provide an alternative accessway in civil emergency situations. Therefore, the proposal is considered to be generally aligned with the relevant objectives and policies.

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
Protecting heritage and sites of significance	Policy 17	As detailed in Section 7.8, Te Ara Tipuna passes through a rich archaeological and historic heritage landscape. In order to assess and manage any actual and potential effects, the Historic Heritage Assessment designates sections of the Ara into zones (green, orange and red). As detailed in the HHMP, different measures will be applied to each zone based on the risk of adverse effects, with the least management required in green zones and the most stringent methods applied to red zones. The design approach is to avoid sites as far as practicable within the consent corridor (whereby the exact location of the Ara within the corridor is confirmed during detailed design to avoid the relevant place or site). Where avoidance is not practicable implementation of management measures will be carried out. The proposed Arawhenua passport system will contain an Oati 'Oath' to adhere to identified tikanga and kawa in specific areas, helping ensure that heritage sites are engaged with in a respectful manner by users. Moreover, there may be an opportunity to capture historical information through ongoing engagement with stakeholders and landowners. Therefore, the proposal is considered to be in keeping with these objectives and policies.
Indigenous biodiversity	Policy 11	Overall, the Ara aims to protect indigenous biodiversity where possible. As detailed in Section 7.3.4, works proposed within the coastal environment are very limited. Where the ara follows the beach in fourteen sections, wayfinding will be used, and no track construction is required. In twelve of these sections where the ara transitions from the terrestrial environment through sand dunes onto the beach, existing crossings will be utilised. The proposed design methodology of the Ara seeks to avoid adverse effects on indigenous biological diversity in the coastal environment by realigning the Ara within the Sensitive Area Consent Corridor to reduce disturbance as far as practicable and by implementing stage-specific pre-construction surveys and EMP approach, adapted for coastal ecosystems. . These measures contribute to ensuring that indigenous biological diversity in the coastal environment is protected by avoiding adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity listed in Policy 11(a), avoiding significant adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity listed in Policy 11(b), and any other effects will be appropriately avoided remedied or mitigated.

Overall, the proposed works are considered to be consistent with the NZCPS.

8.3.2 National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020

The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPSFM) provides guidance on how freshwater is to be managed in a manner that gives effect to Te Mana o te Wai. The overarching objective of the NPSFM (Objective 1, clause 2.1) is to ensure that natural and physical resources are managed in a way that prioritises:

a First, the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems;
b Second, the health needs of people (such as drinking water); and
c Third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being, now and in the future.

Section 104(2F) of the RMA directs that a consent authority must not have regard to clause 1.3(5) (hierarchy of obligations) or 2.1 (set out above) of the NPSFM when considering applications, and clause (2A) of Schedule 4 to the RMA directs that an AEE must not include such an assessment.

Table 8.2 provides an assessment of the Ara against the relevant policies of the NPSFM.

Table 8.2: National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management Assessment

Relevant Policy	Assessment
Policy 1: Freshwater is managed in a way that gives effect to Te Mana o te Wai.	Te Mana o te Wai is described in the NPSFM as "a concept that refers to the fundamental importance of water and recognises that protecting the health of freshwater protects the health and well-being of the wider environment. It protects the mauri of the wai." While some works may be required within riparian zones to establish the single-span bridge approaches, no permanent works will occur within intermittent and permanently flowing streams. While the general approach of the Ara is to avoid culverts where possible, in the event that culverts are required, they will be installed to meet the permitted activity standards of the NES-F and TRMP to ensure that fish passage is maintained. No physical works are proposed within 10 m of any natural inland wetland. While the Ara traverses or is adjacent to some mapped wetlands in limited locations, these sections are restricted to wayfinding only and no physical works will be undertaken. During detailed design, an assessment will be undertaken to identify any unmapped wetlands that may be present along the Ara concept alignment. In such cases, the Ara will be designed to avoid vegetation clearance or earthworks within 10 m of these wetlands where possible. Where avoidance is not feasible, separate additional resource consents under the NES-F may be sought. The one potential exception to this is the Te Whare Wetlands at Te Araroa (km 212 to km 214), where minor earthworks associated with guardrails and vegetation clearance to enable appropriate

Relevant Policy	Assessment
	sightlines may be undertaken. In the event that works are required, the Trust will work together with NZTA to agree the manner in which the works will be undertaken. These activities are not proposed or sought to be authorised by this consent. Additionally, wetlands are included in the broader 'Sensitive Area Consent Corridor' being applied for as part of this consent, which will enable wetlands to be avoided and protected as far as practicable.
Policy 2: Tangata whenua are actively involved in freshwater management (including decision-making processes), and Māori freshwater values are identified and provided for.	The Trust is comprised of active Ngati Porou working in service of the best outcomes for Ngati Porou whanau, whenua, and wellbeing [78]. As such, there has been active involvement in the planning and design of the Ara, as outlined in Section 7.7. Proposed conditions include provision for a cultural monitoring plan, and ongoing engagement throughout the design, construction and operation of the Ara.
Policy 3: Freshwater is managed in an integrated way that considers the effects of the use and development of land on a whole-of-catchment basis, including the effects on receiving environments.	The Ara has been designed to consider effects in relation to freshwater quality and ecosystems by avoiding physical works directly within rivers and streams, maintaining fish passage, undertaking pre-construction surveys in freshwater environments and mitigating the downstream effects of construction through erosion and sediment control measures. As outlined in the CMP, timber bridge and swing bridge construction will adhere to best practice guidelines for operating in proximity to freshwater environments, including implementation of appropriate erosion and sediment control measures prior to construction, and regular monitoring to ensure measures remain effective. Upon completion of construction, all disturbed sites will be rehabilitated to prevent ongoing erosion and sediment generation.
Policy 5: Freshwater is managed (including through a National Objectives Framework) to ensure that the health and well-being of degraded water bodies and freshwater ecosystems is improved, and the health and well-being of all other water bodies and freshwater ecosystems is maintained and (if communities choose) improved.	
Policy 6: There is no further loss of extent of natural inland wetlands, their values are protected, and their restoration is promoted.	No physical works are proposed within 10 m of any natural inland wetland (with the one potential exception of the Te Whare Wetlands discussed in the Policy 1 assessment above) and there is no proposed or anticipated loss of wetland extent related to the Project. Where avoidance is not feasible, separate additional resource consents under the NES-F may need to be sought.
Policy 7: The loss of river extent and values is avoided to the extent practicable	The Ara has been designed to avoid physical works within rivers and streams, including Outstanding Waterbodies, and be wayfinding only where the ara crosses or follows rivers or streams. No works or
Policy 8: The significant values of outstanding water bodies are protected.	

[78] The Ara is wholly within the Ngati Porou rohe. See: Trust Deed Purpose

Relevant Policy	Assessment
Policy 9: The habitats of indigenous freshwater species are protected.	vegetation clearance will be undertaken within the gravel bed of rivers. As outlined in Section 7.3.3, pre-construction surveys will be undertaken in freshwater environments and specific measures will be implemented to ensure that freshwater habitats of indigenous species are protected. Additionally, management of dog access along the Ara is provided for in the OMMP, with a particular focus on ecologically sensitive areas.
Policy 15: Communities are enabled to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being in a way that is consistent with this National Policy Statement.	The Ara will enable the community to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing through enhancing recreational, tourism and employment across Te Tairawhiti. This is discussed further in Section 7.2.

Overall, the Ara is considered to be consistent with the objectives and policies of the NPSFW.

8.3.3 National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023

The National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 (NPSIB) came into force on 4 August 2023. Its objective is to maintain indigenous biodiversity across Aotearoa New Zealand so that there is at least no overall loss in indigenous biodiversity after the commencement date.

The NPSIB applies to indigenous biodiversity in the terrestrial environment throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. There is a particular focus on Significant Natural Areas (SNAs), but the provisions of the NPSIB also apply to indigenous biodiversity outside SNAs.[79]

Clause 3.10(2) requires that new use or development within SNAs avoids the following adverse effects:

> *(a) loss of ecosystem representation and extent:*
> *(b) disruption to sequences, mosaics, or ecosystem function:*
> *(c) fragmentation of SNAs or the loss of buffers or connections within an SNA:*
> *(d) a reduction in the function of the SNA as a buffer or connection to other important habitats or ecosystems:*
> *(e) a reduction in the population size or occupancy of Threatened or At Risk (declining) species that use an SNA for any part of their life cycle.*

Adverse effects on an SNA that are not referred to in subclause (2) must be managed by applying the effects management hierarchy. Significant adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity outside of SNAs and not on specified Maori land must also be managed by applying the effects management hierarchy under clause 3.16. Clause 3.18 requires local authorities to work in partnership with tangata whenua and owners of specified Maori land to maintain and restore indigenous biodiversity and protect SNAs and identified taonga on specified Maori land.

In SNAs where wayfinding is not possible, the Sensitive Area Consent Corridor will be applied to avoid indigenous vegetation clearance as far as practicable and the width of clearance will be limited to 1 m, with the exception of proposed single-span bridge approaches, bridge installations, sections of gravel, steps, low bench cuts and toilets, if required. Further, ecological enhancement planting of any permanently removed indigenous vegetation from areas identified as ecologically sensitive is proposed at a ratio of 2:1 on a voluntary basis. Micro-sitting of the ara

[79] The PMA and TASCV in the TRMP are deemed SNAs in accordance with the definition in the NPSIB.

within the Standard Consent Corridor will avoid adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity outside of SNAs.

Within SNAs, outside of SNAs and on specified Maori land, rare plant species will be avoided in the first instance, otherwise relocated. Where relocation is not possible, replanting at a ratio of 3:1 will be implemented. Additionally, rehabilitation planting in contiguous areas of indigenous forest, where a greater width of vegetation than the ara width is required for construction, will be undertaken to reinstate the cleared area that is not required for the ara post-construction. Pre-construction surveys will be required in sensitive areas and specific management plans will be implemented for bats, birds, lizards and freshwater fauna.

Table 8.3 provides an assessment of the Ara against the relevant objectives and policies of the NPSIB.

Table 8.3: National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity Assessment

Relevant Objective/Policy	Assessment
Objective (1) The objective of this National Policy Statement is: (a) to maintain indigenous biodiversity across Aotearoa New Zealand so that there is at least no overall loss in indigenous biodiversity after the commencement date; and (b) to achieve this: (i) through recognising the mana of tangata whenua as kaitiaki of indigenous biodiversity; and (ii) by recognising people and communities, including landowners, as stewards of indigenous biodiversity; and (iii) by protecting and restoring indigenous biodiversity as necessary to achieve the overall maintenance of indigenous biodiversity; and (iv) while providing for the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of people and communities now and in the future.	The Ara has been developed in a manner that supports the overarching objective of the NPSIB. This is achieved through a combination of management and mitigation measures that are designed to avoid adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity, including confirmatory ecological surveys and micro-siting of the Ara within the consent corridor, including the additional flexibility to avoid and minimise effects in the Sensitive Areas Corridor. Rare plant species will be avoided, relocated or replanted at ratios of 3:1. Rehabilitation planting in contiguous areas of indigenous forest, where a greater width of vegetation than the ara width is required for construction, will be undertaken to reinstate the cleared area that is not required for the ara post-construction. In addition, ecological enhancement planting at a ratio of 2:1 will be undertaken for indigenous vegetation permanently removed from identified ecologically sensitive areas, noting that this planting is proposed on a voluntary basis and has not been proposed as mitigation required to address any residual adverse ecological effect. These measures contribute to ensuring that there will be no overall loss of indigenous biodiversity as a result of the Ara. Te Ara Tipuna Trust is comprised of active Ngati Porou working in service of the best outcomes for Ngati Porou whanau, whenua, and wellbeing [80]. Therefore iwi and hapu have been engaged with throughout the planning and design process, including through approaches to indigenous biodiversity. The proposed Arawhenua passport system will contain an Oati 'Oath' to adhere to identified tikanga and kawa in specific areas, helping ensure

[80] The Ara is wholly within the Ngati Porou rohe. See: Trust Deed Purpose

Relevant Objective/Policy	Assessment
	that areas of indigenous biodiversity are engaged with in a respectful manner. Moreover, indigenous biodiversity of value to tangata whenua will be identified through landowner agreements and managed accordingly. Tangata whenua will continue to be recognised as kaitiaki of indigenous biodiversity throughout the detailed design, construction and operational phases of the Ara.
Policy 1: Indigenous biodiversity is managed in a way that gives effect to the decision making principles and takes into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Policy 2: Tangata whenua exercise kaitiakitanga for indigenous biodiversity in their rohe, including through: (a) managing indigenous biodiversity on their land; and (b) identifying and protecting indigenous species, populations and ecosystems that are taonga; and (c) actively participating in other decision-making about indigenous biodiversity.	Te Ara Tipuna Trust is comprised of active Ngati Porou working in service of the best outcomes for Ngati Porou whanau, whenua, and wellbeing [81]. As such, they have been actively involved in the planning and design of the Ara, as outlined in Section 7.7. Proposed conditions include provision for a cultural monitoring plan, and ongoing engagement throughout the design, construction and operation of the Ara.
Policy 3: A precautionary approach is adopted when considering adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity. Policy 7: SNAs are protected by avoiding or managing adverse effects from new subdivision, use and development. Policy 8: The importance of maintaining indigenous biodiversity outside SNAs is recognised and provided for.	A precautionary approach has been applied throughout the design, assessment of potential adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity associated with the Ara, and proposed management and mitigation measures to ensure that SNAs and indigenous biodiversity outside SNAs are protected and maintained. For indigenous vegetation, the Tracker provides a conservative upper estimate of the potential scale and extent of indigenous vegetation removal. It is highlighted by the EcIA (Appendix H) that a highly conservative and restrictive approach has been taken with respect to the design of the Ara in terms of its alignment, location and construction methodology as outlined in Section 7.3.2. As such, the ecological effects identified represent the upper limits of potential impact, and the proposed protection and mitigation measures are precautionary in nature. Similarly, a precautionary approach has been taken in assessing potential ecological effects on indigenous fauna. Along the Ara, the presence of rare species has been assumed wherever suitable habitat is identified, ensuring that management and mitigation measures are appropriate. Pre-construction confirmatory surveys will be undertaken in areas which have been identified as sensitive ecological areas with indigenous biodiversity, and the EcIA has conservatively assessed the ecological value of all wetlands,

[81] The Ara is wholly within the Ngati Porou rohe. See: Trust Deed Purpose

Relevant Objective/Policy	Assessment
	freshwater and coastal habitats, Protected Management Areas (PMAs), Threatened and At-Risk Species Conservation Values (TASCVs), Migratory and At-Risk Species Conservation Values (MASCVs), Ngā Whenua Rāhui Kawenata areas, and QEII National Trust covenanted areas intersected or adjacent to the Ara as high. The Sensitive Area Consent Corridor outlined in Section 1.7.5 also reflects a precautionary approach by providing for a greater degree of flexibility to avoid disturbing or removing indigenous biodiversity along the Ara. Overall, the design of the Ara, the approach taken to assessing ecological effects for both SNAs and indigenous biodiversity outside SNAs, and the corresponding management and mitigation measures proposed, are precautionary in nature and therefore consistent with these policies.
Policy 13: Restoration of indigenous biodiversity is promoted and provided for.	Ecological enhancement planting is proposed for any permanently removed indigenous vegetation within areas identified as ecologically sensitive at a ratio of 2:1, which is acknowledged in the EcIA as a proactive measure for restoring indigenous biodiversity which is not required to address any residual adverse ecological effect. Additionally, pest control measures, as provided for in the OMMP, will support the restoration of indigenous biodiversity by reducing invasive species along the Ara.
Policy 15: Areas outside SNAs that support specified highly mobile fauna are identified and managed to maintain their populations across their natural range, and information and awareness of highly mobile fauna is improved.	The EcIA identifies a number of specified highly mobile fauna as being present, or potentially present, along the Ara, including pīhoihoi/New Zealand pipit, pekapeka/long-tailed bat, weka, matuku moana/reef heron and pohowera/banded dotterel. As outlined in Section 7.3, pre-construction confirmatory ecological surveys will be undertaken both within SNAs and in areas outside of SNAs to identify indigenous biodiversity and habitats that support highly mobile fauna along the Ara. These surveys will confirm the presence or likely presence of highly mobile fauna identified in the EcIA and ensure that appropriate management and mitigation measures are implemented to maintain their populations, including through specific Bat Management Plans, Avifauna Management Plans, Freshwater Ecology Management Plans and Coastal Ecology Management Plans outlined in the ESMPP.
Policy 17: There is improved information and regular monitoring of indigenous biodiversity.	Survey findings will be incorporated into the information provided to ara users by the Arawhenua passport system, thereby enhancing awareness of these species and their habitats across Te Tairawhiti. Areas of restoration planting will be subject to monitoring during the establishment phase of the Ara.

Overall, the Ara is considered to give effect to the objectives and policies of the NPSIB.

8.3.4 National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022

The National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022 (NPS-HPL) provides direction for the management of highly productive land under the RMA. The objective of the NPS-HPL aims to ensure that highly productive land is protected for use in land-based primary production, both now and for future generations. In some locations, the Ara traverses Land Use Capability (LUC) Classes 1, 2 and 3 land within the General Rural Zone that is classified as highly productive land. Earthworks associated with the construction of the ara in these locations have the potential to impact on productivity of this land and will be managed to align with NPS-HPL objectives. It is noted that wayfinding is not anticipated to impact land productivity.

Of particular relevance to the Project is Policy 8, which states that highly productive land is protected from inappropriate use and development. Clause 3.9(2) of the NPS-HPL provides a list of activities that are not deemed as inappropriate, which includes the following exceptions that are relevant to the proposal:

> *(d) it is, or is for a purpose associated with, a matter of national importance under section 6 of the Act*
>
> *(e) it is on specified Māori land*[82]
>
> *(i) it provides for public access*

The following matters of national importance under RMA section 6 are relevant to the proposal:

> *(d) the maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers*
>
> *(e) the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga*

Under Clause 3.9(3), use or development of highly productive land must minimise or mitigate any actual loss or potential cumulative loss of the availability and productive capacity of highly productive land and avoid if possible, or otherwise mitigate, any actual or potential reverse sensitivity effects on land-based primary production activities from the use or development.

The Ara traverses whenua Maori that falls within the definition of specified Māori land, and will provide for public access by enhancing access to and along the CMA and rivers. It also directly supports the relationship of Ngati Porou uri with their ancestral lands. The design of the Ara will minimise the extent of activities that could result in the loss of productive capacity on highly productive land by utilising wayfinding and following existing ara where possible and locating the ara within the consent corridor to reduce the extent of earthworks and vegetation clearance required for construction works. Wayfinding posts and signage is low-impact and will be designed to not interfere with existing or future land-based primary production activities, ensuring

[82] specified Māori land means land that is any of the following:
(a) Māori customary land or Māori freehold land (as defined in Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993):
(b) land vested in the Māori Trustee that— (i) is constituted as a Māori reserve by or under the Māori Reserved Land Act 1955; and (ii) remains subject to that Act:
(c) land set apart as a Māori reservation under Part 17 of Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993 or its predecessor, the Māori Affairs Act 1953:
(d) land that forms part of a natural feature that has been declared under an Act to be a legal entity or person (including Te Urewera land within the meaning of section 7 of the Te Urewera Act 2014):
(e) the maunga listed in section 10 of the Ngā Mana Whenua o Tāmaki Makaurau Collective Redress Act 2014:
(f) land held by or on behalf of an iwi or hapū if the land was transferred from the Crown, a Crown body, or a local authority with the intention of returning the land to the holders of the mana whenua over the land

compatibility with surrounding rural land uses. As such, the Ara is considered consistent with the NPS-HPL.

8.4 Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan

The Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (TRMP) became operative in part on 30 August 2023. The TRMP contains the Regional Policy Statement (RPS), regional (including coastal) plan and district plan objectives and policies.

The TRMP RPS aims to promote sustainable management by identifying the regionally significant resource management issues and providing objectives and policies to achieve integrated management of the region's natural and physical resources. Of particular significance to this proposal are the following sections of the TRMP RPS:

- B1 Tangata whenua – recognising and providing for interests, aspirations and involvement of tangata whenua in resource management. These overarching provisions are supported by more specific objectives and policies embedded throughout the Plan relating to tangata whenua interests, including freshwater, the coastal environment and air quality.
- B4 Coastal Management – managing activities that straddle administrative boundaries, protecting natural character and processes within the coastal environment, maintaining and enhancing public access, as well as managing natural hazards and water quality.
- B5 Environmental Risk, including Natural Hazards – avoiding or mitigating the effects of Natural Hazards and managing waste disposal.
- B6 Freshwater – Hapu and iwi cultural requirements for freshwater as well as significant resource management issues for freshwater such as ecosystem health, water quality, and integrated management.
- B7 Cultural and Historic Heritage – recognising and protecting heritage values.
- B8 Land Management - soil erosion and protection of erosion-prone land to protect downstream natural and physical resources, including as a result of poor land management or unsuitable land uses.
- B9 Natural Resources – preserving natural character, protecting and rehabilitating significant indigenous biodiversity and sustainable management.

Analysis of the proposal against the relevant RPS provisions, alongside the regional plan and district plan provisions of the TRMP is grouped by theme and provided in Table 8.4 below. Appendix S contains a copy of the full provisions that are considered relevant to this application.

Table 8.4: TRMP objectives and policies key themes and assessment

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
Tangata whenua		
Recognising and providing for tangata whenua	Objectives B1.2.1(1) B1.3.1(1) B1.4.1(1)-(2) C3.6.2(3)-(4) Policies B1.2.2(1)-(5) B1.3.2 (1)-(4) B1.4.2(1) B4.2.2 (2) C3.6.3(1)-(3),(9),(11)	Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust is the applicant and is comprised of active Ngati Porou working in service of the best outcomes for Ngati Porou whanau, whenua and wellbeing [83]. As explored in Section 7.2, a key purpose of Te Ara Tipuna is to enrich and uplift the cultural, social, and economic status of the whanau, hapu, Ngati Porou and communities of Te Tairawhiti, including their resources, authority over their way of life, and wellbeing of their natural and built environment by creating a continuous journey through Ngati Porou rohe. As demonstrated by the management measures outlined in Section 7.7, the proposal is guided by the principles of the partnership, protection and participation. On this basis, the Project gives effect to the Treaty of Waitangi Principles, promotes kaitiakitanga and provides for the relationship of Maori with their ancestral lands and heritage. In accordance with C3.6.3(1)-(3), based on the Joint Management Agreement with Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou, one of the commissioners hearing the resource consent has been nominated by TRONP (see Section 6). Overall, it is considered that the Ara is consistent with the relevant objectives and policies.
Recognition and protection of special value sites	Objectives C3.6.2(1) Policies C3.6.3(5)-(6)	Section 2.6 states that most of the waahi tapu sites identified in the TRMP are not crossed by the Ara. A notable exception is WY5 at Tatapouri Point (km 5), but the ara is wayfinding in this location, therefore no physical works are proposed within the waahi tapu site. Waahi tapu area WY12 at Kaiaua Bay (km 62) is also located within the consent corridor, but the ara is proposed within the road reserve at this point and therefore no physical works are proposed. As detailed in Section 7.7 and 7.8, the effect on recorded waahi tapu and archaeological sites will be avoided in a variety of ways including, modification of the route to avoid visible surface features, archaeological monitoring and excavation and operational methodologies that minimise the potential for effects and limit on-going visitor impacts. For example, the proposed Arawhenua passport system will contain an Oati 'Oath' to adhere to identified Tikanga and Kawa in specific areas, helping ensure waahi tapu sites are engaged with in a respectful manner. Moreover, sites of value to tangata whenua will be identified through landowner agreements and managed accordingly.

[83] The Ara is wholly within the Ngati Porou rohe. See: Trust Deed Purpose

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		No rehabilitation of sites is proposed. However, where appropriate, signage will be established to enhance knowledge of sites of value to Maori. Overall, it is considered that the Ara is consistent with the relevant objectives and policies.
Built Environment, Energy and Infrastructure		
Infrastructure development	Objectives C2.1.3(1)-(4) Policies B3.5.2(4) C2.1.4.5(1) C2.1.4.5(4)	The Ara is designed to enrich the cultural, social, and economic status of the people and communities of Te Tairawhiti and will provide incentive for entrepreneurial activity upon completion and employment during and after construction. The Ara is designed to be as natural, unobtrusive and harmonious with its location as possible, with 75% of the track being wayfinding through natural terrain requiring minimal construction. The TRMP RPS Section B3 Built Environment, Energy and Infrastructure primarily relates to the development of efficient, effective, safe transport and network utility systems in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the natural and physical environment. While the Ara will primarily be used for recreational purposes, it is noted that the Project will support the safe and efficient movement of people by providing a dedicated walking track between Gisborne and Potaka. Moreover, it is possible that in the event that main connections are cut-off, this ara could provide alternative connections between communities. Accordingly, it is deemed that the Project aligns with these objectives and policies.
Coastal environment		
Management across administrative boundaries and General Management Area	Objectives B4.2.1 (1) DC2.3(1)-(3) Policies DC2.4(1),(4)	In direct accordance with RPS Objective B4.2.1 (1), Te Ara Tipuna seeks to establish a network of ara, providing a greater immersive experience of coastal and inland environments for whanau and visitors. Specifically, the ara connects existing tracks, old and new, reviving unused trails, defunct paper roads, encroachments, to create a continuous journey through Ngati Porou rohe. In keeping with the objectives and policies for the General Coastal Management Area, the ara implements a low-impact design approach which incorporates sympathetic design to the surrounding natural character by prioritising the use of wayfinding and the proposed mitigation measures where works are required (refer to Section 7.4). The Coastal Hazard Report (Appendix L) provides an assessment of the potential effects of the Ara on coastal hazards. The envelope of effects is guided by the Km-by-Km tracker. As detailed in Section 7.5.1, based on the mitigation measures, environmental risk in the

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		coastal environment is also considered to be appropriately managed. On this basis, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with these objectives and policies.
Natural character features and landscapes	Objectives B4.3.1(1)-(2) B4.4.1(1) C3.2.2(1)-(3) C3.3.2(1)-(3) DC1.3(1)-(2) Policies B4.3.2(4)-(5) C3.2.3(1)-(2),(5)-(6),(12) C3.3.3(1),(4) C9.2.4(1) C9.1.4(4)-(5) DC1.4(1)	As detailed in Section 7.4, the Ara is designed to be as natural, unobtrusive and harmonious with its location as possible. Notably, approximately 75% of the track is wayfinding through natural terrain requiring minimal construction and helping preserve natural character. The LVA notes that natural character effects mainly relate to stream and river crossings which are located above the CMA in several instances. On this basis, crossing on foot and existing access will be used where possible, and where this is not practicable, swing bridges are the preferred design option. These structures are expected to be less visually dominant than alternatives (rigid deck and pier design) and preserve coastal patterns. Other measures to ensure that both the biophysical and perceptual aspects of natural character within the coastal environment are retained include: • Enhancement of natural patterns of indigenous vegetation. This includes the proposed enhancement planting which will likely improve natural character, including the logical siting, as required to be considered in the LMPF. • Improved visual and physical access to the coastal environment and waterways. Table 2 of the LVA (Appendix I) shows that the adverse effects of the proposed Ara on ONFL areas ranges from nil to low across the project extent. There will also be low moderate positive effects within ONFL areas primarily as a result of the proposed enhancement planting (2:1 ratio), particularly where enhancement planting and on-trail pest control contributes to broader restoration efforts. While visual effects are not entirely avoided, the LVA considers the level of adverse effects to be very low to low across the Ara. As stated in Section 7.4.2.1, some of these visual effects are associated with earthworks, up until rehabilitation is complete. There will also be low moderate positive effects on visual amenity as a result of enhancement planting and in several cases new views will be provided to previously inaccessible vantage points featuring ONFL and regenerating indigenous vegetation. On this basis, the visual effects are assessed as being not inconsistent with Policy C3.2.3(12). Works are required in ecologically sensitive locations, including Significant Values Coastal Management Area. However, vegetation clearance will be limited to 1 m, with the exception of areas outlined in the CMP where

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		this is not possible. Moreover, enhancement planting is proposed which will have a positive effect on natural character in a number of locations given the proposed 2:1 ratio. Overall, the Project will not detract from the experience of the natural character of the coastal environment and is therefore considered to be broadly consistent with the relevant objectives and policies.
Natural coastal processes	Objectives B4.4.1(2)-(3) Policies B4.2.2 (4) B4.4.2(2)-(3) C3.2.3(3)	As discussed in Section 7.6 and the Coastal Hazard Assessment (Appendix L), the low-impact design of the Ara does not create a barrier to natural coastal processes and enables the natural functioning of the coastal environment, which is consistent with Objective B4.4.1(2) and Policy C3.2.3(3) which seek to avoid the adverse effects of activities on the integrity, functioning and resilience of natural processes. Physical works are avoided within the CMA and sand dune areas, unless for the purposes of dune restoration or improvement of dune stability. Along beaches, the Ara is wayfinding only and existing crossings will be utilised at beach transitions where possible. Management and mitigation measures prioritise avoidance and adaptation over the construction of protection works, and the proposed Arawhenua passport system will guide users to minimise disturbance to sensitive areas. Overall, it is considered that the Ara is consistent with the TRMP objective and policies that relate to natural coastal processes.
Coastal ecosystems	Policies B4.3.2(5) B4.4.2(1) B4.7.2(2) C3.2.3(4) C3.2.3(7)-(9) C3.10.3(1),(3) C3.10.3(8) C3.14.2(2)	Policy B4.4.2(1) of the TRMP RPS seeks to avoid, remedy or mitigate the effects of activities which have an adverse effect on biological diversity and ecosystem diversity. By predominantly utilising a low-impact design (i.e., wayfinding and existing ara) in the coastal environment and providing for the micro-sitting of the ara within the consent corridor during detailed design, adverse effects on coastal ecosystems resulting from land disturbance, earthworks and vegetation clearance will be avoided as far as practical. The proposed Arawhenua passport system will guide users to minimise disturbance to sensitive coastal habitats and ecosystems. As outlined in Section 7.3.6, minimal change to natural stormwater runoff is expected, and erosion and sediment control measures will be implemented to avoid creating adverse effects on coastal ecosystems as directed by Objective C3.10.3(3) and Policy C3.10.3(8). In limited coastal areas, such as at the two beaches where there is a potential need for new crossings to be established through dune or coastal vegetation, minimal works may be required to establish ara. In these areas, the ara will be realigned within the consent

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		corridor to avoid rare plant species or they will be relocated. Where they can't be avoided or relocated, rare plant species will be replanted at a ratio of 3:1. In addition, voluntary ecological enhancement planting of any permanently removed indigenous vegetation will be undertaken at a ratio of 2:1 in ecologically sensitive areas, as identified in the EcIA (Appendix H). During detailed design, coastal wetlands will be avoided and in the two dune locations where new crossings may be required, the crossing will be positioned within the consent corridor to minimise the extent of land disturbance and vegetation clearance as far as possible, which directly addresses Policy C3.2.3(8). Further, as outlined in Section 7.3.4, pre-construction surveys will be undertaken for coastal ecosystems where new CMA accessways are proposed to ensure the ara location avoids disturbing rare plant species (as discussed above), and bats, birds, spiders and lizards, which will avoid where practicable the adverse effects on indigenous vegetation of the habitats of indigenous fauna in the coastal environment as directed by Policy C3.2.3(7). As such, the final placement of the Ara within the consent corridor during detailed design and the ecological mitigation measures that will be adapted to and implemented in the coastal environment as outlined in the EcIA and the ESMPP (Appendix H) will ensure that the objectives and policies of the TRMP as they relate to coastal ecosystems are met.
Structures	Objectives C3.7.2(1)-(2),(6)-(7),(9)-(10) C3.8.2(1)-(6) Policies C3.7.3(1)-(3),(5)-(7),(9)-(11),(13)-(15) C3.8.3(2),(4)	In keeping with Objective C3.7.2(1), erection of structures has been avoided in the first instance by using natural crossings. Where avoidance was not possible, two swing bridges are proposed in the CMA. These structures are necessary to provide for pedestrian access over the rivers which would be impossible to traverse on foot, therefore they are considered appropriate structures in this instance. As noted above, swing bridges are stated in the LVA as being less visually dominant than alternatives (rigid deck and pier designs) and preserve coastal patterns. Furthermore, permanent indigenous vegetation removal in ecologically sensitive areas is subject to the proposed enhancement planting at a 2:1 ratio. The potential adverse effects from structures have also been avoided where possible by undertaking construction works outside of waterbodies. Instead, construction will take place from the upper embankments and potential effects will be managed through implementation of the ESCP. In general accordance with Objective C3.7.2(7), no physical works are proposed along beaches or in the CMA, and users will be advised to follow defined accessways and ara. As detailed in Section 7.5.2, single-

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		span bridge structures in the CMA will be designed and constructed to ensure they suitably accommodate physical coastal process and/or events, as well as safety. Due to the contained nature of the structures and their purpose, the Ara will not contribute to the proliferation or sprawl of structures. The detailed design stage will ensure that structures are not located on sites of cultural, conservation or historical significance, and in the event that is not possible, effects will be appropriately managed. Overall, the use of structures has been avoided as far as practicable and management measures are otherwise proposed. Moreover, the structures will enhance the level and quality of access the public have to and along the CMA. Accordingly, it is assessed that the Project is consistent with the relevant objectives and policies for structures.
Water quality	Objectives B4.3.1(3) B4.7.1(2) B4.8.1(1) B4.9.1(1) C3.10.2(1) C3.14.1(1) Policies B4.7.2(1) B4.8.2 (2) B4.9.2(1) C3.10.2(3)	Objectives B4.3.1(3) and B4.8.1(1) of the RPS seeks to maintain water quality in the coastal environment and in rivers, streams and wetlands. Minimal changes to natural stormwater runoff are expected due to the low-impact design of the Ara. In particular, works in the coastal environment have been avoided as far as practical and physical works directly within the CMA or within 10 m of wetlands will be avoided. Further, existing structures and natural crossings on foot have been prioritised along the Ara to reduce construction requirements for new single-span bridges. Where construction works are required to establish new proposed single-span bridges or toilets, appropriate sediment and erosion control measures will be implemented to ensure that water quality is maintained and adverse effects on receiving waters are avoided as directed by Objective B4.8.1(1) of the RPS. As such, the objectives and policies that seek to protect and maintain water quality will be met.
Environmental risk		
Natural hazards	Objectives B5.1.2(1) C8.1.3(2),(3) C8.5.3(2),(4)-(5) Policies B5.1.3(1),(4)-(5) C8.1.4(1)-(2),(4) C8.2.2(3) C8.5.4(8)-(9) C8.5.5(1)	The Ara has been designed to avoid natural hazards where possible, including the geotechnical hazards identified in the Geotechnical Assessment (Appendix N) and coastal hazards discussed in the Coastal Hazard Assessment (Appendix L). During detailed design, further adjustments will be made to the alignment if required to avoid geotechnical and flood hazards, ensuring adverse effects on natural hazards are appropriately managed. The construction of the Ara is not expected to impact the ability of features to act as a buffer to natural hazards, such as dune systems and estuaries. In

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		accordance with Policy C8.1.4(1), no physical works are proposed in extreme hazard areas. As outlined in the CMP (Appendix F), single-span bridge structures for waterbody crossings will be installed so that the height of the deck of the structure will not be overtopped by the 2% annual exceedance probability (50 year) flood event. As a whole, the entire Ara has been designed to function as a resilience network that can sustain extreme weather events in Te Tairawhiti. In terms of the operation of the Ara, the proposed Arawhenua passport system will inform users of potential natural hazards, ensuring the safety and protection of users. These measures are consistent with Objective B5.1.2(1) and Policies B5.1.3(1), (4) and (5) of the RPS which seeks to avoid the risk to infrastructure from natural hazards and ensure that development does not increase the effects of natural hazards upon the physical environment. Overall, it is considered that detailed design within the consent corridor will enable to Ara to be located and constructed in a manner that is consistent with the objectives and policies which seek to avoid the adverse effects of natural hazards on human settlements, development and activities.
Waste management	Objectives B5.8.1(1) Policies B5.4.2(1) B5.8.2(1)	Existing public toilets were identified to inform the Ara concept alignment and in locations where public toilets are not available, compostable toilets are proposed which will not result in any solid or liquid discharge as set out in the CMP (Appendix F), thereby avoiding impacts from non-sewered waste disposal in line with Objective B5.8.1(1) and Policy B5.4.2(1). The OMMP (Appendix G) will set out measures and expectations in terms of the management of the proposed toilets, and management of rubbish, including requiring rubbish found on the ara or adjoining ara facilities to be removed. The Ara is therefore considered consistent with provisions relating to waste management.
Contamination	Objectives B5.6.1(1) C5.1.3(1)-(2) Policies B5.6.2(2) C5.1.4(1)-(2)	Objectives B5.6.1(1) and C5.1.3(1) and (2) seek to ensure that the use and development of contaminated land avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on humans, ecosystems and the environment. In locations along the Ara where earthworks and land disturbance are required, any excavated material requiring off-site disposal will be transported to an appropriate facility for disposal. As outlined in Section 3.5 and 5.2.2 of the AEE and the CMP (Appendix F), in the event that a HAIL site is identified during detailed design, all works will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant NES Soil permitted activity conditions where possible. If compliance with these conditions cannot be achieved, resource consent under the NES Soil will be sought.

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		These measures will ensure that the objectives and policies of the TRMP that relate to land contamination are met.
Cultural and historic heritage		
Archaeological and historic heritage sites	Objectives B7.1.1(1) C4.1.3(1) C4.1.5(1)-(3) C4.1.7(1)-(2) C4.1.9(3)-(4) Policies B4.3.2(3) B7.1.2(1)-(3),(5)-(10),(14) C3.14.2(1) C4.1.6(1)-(4) C4.1.8(2)	The TRMP RPS Objective B7.1.1 seeks to recognise and protect heritage values, including those of Maori origin. To achieve this objective, a number of policies aim to ensure that the effects of proposals on heritage sites/values in the region are avoided, remedied or mitigated. Notably, Policy C3.14.2(1) enables development in the Coastal Environment which avoids adverse effects on natural heritage values as far as practicable. As detailed in Section 7.8, Te Ara Tipuna passes through a rich archaeological and historic heritage landscape. In order to assess and manage any actual and potential effects, the Historic Heritage Assessment designates sections of the Ara into zones (green, orange and red). As detailed in the HHMP, different measures will be applied to each zone based on the risk of adverse effects, with the least management required in green zones and the most stringent methods applied to red zones. In keeping with the management hierarchy outlined in these provisions, the primary aim is to avoid sites as far as practicable within the consent corridor (whereby the exact location of the Ara within the corridor is confirmed during detailed design to avoid the relevant place or site). Where complete avoidance is not practicable within the consent corridor and there is potential for adverse effects, these will be managed using a range of measures, such as; low impact construction methods, informing users of the presence of archaeological sites and behaviours necessary to avoid risk of damage to such sites through a code of conduct provided as part of an Arawhenua passport system (refer to the OMMP). Signage will be used where appropriate to provide information on archaeological sites. Additionally, an Archaeological Authority will also be sought from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT). Based on the proposed management measures, which clearly apply the management hierarchy and accordingly avoid adverse effects as far as practicable, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with these objectives and policies.
Land management		
Land disturbance/ erosion	Objectives B8.1.1(1)-(3) C7.1.3(1) Policies	Geotechnical (Appendix N) and coastal hazard (Appendix L) assessments have been prepared to inform the Ara concept alignment in relation to avoiding unstable and erosion-prone areas and minimising the degradation of land from unsuitable

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
	B8.1.2(1)-(2),(4) C7.1.4(2),(3),(18)	land uses, which is in accordance with Objectives B8.1.1(1) and (3). The final location of the Ara will be realigned within the consent corridor as appropriate to avoid these areas, and engineering intervention will be implemented as appropriate to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on natural resources including soil and ecosystems. As set out in the CMP (Appendix F), best practice erosion and sediment control measures will be used during construction to protect downstream natural and physical resources from adverse effects as directed by Objective8.1.1(2). Overall, it is considered that the geotechnical and coastal hazards assessments will appropriately inform the alignment of the Ara during detailed design to ensure that land use and management practices are appropriate for the location in accordance with these objectives and policies.
Noise and vibration	Objectives C11.2.4(1) C11.2.12(1),(3) Policies C11.2.5(1)-(4) C11.2.13(1),(4)-(6)	Noise and vibration generation will largely be limited to around one-quarter of the Ara where physical works are required, which are generally located outside of the coastal environment and in remote rural areas away from residential activities and other environments likely to be occupied by sensitive receivers. As outlined in Section 7.3.4 and Section 7.10, several mitigation measures are proposed to ensure that noise levels do not adversely affect sensitive receivers and ecosystems, such as pre-construction ecological surveys, construction timing and machinery noise reduction measures. It is considered that the implementation of these mitigation measures will ensure that the acoustic environment remains consistent with the character of the surrounding zone or area and material adverse effects of noise on sensitive ecosystems will be avoided, thereby meeting the objectives and policies that provide direction for managing noise and vibration.
Rural	Objectives DD4.3.1(1)-(3) Policies DD4.4.1(1)-(2)	The Ara has been designed and located to be low-impact, avoiding earthworks and vegetation clearance where possible by following the natural contours of the rural landscape and using existing farm tracks. The ara maintains rural character and amenity values by preserving farmland and open space and avoiding new structures where possible. As discussed in Section 7.4, the Ara has been designed to be consistent with the character of rural areas such that rural amenity values are maintained in accordance with Objective DD4.3.1(2). New structures including proposed single-span bridges, toilets and wayfinding posts are proposed in locations that do not cause adverse environmental effects across

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		property boundaries as directed by Objective DD4.3.1(3). Overall, the establishment of the Ara in rural areas is considered appropriate and all environmental effects will be appropriately managed to meet the relevant objectives and policies.
Reserve	Objectives DD5.3(2) Policies DD5.4(1),(4)-(7)	As identified in Section 2.11, the Ara concept alignment is within a reserve zone in limited locations. In these areas, the Ara has been designed to ensure that adverse effects on reserves will be avoided and amenity, public access, recreation, and conservation, heritage and landscape values will be maintained and enhanced in order to provide for Objective DD5.3(2) and Policy DD5.4(1). During detailed design, the alignment will be further refined to ensure that the objectives and policies that provide for land use and development in reserve zones are achieved.
Natural resources		
Sustainable management	Objectives B9.1.1(3) Policies B9.1.2(5) B9.1.2(10)	In keeping with RPS Objective B9.1.1(3), the Project has been designed with sustainable management of natural and physical resources in mind. Notably, the Ara connects existing tracks, old and new, reviving unused trails, defunct paper roads, encroachments, to create a continuous journey through Ngati Porou rohe. This approach limits the number of new structures required, as well as minimising earthworks and vegetation removal. The ara also provides opportunities for environmental education, particularly with regard to how significant natural areas are managed. Specifically, signage and the Arawhenua passport system are intended to educate visitors on the importance of significant natural and heritage areas. Overall, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with these objectives and policies.
Freshwater systems and integrated management	Objectives B6.2.1(1)-(4),(7) C9.2.3(3) Policies B6.2.6(2),(5) C6.2.11(1),(6) C6.3.1(1),(3) C6.3.4(4) C6.4.1(1),(4),(6)-(7) C6.4.4(1)	The low-impact design of the Ara avoids direct disturbance to rivers and streams, thereby preserving water quality, natural character and amenity values, and the life-supporting capacity of freshwater ecosystems as directed by the objectives and policies for freshwater management set out in the TRMP. In terms of single-span bridges and ara construction, no works will be undertaken within 10 m of wetlands, within Outstanding Waterbodies or within the CMA, and fish passage will be maintained. Sediment and erosion control measures will be utilised where land disturbance and earthworks are required to prevent impacts on water quality as set out in the CMP (Appendix E). As discussed in Section 7.3.3, pre-construction ecological confirmatory surveys will be undertaken to

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		minimise adverse effects on freshwater species. Where riparian vegetation is removed, the Trust is proposing to undertake voluntary ecological enhancement planting of any permanently removed indigenous vegetation at a ratio of 2:1 in ecologically sensitive areas. Further, rare plant species identified in the EcIA (Appendix H) will be avoided, relocated or replanted at a ratio of 3:1 to ensure that these values are maintained and enhanced.
Natural character	Objectives B9.1.1(1) C3.2.2(1) C9.2.3(1) Policies B9.1.2(9) C9.2.4(1)	The LVA notes that natural character effects mainly relate to stream and river crossings. On this basis, existing road bridges will be used where possible, and where this is not practicable, swing bridges are the preferred design option. These structures are expected to be less visually dominant than alternatives (rigid deck and pier designs). Lastly, as outlined in Section 7.4.2.2, the proposed enhancement planting is considered to improve natural character and is provided for by the LMPF and ESMPP. In order to avoid works within 10 m of wetlands, some works may be required within riparian zones to establish the single-span bridge approaches, including installation of piles on the upper embankment, minor earthworks, land disturbance and vegetation removal. However, in keeping with Objective C9.2.3 the extent of works will be minimised as far as practicable to preserve natural character. Overall, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with these objectives and policies.
Indigenous biodiversity	Objectives B4.4.1(1) B9.1.1(2) C3.4.2(2)-(3) C9.1.3(1)-(3) Policies B9.1.2(6),(8) C3.4.3(2),(6)-(7) C9.1.4(1)-(3),(6)	In keeping with Policy C3.4.3(2), adverse effects on significant indigenous vegetation and habitats have been avoided as far as practicable through the proposed ara location and design approach. The Sensitive Area Consent Corridor approach allows for greater flexibility within identified ecologically sensitive areas during detailed design and construction to avoid adverse effects as far as practicable, which is consistent with Objective C3.4.2(2). Additionally, pre-construction confirmatory surveys will be undertaken to identify the presence of indigenous flora and fauna, and if identified, appropriate measures provided for in the ESMPP will be implemented to avoid and mitigate any adverse effect. However, in order to establish the Ara, some vegetation disturbance will be required. Accordingly, the Trust is proposing to undertake voluntary ecological enhancement planting of any permanently removed indigenous vegetation at a ratio of 2:1 in ecologically sensitive areas. Further, rare plant species identified in the EcIA (Appendix H) will be avoided, relocated or replanted at a ratio of 3:1 to ensure that these values are maintained and enhanced. This approach will help ensure that avoiding adverse effects on those ecological corridors is achieved and that their integrity and

Theme	Relevant objective/ policy reference	Comment
		continued viability is maintained, as sought by Objective C3.4.2(3). Based on the proposed mitigation and management measures, which apply the management hierarchy and accordingly avoid adverse effects as far as practicable, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with these objectives and policies.
Public access, signs and amenity value	Objectives B4.3.1(4) B9.2.1(1) C3.5.2(1),(3)-(5) C9.2.3(2) C11.1.3(1)-(2) Policies B9.2.2(2) C3.5.3(1)-(2),(5)-(7),(10),(12) C3.7.2(4) C9.1.4(7) C11.1.4(1), (3)-(6)	As stated in Section 7.2, the Project will significantly enhance public access to and along the CMA and rivers. Specifically, where practicable the track will be aligned with, and connect to existing recreation tracks, beach areas above high tide, farm tracks and unformed legal (paper) roads. In other areas it will be located alongside SH35 and formed local roads. Accordingly, the Ara will provide for greater immersive experience of the coastal and river environments, for whanau and visitors alike. In places the route is proposed to cross through whenua Maori and general title landholdings, subject to easements being negotiated with landowners. The Ara will only cross land over which landowner agreement is obtained and individual preferences will be provided for through the Arawhenua passport system where practicable. As detailed in Section 1.3, the application has been publicly notified, and significant consultation has been undertaken to-date. Where appropriate, signage will be established to raise awareness of sensitive ecological areas and archaeological sites, helping improve knowledge and protect these environments. Signs will be sufficiently separated and of a scale and nature that will not detract from rural character. Any signage within the road network will be simple and will comply with the applicable standards. Overall, in keeping with RPS Objective B9.2.2(1), the Ara recognises the national importance of maintaining and enhancing legal public access to and along the CMA and rivers. Adverse effects will be managed using measures outlined in the CMP, LMP and EMP. Therefore, the Project is assessed as being is consistent with these relevant objectives and policies.

The Ara aligns with the majority of relevant regional and district plan objectives and policies contained in the TRMP. As noted in Table 8.4 above, it is acknowledged that complete avoidance of adverse effects is not entirely practicable in some instances. For example, there will be some unavoidable visual effects on high natural landforms, as noted by the LVA. Notably, a low bench ara over steep terrain is visible from SH35 and popular beaches at Turihau (km 9). However, the LVA considers that the mitigation measures in the CMP and LMPF to limit the extent of works and rehabilitation are appropriate. Moreover, the LVA expressly acknowledges the low moderate positive effects of the restoration planting on landscape and visual effects.

Overall, the management hierarchy of avoiding, mitigating and remedying has been applied to all proposed physical works and the Project is considered to be consistent with the objectives and policies of the TRMP.

8.5 Other matters

8.5.1 Ngati Porou Claims Settlement Act 2012

The Ngati Porou Claims Settlement Act 2012 (the Settlement Act) gives effect to the Ngati Porou Deed of Settlement (the Deed), which acknowledges Crown breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi and aims to restore the relationship between Ngati Porou and the Crown. It includes financial, cultural, and commercial redress, and confirms Ngati Porou's tino rangatiratanga over taonga, whenua, and wai.

The Act establishes mechanisms for durable redress and formal Crown recognition of Ngati Porou tino rangatiratanga. It provides a legal basis for shared decision-making and supports access to opportunities for iwi-led cultural, social, and economic development.

Te Ara Tipuna gives physical and cultural expression to aspects of settlement redress by activating whenua Maori in ways that reflect Ngati Porou values and priorities. It strengthens connections between uri and their ancestral whenua and supports economic, cultural, and environmental opportunities. The project also reflects Ngati Porou autonomy by embedding cultural frameworks, and positioning landowners, governance entities and hapu as key contributors to the Ara.

8.5.2 Joint Management Agreement between GDC and Te Runanganui o Ngāti Porou Trustee Limited

The Joint Management Agreement (JMA) is a formal agreement between Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou and GDC established under section 36B of the RMA. It enables GDC and Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou to jointly carry out the functions and duties under section 36B of the RMA and other legislation relating to all land and water resources within or affecting the Waiapu Catchment (Figure 8.1 below). It is a unique statutory mechanism for Iwi-Council co-governance under the RMA, and one of the only such arrangements in the country.

The JMA seeks to embed a co-governance model that upholds Ngati Porou tikanga and values in regional planning and resource management. It ensures that Ngati Porou have a direct and enduring role in decisions about land, water, and development within their rohe.

Te Ara Tipuna is the first applicant to nominate activation of the JMA since its establishment in 2015, through the appointing of a Commissioner nominated by Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou, in accordance with JMA provisions. This reflects a practical implementation of co-governance and ensures Ngati Porou values and perspectives are embedded at the decision-making table.

More than a compliance exercise, Te Ara Tipuna gives life to the intent of the JMA by fostering partnership, protecting cultural landscapes, and supporting development that is led by and for Ngati Porou.

Figure 8.1: Waiapu Catchment (Source: GDC, 2015)

8.5.3 Waiapu Catchment Plan

A long-term partnership has been developed between Ngati Porou, GDC and the Crown (DOC) to prepare a Waiapu Catchment Plan, focused on restoring the health of the Waiapu River and its catchment. The current timeline identifies that the Waiapu Catchment Plan should be ready for public notification by the end of 2026.[84] It is intended to include objectives around land stabilisation, erosion control, biodiversity restoration, and community wellbeing over a 100-year horizon, aiming to reverse environmental degradation, protect cultural values, and promote sustainable land use. It will also seek to build local capability and empower Ngati Porou as environmental stewards of their own catchment.

Te Ara Tipuna will contribute directly to the achievement of the objectives of the Waiapu Catchment Plan by ensuring appropriate management of effects on freshwater ecology within the catchment, and enabling the restoration and sustainable use of whenua, supporting uri to return home, and encouraging low-impact, culturally appropriate recreation and tourism.

A core feature of the project is the establishment of a local nature-based workforce for the Ara, a team of trained kaimahi who will maintain the Ara, undertake land care and restoration activities, and provide a daily presence along the route. These kaimahi will also be trained as emergency first responders, offering vital support to users of the Ara, landowners and communities along the Ara during times of regional isolation or severe weather. This nature-based workforce will be

[84] https://www.gdc.govt.nz/environment/rivers,-water-and-wetlands/our-rivers/catchment-plans/waiapu-catchment-plan, accessed 27 July 2025.

supported through East Coast Exchange investment and delivers both environmental restoration and resilience outcomes.

Importantly, this workforce not only ensures the long-term care and safety of Te Ara Tipuna but will also provide capacity to deliver on broader Waiapu Catchment Plan objectives. Their presence and skillset position them to support erosion control, biodiversity restoration, and other catchment-based initiatives, creating a dual benefit that advances both the aspirations of the Ara and the long-term environmental goals of the catchment. This integrated approach strengthens community resilience while giving practical effect to kaitiakitanga. The project also gives effect to recommendations in the 2023 Ministerial Inquiry into Land Use ("Outrage to Optimism" Report), which called for urgent, community-led environmental action in erosion-prone East Coast catchments.

8.5.4 Customary interests under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act

Under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 (MACA) those seeking a resource consent in the common marine and coastal area need to notify and seek the views of any group that has applied for recognition for customary marine title in the area.

As part of the original resource consent application for Te Ara Tipuna that was lodged with GDC, several areas of the Ara were identified as being in proximity to four CMT application areas. Based on a conservative approach, the Trust wrote a letter to these groups dated 12 November 2024, notifying them of the project and seeking their views.

Since this time, the ara concept alignment has been amended, meaning that a single-span bridge is now proposed at Pouawa River (km 13). We note this new structure is located approximately 200 m away from the closest CMT application areas, as shown on Kōrero Takutai or Arc Map[85].

Overall, given that no new works are expected to be within, or in close proximity to CMT application areas, we don't consider any further notification is required.

8.5.5 Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019

The Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 (NHNP Act) gives legal effect to an agreement between the Crown and nga hapu o Ngati Porou, recognising the mana of the hapu over the common marine and coastal area within their rohe. Under the NHNP Act resource consent applicants must meet obligations in relation to confirmed CMT order areas.

In this case no new structures are proposed within confirmed CMT order areas, so written permission is not required under the NHNP Act.

8.5.6 Reserves Act 1977

The Reserves Act 1977 provides for the acquisition, preservation, and management of land for conservation, recreation, and educational purposes. It establishes a framework for the classification and administration of reserves, including provisions for leases, licences, and public access.

The Act has three main functions:

- To preserve and manage areas for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, particularly those with recreational, scenic, wildlife, or educational values;
- To protect representative natural ecosystems and landscapes, and support the survival of indigenous flora and fauna; and

[85] Source: Kōrero Takutai

- To maintain and enhance public access to the coast, lakes, rivers, and other natural features, and to protect their natural character.

Reserves may be administered by DOC, local authorities, or other appointed bodies such as boards, trusts, or societies. These administering bodies are responsible for ensuring that reserve use aligns with the purpose and classification of the land.

The Ara traverses reserves in a number of locations. The Ara is consistent with the purpose of recreation reserves under the Act, which is to provide for public recreation while protecting the natural environment.

Where the track crosses reserve land, the Trust will work collaboratively with the relevant administering bodies to obtain the necessary approvals and ensure that the development aligns with the reserve's classification and management objectives. Consultation has been undertaken with Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa who will assist in facilitating access arrangements and approvals.

The Ara is therefore considered to be consistent with the purpose and provisions of the Reserves Act 1977.

In addition in relation to the Reserves Act 1977, Ngā Whenua Rāhui kawenata (covenants) are voluntary legal agreements between Maori landowners and the Crown, established under section 77A of the Act. Their purpose is to protect indigenous biodiversity and preserve the cultural and spiritual values Maori associate with their land, while ensuring that ownership and stewardship remain with Maori. These covenants support long-term conservation efforts through funding and technical assistance, and are registered on land titles to ensure enduring protection.

Where the Ara intersects land subject to Ngā Whenua Rāhui covenants, the Trust will engage with the relevant landowners to ensure that any proposed access or ara development is consistent with the covenant conditions.

The Trust acknowledges the importance of these covenants in preserving significant landscapes and biodiversity and will ensure that all works within covenant areas are undertaken in a manner that respects and upholds the intent of the protection agreement.

Given this approach, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the objectives of the Ngā Whenua Rāhui Fund and will be implemented in accordance with covenant requirements.

8.5.7 QEII covenants

The Queen Elizabeth II National Trust (Ngā Kairauhī Papa) partners with private landowners to protect areas of ecological, landscape, or cultural significance through legally binding open space covenants (referred to as QEII covenants). These covenants are registered on the land title and are intended to provide enduring protection for the identified values.

Where the Ara intersects land subject to QEII covenants, the Trust will engage with the QEII National Trust and the relevant landowners to ensure that any proposed access or ara development is consistent with the covenant conditions.

The Trust acknowledges the importance of these covenants in preserving significant landscapes and biodiversity and will ensure that all works within covenant areas are undertaken in a manner that respects and upholds the intent of the protection agreement.

Given this approach, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the objectives of the QEII National Trust and will be implemented in accordance with covenant requirements.

8.5.8 Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

The Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 provides statutory protection for all archaeological sites in New Zealand. Under section 42 of the Act, it is unlawful to modify or destroy any part of an archaeological site without prior authority from HNZPT.

A Historic Heritage Assessment (Appendix I) has been prepared for the Ara which identifies sections of the Ara which traverse or are in proximity to known archaeological and heritage sites and sets out mitigation measures that will be implemented to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on archaeological values. These are outlined in Section 7.8.

As outlined in Section 5.5.1, an application for an archaeological authority will be made prior to the commencement of works in areas of the Ara where archaeological sites are known to be present or are identified during detailed design.

Given the above, the proposal is considered consistent with the provisions of the Act.

8.5.9 Designations and Road Corridors

The Ara concept alignment is adjacent to, but not directly within, sites that are designated under the TRMP in a number of locations. At these locations, it is the intent that the Ara will remain in the road corridor and will not be realigned into designated sites. As such, it is not anticipated that approvals will need to be sought from requiring authorities. However, in the instance that realignment within the consent corridor is required, approvals will be sought from the relevant requiring authorities as required under section 176 of the RMA.

Where the Ara is located in the road corridor, the Trust will work with NZTA (in relation to SH35) and GDC (in relation to local roads) as the detailed design and final CMP/ CTMP are developed.

8.6 Other Resource Management Act 1991 considerations

8.6.1 Part 2 of the RMA

Part 2 of the RMA sets out the purpose and principles of the Act. The purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

The Court of Appeal's decision on RJ Davidson Family Trust v Marlborough District Council addresses the approach to Part 2 of the RMA in the context of consent applications. The Court held that reference to Part 2 of the RMA would likely not add anything if "it is clear that a plan has been prepared having regard to Part 2 and with a coherent set of policies designed to achieve clear environmental outcomes". It is therefore generally not necessary to consider Part 2 of the RMA, unless the relevant plan has been shown to not have been prepared in accordance with and to give effect to Part 2 and higher order planning documents.

The TRMP was made operative in part in August 2023 and there is no reason to consider the TRMP has not been prepared in a manner that appropriately reflects Part 2 of the RMA. Consequently, the below assessment of the proposal against Part 2 is provided for completeness only.

Overall, based on the assessment undertaken as part of this application, it is considered that the Proposal is aligned with the purpose of the RMA, consistent with sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the RMA, and is therefore in accordance with Part 2. The reasons for this conclusion are set out in the sections below.

8.6.1.1 Section 5 – Purpose

Section 5(1) of the RMA states that the purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources, with sustainable management defined in section 5(2). The Proposal has been assessed against section 5 and is considered to be consistent with the purpose of the RMA as summarised below:

- As explored in Section 7.2, a key purpose of Te Ara Tipuna is to enrich and uplift the cultural, social, and economic status of the whanau, hapu, Ngati Porou and communities of Te Tairawhiti, including their resources, authority over their way of life, and wellbeing of their natural and built environment by creating a continuous Ara through Ngati Porou rohe.
- Potential adverse effects as a result of the construction and operation of the Ara will be avoided, remedied or mitigated through robust management measures and operational procedures (particularly as controlled through management plans and proposed conditions of consent).
- As stated in Section 3.12, while not required to offset or compensate for residual ecological effects, ecological restoration enhancement planting is proposed for any permanently removed indigenous vegetation from identified ecologically sensitive areas at a ratio of 2:1. As such, the Ara will have environmental benefits related to life supporting capacity of indigenous ecosystems.

8.6.1.2 Section 6 – Matters of National Importance

Matters of national importance, which are to be recognised and provided for, are set out in section 6 of the RMA. Of particular relevance to this proposal is:

- Section 6(a) – the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development;
- Section 6(b) – the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development;
- Section 6(c) - the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna;
- Section 6(d) – the maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes and rivers;
- Section 6(e) - the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga;
- Section 6(f) – the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development; and
- Section 6(h) – the management of significant risks from natural hazards.

Considering section 6(a), natural character is not defined in the RMA, but it generally refers to the 'degree of naturalness' of an area. Natural character is primarily determined by the nature and extent of modification to a landscape and comprises natural elements appearing in natural patterns, underpinned by natural processes. As detailed in the LVA (Appendix I) and assessed in Section 7.4, the Ara is designed to be as natural, unobtrusive and harmonious with its location as possible. Notably, approximately 75% of the track is wayfinding through natural terrain requiring minimal construction and helping preserve natural character. The LVA notes that natural character effects mainly relate to stream and river crossings. On this basis, crossing on foot and existing bridge crossings will be used where possible, and where this is not practicable, swing bridges are the preferred design option. These structures are a less visually dominant option for wider crossings compared to alternatives such as rigid deck and pier designs; they will not detract from the natural patterns of the coastal environment and can be well integrated into the landscape.

Regarding section 6(b), Table 2 of the LVA (Appendix I) shows that the adverse effects of the proposed Ara on ONFL areas ranges from nil to low across the project extent. There will also be low moderate positive effects within ONFL areas primarily as a result of the proposed enhancement planting (2:1 ratio), particularly where enhancement planting and on-trail pest control contributes to broader restoration efforts. Additionally, the Ara is not considered an inappropriate activity because it gives effect to a matter of national importance under section 6(d) by maintaining and enhancing public access along the coastal marine area and rivers.

In keeping with section 6(c), significant indigenous vegetation and habitats have been protected as far as practicable through the proposed ara location and design approach. The Sensitive Area Consent Corridor approach allows for greater flexibility within identified ecologically sensitive areas to avoid effects during detailed design and construction. Additionally, pre-construction confirmatory surveys will be undertaken to identify the presence of indigenous flora and fauna, and if identified, appropriate measures will be implemented. Notably, the Trust is proposing to undertake voluntary ecological enhancement planting of any permanently removed indigenous vegetation at a ratio of 2:1 in ecologically sensitive areas. Further, rare plant species identified in the EcIA (Appendix H) will be avoided, relocated or replanted at a ratio of 3:1 to ensure that these values are maintained and enhanced.

With respect to section 6(d), the Project will significantly enhance public access to and along the CMA and rivers. Where practicable, the track will be aligned with, and connect to existing recreation tracks, beach areas above high tide, farm tracks and unformed legal (paper) roads. In other areas it will be located alongside SH35 and formed local roads. Accordingly, the Ara will provide for greater immersive experience of the coastal and river environments, for whanau and visitors alike.

With respect to section 6(e), a key purpose of Te Ara Tipuna is to enrich and uplift the cultural, social, and economic status of the whanau, hapu, Ngati Porou and communities of Te Tairawhiti. Additionally, as detailed in Section 7.7 and 7.8, recorded waahi tapu and taonga will be protected in a variety of ways including, modification of the route to avoid visible surface features, archaeological monitoring and excavation and operational methodologies that minimise the potential for effects and limit on-going visitor impacts. For example, the proposed Arawhenua passport system will contain an Oati 'Oath' to adhere to identified Tikanga and Kawa in specific areas, helping ensure waahi tapu sites are engaged with in a respectful manner.

Regarding section 6(f), as detailed in the HHMP, the primary aim is to avoid recorded historic heritage sites as far as practicable within the consent corridor. The proposed management measures also help protect these sites, including the implementation of low impact construction methods, informing users of the presence of archaeological sites and behaviours necessary to avoid risk of damage to such sites.

In terms of section 6(h), the Ara has been designed to avoid natural hazards where possible, including the geotechnical hazards identified in the Geotechnical Assessment (Appendix N) and coastal hazards discussed in the Coastal Hazard Assessment (Appendix L). Additionally, during detailed design and construction, the Ara will be subject to geotechnical and flood mitigation measures to ensure adverse effects on natural hazards are appropriately managed.

8.6.1.3 Section 7 – Other Matters

Section 7 of the RMA sets out other matters to which particular regard must be had when exercising functions and powers under the RMA. Of particular relevance to this Project are:

(a) Kaitiakitanga;

(aa) The ethic of stewardship;

(b) The efficient use and development of natural and physical resources;

(c) the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values;

(d) Intrinsic values of ecosystems;

(f) Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment; and

(g) Any finite characteristic of natural and physical resources.

The following comments in respect to the above other matters are made:

- Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust is the applicant and is comprised of active Ngati Porou working in service of the best outcomes for Ngati Porou whanau, whenua and wellbeing [86]. As explored in Section 7.2, a key purpose of Te Ara Tipuna is to enrich and uplift the cultural, social, and economic status of the whanau, hapu, Ngati Porou and communities of Te Tairawhiti, including their resources, authority over their way of life, and wellbeing of their natural and built environment by creating a continuous journey through Ngati Porou rohe. As demonstrated by the management measures outlined in Section 7.7, the proposal is guided by the principles of the partnership, protection and participation. On this basis, the Project promotes kaitiakitanga and provides for the relationship of Maori with their ancestral lands and heritage.
- As noted above, a key purpose of Te Ara Tipuna is to enrich and uplift the cultural, social, and economic status of the whanau, hapu, Ngati Porou and communities of Te Tairawhiti. It is also noted that in order to establish this continuous journey, the Ara connects existing tracks and will revive unused trails and defunct paper roads. This methodology is both efficient and directly enhances amenity values.
- The intrinsic value of ecosystems and other environmental features is reflected in the consent corridor approach. With specific regard to ecosystems, the Sensitive Area Consent Corridor approach allows for greater flexibility within identified ecologically sensitive areas during detailed design and construction to avoid adverse effects as far as practicable. Where complete avoidance is not practicable, appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed.
- Broadly, the low-impact design approach, including utilising existing resources to limit the scale of works and implementing a consent corridor approach to further avoid and manage effects gives regard to finite characteristic of natural and physical resources.

8.6.1.4 Section 8 – Treaty of Waitangi

Section 8 requires those exercising powers or functions under the RMA to take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

The Trust is comprised of active Ngati Porou working in service of the best outcomes for Ngati Porou whanau, whenua and wellbeing and as such have been actively involved in the planning and design of the Ara. Additionally, as demonstrated by the management measures outlined in Section 7.7, the proposal is guided by the principles of the partnership, protection and participation. Further, proposed conditions of consent incorporate requirements for a cultural monitoring plan and ongoing engagement with mana whenua, other landowners, hapu and communities. On this basis, the Project takes into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

[86] The Ara is wholly within the Ngati Porou rohe. See: Trust Deed Purpose

8.6.1.5 Summary – Part 2

In summary, while the Project will result in some adverse effects on the environment, these have been avoided as far as practicable and extensive measures are proposed to mitigate for those effects. Moreover, while not required to offset or compensate for residual ecological effects, ecological restoration enhancement planting is proposed (as detailed in Section 3.12). A range of positive effects are enabled through the development, construction and maintenance of the proposed ~345 km ara between Makorori near Gisborne and Potaka (and additional Port Awanui Loop and Hikurangi Loop tracks). As such, the Project is consistent with Part 2 and granting this application will further the sustainable management purpose of the RMA.

8.6.2 Proposed conditions of consent – sections 108 and 108AA RMA

Section 108AA sets out the requirements for conditions of resource consents as follows:

> *1) A consent authority must not include a condition in a resource consent for an activity unless—*
> *a) the applicant for the resource consent agrees to the condition; or*
> *b) the condition is directly connected to 1 or both of the following:*
> *i. an adverse effect of the activity on the environment:*
> *ii. an applicable district or regional rule, or a national environmental standard; or*
> *c) the condition relates to administrative matters that are essential for the efficient implementation of the relevant resource consent.*
>
> *(2) – (5) …*

A set of draft conditions proposed by the applicant is discussed in Section 1.7.5 and set out in Appendix TAppendix T. These represent key conditions which capture the mitigation measures and management plans identified in the specialist reports and assessment of effects which are considered necessary to address the potential adverse effects of the proposed activity on the environment.

8.6.3 Notification

At the time of lodgement, the Trust requested that the application by publicly notified and this notification has been undertaken. The application as amended in this AEE is within the scope of that notified application, having reduced both the extent of the Ara and the scale of its effects in response to submissions, engagement with NZTA and with GDC and its technical experts, and the request for further information.

Given this reduction in scope, while all submitters should be provided access to this AEE and its appendices, no public notification or service process is necessary.

9 Conclusion

This AEE report has been prepared on behalf of the Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust. It supports a resource consent application to authorise the construction, operation, and maintenance of a recreational pedestrian pathway known as Te Ara Tipuna – Stage 1, comprising an approximately 345 km long Ara, extending from Makorori near Gisborne, generally following the coastal environment around East Coast, and ending at Potaka.

Te Ara Tipuna represents more than a physical pathway network—it embodies layers of cultural significance and connection to place. Te Ara Tipuna is intentionally designed using a low-impact approach, meaning the majority of the route will follow existing terrain with minimal intervention, ensuring the landscape remains largely undisturbed.

The Project requires resource consent from GDC as a discretionary activity under the TRMP.

The AEE draws the following conclusions:

- The effects of the proposal have been assessed in accordance with s104(1), which concludes that the effects will be subject to extensive management and mitigation measures such that the effects on the environment will be appropriately avoided, managed and mitigated.
- The Project has been assessed against relevant statutory plans in accordance with s104(1)(b), which concludes that it will be consistent with the NZCPS, NPSIB, NPSFW, NPSHL and TRMP.
- The Project is consistent with Part 2 and granting this application will further the sustainable management purpose of the RMA.

10 Applicability

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of our client Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust, with respect to the particular brief given to us and it may not be relied upon in other contexts or for any other purpose, or by any person other than our client, without our prior written agreement.

We understand and agree that our client will submit this report as part of an application for resource consent and that Gisborne District Council as the consenting authority will use this report for the purpose of assessing that application.

Tonkin & Taylor Ltd
Environmental and Engineering Consultants

Report prepared by:	Tonkin & Taylor Ltd
	
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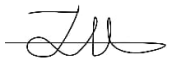
Portia Sutherland Planner	Haylee Minoprio Principal Planner

Report prepared by:	Authorised for Tonkin & Taylor Ltd by:
	
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Zoe Anderson Planner	Jennifer Carvill Project Director

6-Aug-25
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Appendix A Client statement

Appendix B Ara alignment maps

Appendix C Link to GIS tool

Appendix D Km by Km Design Tracker and Km Tracker Guidance Document

Appendix E Waterbody Crossings spreadsheet and Waterbody Crossing Covering Document

Appendix F Construction Management Plan (draft)

Appendix G Operational and Maintenance Management Plan (draft)

Appendix H Ecological Impact Assessment

Appendix I Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment

Appendix J Historic Heritage Assessment

Appendix K Transport Safety Assessment and Management Plan

Appendix L Coastal Hazard Assessment

Appendix M Cultural Impact Assessment

Appendix N Geotechnical Assessment

Appendix O Recreation Assessment

Appendix P Social Impact Assessment

Appendix Q Consultation Summary

Appendix R TRMP rules assessment

Appendix S Objectives and policies

Appendix T Proposed conditions

Appendix U Te Ara Tipuna Proposal 2021

Appendix V Te Ara Tipuna Trust Deed

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