

3 December 2025

**Attention: Duncan Stuart, Ngāti Hine Health Trust**  
**cc: Alvin Jung, Makarena Dalton, Barker and Associates**

**Re: Te Mataora Precinct, Kawakawa**

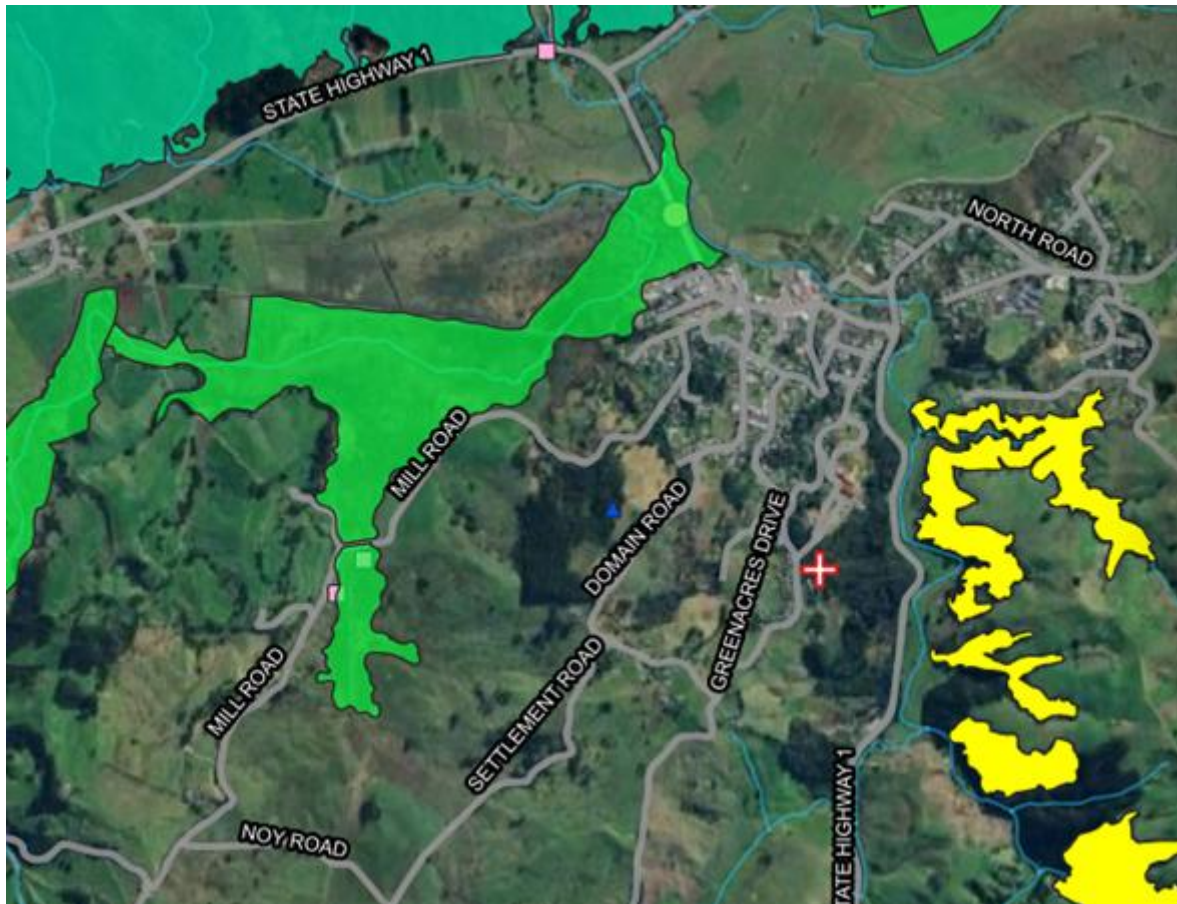
## Introduction

The proposed Te Mataora Precinct ('the Precinct') applies to land which was formally part of the Bay of Islands Hospital and is in the process of being returned to Ngāti Hine. The Precinct is located on the corner of Greenacres Drive and Hospital Road, adjacent to the Bay of Islands Hospital in Kawakawa. The proposed precinct provisions would enable residential development in locations that are environmentally appropriate, whilst ensuring that the ecological features are adequately protected, restored, and enhanced. You have asked that Ecological Solutions Limited visit the site and identify at a 'high level' any ecological features there which would need to be considered in any future development of the Precinct. Any future development proposal would be accompanied by an assessment of ecological effects relating to the specific proposal. The author visited the site on 4 November 2025 and this letter is based on the findings of that visit.

## Ecological Context

The Precinct is located at the northern end of the Whangaruru Ecological District ('ED'), near the boundary with the Kerikeri ED to the north (Booth 2005). The Whangaruru ED comprises islands, estuaries and coastal and other forest remnants near the east coast of Northland between the Kawakawa River and Awahoa Bay (north of Whangārei Heads). The Whangaruru ED is characterised by steep, deeply dissected hill country to 460m asl with some areas of lower rolling hill country. Whangaruru ED is one of the least windy areas of Northland, with annual rainfall ranging from 1,200mm at the coast to 2,000mm at inland sites (Booth 2005). Booth (2005), identified 52,662ha of natural areas in the Whangaruru ED, of which, 18,641ha (35.4%) was formally protected. This is equivalent to c. 16% of the total area of the ED. Of the natural areas, c. 565ha were wetlands.

More recently (2020), Wildland Consultants Limited, on behalf of the Far North District Council, mapped Significant Natural Areas ('SNAs') in the Far North District. The site is not included in the natural areas identified by Booth (2005), nor the SNAs identified by Wildland Consultants Limited. Figure 1 shows the SNA areas mapped by Wildland Consultants Limited and the wetlands in the vicinity available from the Northland Regional Council.



**Figure 1: Significant Natural Areas identified by Wildland Consultants Limited (yellow and pale green) and wetlands identified by Northland Regional Council (bright green) near the proposed Te Mataora Precinct (red cross), Kawakawa.**

### Ecological Values

The Precinct includes indigenous vegetation and natural inland wetlands in the form of gumland, as well as areas dominated by exotic species (*Eucalyptus* spp.). The vegetation throughout is severely compromised by the presence of a variety of weed species, but particularly Sydney golden wattle (*Acacia longifolia*). The area is bisected by powerlines and mowing beneath the cables to allow access to the poles has also adversely affected the vegetation and likely allowed weeds such as giant reed (*Arundo donax*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and aristeia (*Aristea ecklonii*) to establish and spread across the site. Sydney golden wattle is now the dominant canopy species as shown in Figure 2. At some locations mānuka (*Leptospermum scoparium* agg.) dominates as shown in Figure 3. The gumland vegetation comprises a canopy comprising mānuka, with an understorey with variably present carrier tangle fern (*Gleichenia microphylla*), kauri sedge (*Schoenus tendo*), tāmingi (*Epacris pauciflora*), mingimingi (*Leptecophylla juniperina*) and sword sedge (*Lepidosperma laterale*). Sydney golden wattle and gorse are widespread and substantially reduce the ecological value of the vegetation present. Wilding pines (*Pinus radiata*) are also occasional. The mānuka is typically c. 3m tall with diameters at breast height less than 10cm, suggesting that the vegetation is relatively young. The largest wattle stems were approximately 20cm in diameter at breast height.

As well as the area beneath the power lines, a previous access track and other areas that appear to have been more recently cleared contain regenerating vegetation which includes native species as well as a high proportion of weeds.





**Figure 2: Sydney golden wattle (background) dominates the vegetation across much of the Te Mataora Precinct site.**



**Figure 3: Mānuka beneath the powerlines which bisect the Te Mataora Precinct site.**



Birds heard or seen include common native species such as pīwaiwaka (fantail, *Rhipidura fuliginosa*), grey warbler (*Gerygone igata*) and welcome swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*). The habitat is suitable for native lizards including Auckland green gecko (*Naultinus elegans*) and copper skink (*Oligosoma aeneum*), but neither of these species were observed. Given that there is no mammalian pest control at the site, if native species remain, their numbers are likely to be substantially reduced.

The indigenous vegetation present would not meet the criteria for ecological significance set out in Appendix 5 of the operative Northland Regional Policy Statement, however the gumland area would trigger the rarity criterion, although the ecological value would be low because of the pervasive impact of weeds.

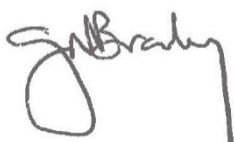
## Conclusion

The proposed Te Mataora Precinct site includes areas of exotic vegetation which are of low ecological value, as well as areas of indigenous vegetation and wetland. These areas have not been previously identified as significant in any planning documents. The vegetation is weedy and some areas appear to be regenerating from relatively recent disturbance (10–15 years). The areas with indigenous elements amongst the vegetation have substantial potential for ecological improvement if restored and appropriately managed as part of the Precinct provisions.

The indigenous vegetation would not trigger the relevant criteria for ecological significance, but the gumland area would trigger the rarity criterion and would therefore be considered significant. Any ecological restoration plan should focus on the wetland and any areas of indigenous vegetation.

I trust that this assists in informing your planning for the site. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Ngā mihi nui,



**Dr Gary Bramley**  
Ecologist

## References

Booth, A.M. 2005. Natural areas of Whangaruru Ecological District. Reconnaissance survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme. Department of Conservation, Northland Conservancy, Whangārei.