

'Transformational' industrial park opens

Around 300 people gathered at Ngāwhā last week for a blessing to open the first stage of a \$48 million project to transform economic development in the Far North.

Ngāwhā Innovation & Enterprise Park is an award-winning community economic development initiative designed to create employment opportunities by tapping into the district's rich natural assets. The event was hosted by Far North District Council's commercial arm, Far North Holdings Ltd (FNHL), and local hapū, Ngāti Rangī.

FNHL CEO Andy Nock told the gathering the park, near Kaikohe, will provide a platform to transform the Tai Tokerau economy from a low-value, low-skilled supplier of raw materials, to a producer of high-value ingredients and consumer products based on its sub-tropical climate.

The park includes an education and training precinct to deliver skills needed by park businesses and the wider district. It also has a café, modern laboratory, co-working spaces, video conferencing and meeting rooms to encourage collaboration between businesses and to co-locate research and development activity.

Ngāpuhi Asset Holding Company Limited (NAHC) has partnered with FNHL to establish Kaikohe Berryfruit, one of the park's anchor tenants. NAHC CEO Paul Knight said the park's kaupapa and easily accessible location for Kaikohe's workforce made it an obvious choice for the iwi's first significant expansion into horticulture. "I would hold-up Kaikohe Berryfruit as an exemplar of what a partnership between the commercial arms of an iwi and the council should look like."

Ngāti Rangī kaumātua Albert Tana has worked closely with FNHL since the park's inception.



Northland MP Willow-Jean Prime cuts a ceremonial ribbon at the park entrance before beginning a hīkoi to the park buildings. She is pictured with Ngāti Rangī kaumātua Albert Tana and Reverend Wiremu Anania.

"I'm encouraged by the fact that we get to create work for our own in the district and this is an occasion we've all been waiting for," he said.

Far North Kahika Moko Tepania said he was extremely proud of the partnerships that had brought about the park.

"In 2018, the council had a vision and committed \$5 million to buy a dairy farm just outside of Kaikohe

to turn it into a 'market-ready' industrial park that would attract business and create jobs for the Far North.

"We now have secure new jobs, industry training opportunities and the promise of much more to come!"

The project received \$20 million in Provincial Growth funding from the Government.

Southern animal shelter opens



The 300 sqm building includes 13 kennels and four exercise areas.

The much-anticipated Southern Animal Shelter near Kaikohe opened at the end of May with a dawn blessing by rangatira from Te Uri o Hua hapū.

The new, purpose-built facility will work in tandem with the Northern Animal Shelter in Kaitiāia to provide coordinated and district-wide management of animals in the council's care.

Following the blessing, Kahika Moko Tepania, councillors, council staff, and members of the Bay of Islands Animal Rescue team toured the 300 square metre building. The facility includes 13 individual kennels (three of which can be used for quarantine purposes when required), a vet room,

an area for puppies, four exercise areas, as well as an administration block. Outdoor kennels may also be added in the future. It is anticipated that in the future people wanting to view dogs available for adoption will be able to do so by appointment at the shelter.

The shelter was built over nine months, but the project to create a modern facility has been a much longer one. The land was purchased three years ago with an existing dwelling and commercial kennels on-site. However, a thorough assessment of existing buildings found that the investment required to upgrade them to meet national animal codes of welfare would be almost the same as building a completely new facility.

The cost of developing the new facility was approximately \$2.4 million.

In July 2020, the council was awarded \$1 million for two animal shelter projects through a successful funding bid to the Provincial Development Unit following government calls for post-lockdown, shovel-ready projects. The remaining budget for the southern shelter was drawn from existing budgets including from the Long Term Plan 2021-2031.

Local hapū, Ngāti Tautahi and Ngāti Whakaeke, were included in the consultation process.

District Plan notification extended



The District Plan sets out how land can be used and developed.

Notification of the council's Proposed District Plan will take longer than anticipated due to the high number and complexity of public submissions received during a 12-week consultation period held late last year.

Council staff are working to complete a summary of the 8,117 requests made by nearly 600 submitters, but due to the scale and complexity of submissions this process is taking longer than anticipated.

The council was intending to publish the submissions summary by the end of May. The aim now is to issue the notification in late June, but it is possible the notification will be delayed until July.