

3 October 2025

RE Napier City Council's position on the new waka hub project:

Napier City Council (NCC) is the local government authority for the City of Napier | Ahuriri, a compact coastal city within Hawkes Bay.

Council is committed to celebrating our unique culture and provide opportunity for our community and those visiting our city to learn about what makes us special. It has been important to Council from the outset that this project follow a co-design process, working in partnership with the Ātea a Rangi Trust to deliver this exciting initiative.

The current berth of the waka Te Matau a Māui is unsuitable, with poor visitor experience, inadequate mooring, and no secure access, leading to damage and vandalism. There are no facilities for crew or visitors.

A dedicated waka hub is essential for hosting, teaching school and community groups, sheltering visitors, and to provide space for cultural activities and storytelling.

The proposed Waka Hub will celebrate celestial navigation, offer secure mooring via a floating pontoon, and improve access for the waka hourua.

It will include essential amenities such as toilets, showers, sleeping and changing facilities, alongside a public gathering space near the water's edge, ensuring a safe, functional, and culturally significant home for Te Matau a Māui.

NCC is working in partnership with Mana Whenua (local Māori tribes) to create the Hub in Napier's Inner Harbour. It is envisaged the new Hub will enhance the character of this area, provide an opportunity to showcase the rich cultural history of Ahuriri, and is anticipated to significantly improve the economy by increasing social and commercial activities.

The proposed Hub will be situated on land immediately adjoining the existing Napier Sailing Club to the north. This site was formally endorsed by the Napier Sailing Club prior to approval from Council, and has been well received by stakeholders at the Sailing Club, Ātea a Rangi Trust and Council, with efficiencies able to be realised by both the Sailing Club and the Ātea-a-Rangi trust once the Waka Hub is complete.

This project establishes the first purpose-built waka mooring for ocean-going waka in New Zealand's North Island, providing a world class public space that showcases celestial navigation and its cultural significance to Aotearoa. The Waka Hub is envisaged as an international destination for waka voyagers from around the Pacific.

Council has demonstrated its commitment to this kaupapa through confirmed funding contributions of \$2.2 million from the Government's Better Off Fund and \$3.3 million through our Long Term Plan, ensuring the fundamental components of the Waka Hub can be delivered.

Further external support is now sought to complete the cultural, educational, and environmental elements that will further transform the Waka Hub into a nationally significant facility.