

# Te Hiku o te Ika

## Revitalisation Project



The Minister of Local Government Award for Council-Community Relations  
Award Submission 2022





## PROJECT SUMMARY

The “Te Hiku o te Ika Revitalisation Project” is a collaboration between Far North District Council, Kaitaia Business Association, the five iwi of the Far North’s Te Hiku region and the local community.

Its purpose is to create employment in, and restore the vibrancy and mana of, the towns of Kaitaia, Awanui and Ahipara. These had become shadows of their former selves following years of economic decline.

A raft of 81 urban improvement, restoration and revitalisation projects were identified and folded into the Te Hiku o te Ika Revitalisation Project (the initiative).

This initiative has delivered, and continues to deliver, outstanding results generated by excellent community engagement and empowerment.

We have:

- empowered the community to deliver this project
- implemented a more agile procurement approach
- upskilled local businesses so they can be FNDC suppliers in the future
- engaged previously-unemployed people in the towns involved
- consulted hard-to-reach, frequently-disenfranchised groups
- created a sense of community identity and belonging.

This initiative is highly repeatable. Councils everywhere can replicate the results using lessons we have learned about:

- engaging and empowering local communities
- training and empowering local businesses to grow
- introducing ‘agile’ (yet robust) procurement processes







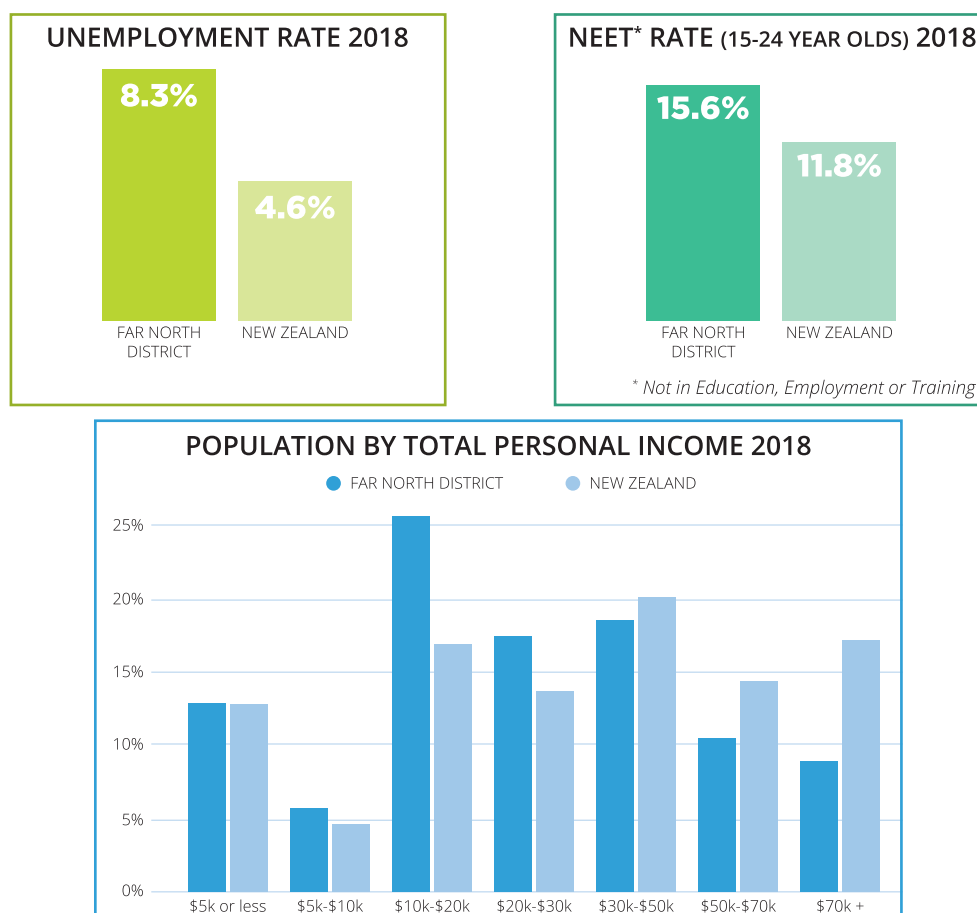
## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### NEED AND FNDC'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Te Hiku has a rich history but in recent times the townships of Kaitaia, Awanui and Ahipara have lacked identity and connectivity and have high levels of social and economic deprivation (Figure 1).

When COVID Recovery funding became available for 'shovel-ready' projects, Far North District Council (FNDC), Kaitaia Business Association and the five iwi of the Far North's Te Hiku region submitted a combined package of 81 projects. Known collectively as the Te Hiku o te Ika Revitalisation Project, this initiative is delivered by a Project Working Group (PWG) of community representatives.

FIGURE 1





## OUTCOMES

The targeted outcomes and how we are achieving them are shown below and in Figure 2:






-  enhance and restore the vibrancy and mana of Kaitaia, Awanui and Ahipara
-  boost employment within the Far North District, targeting Māori, Pasifika and local workers
-  award 70% of work to local businesses (Māori and Pasifika in particular)
-  develop skills and training to enable local individuals and organisations to continue as Council-approved suppliers beyond this initiative
-  projects contribute to FNDC's environmental objectives and strategic direction: "creating a district of sustainable prosperity and wellbeing by creating great places and supporting our people".

FIGURE 2







## RISKS AND MITIGATION

### ***Procurement at pace***

The project was split into manageable packages of work for smaller contractors. The volume of procurement exercises meant that business-as-usual procurement could not have met deadlines outlined in the COVID Recovery funding agreement. An agile procurement strategy, supported by elected members, raised the delegations at each level of authority to allow procurement at pace.

### ***Not enough local workers and businesses qualified to work for FNDC***

FNDC requires contractors to have SiteWise accreditation. While this provides confidence in their safety capability, accreditation is a daunting undertaking for smaller businesses. The volume of work, delivery timeline and pandemic environment risked putting pressure on the local supply chain. There were not enough prequalified businesses to achieve our social outcomes, specifically 70% awarded to local businesses (particularly Māori and Pasifika).

SiteWise-led workshops and a safety consultant coached businesses through SiteWise accreditation and identified specific training needs. Once qualified and engaged, site audits ensured compliance with systems and skills they had developed.

### ***Multiple contractors working on a single project***

Inevitably, a range of businesses will work on the larger projects at the same time, increasing health and safety risks. We've adopted a joint venture model; a more experienced lead contractor engages smaller businesses as sub-contractors.







## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

### SCOPE

A \$7m project budget was split between 81 projects. Scope ranges from open space development and playground and pump track installations to shared paths, streetscaping and cultural art (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3



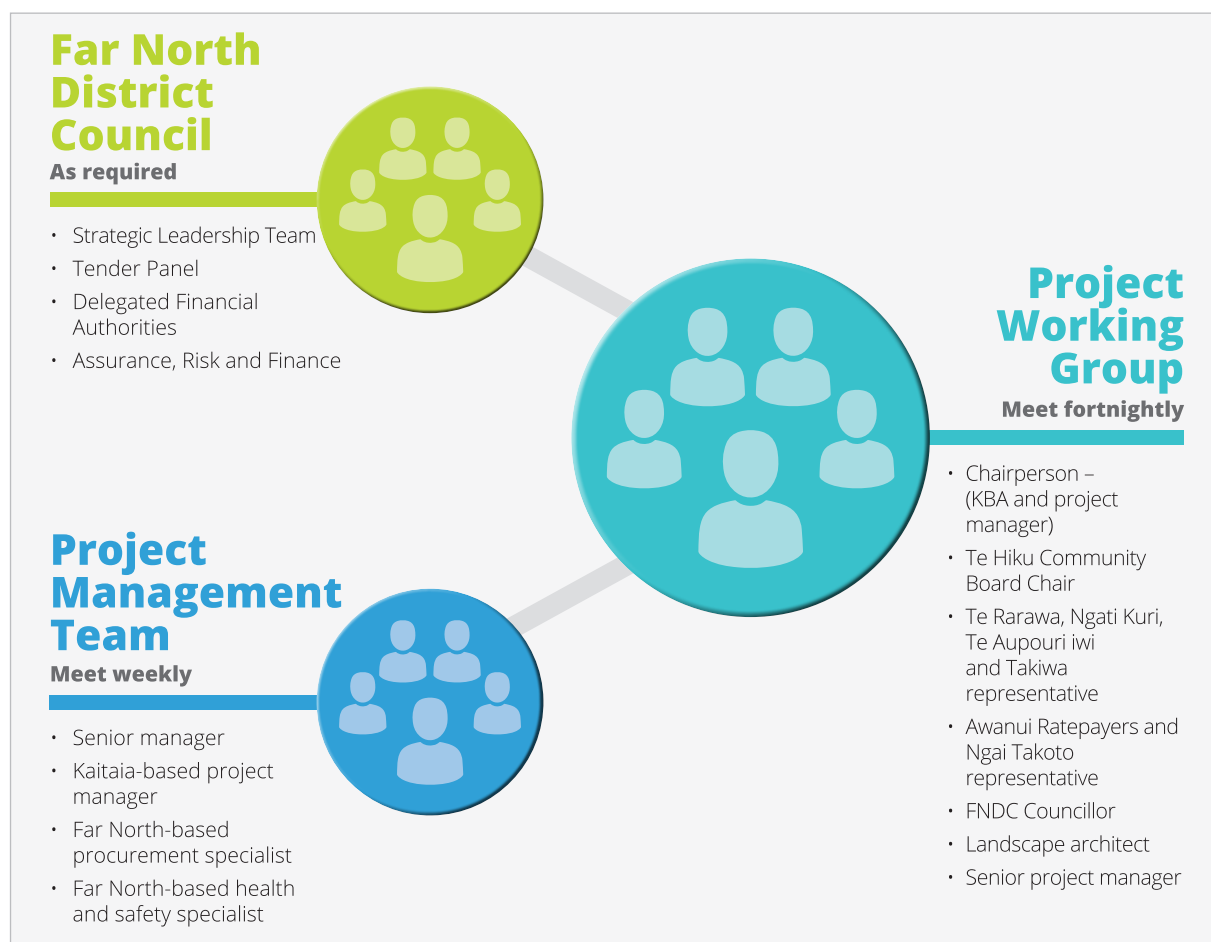


## Governance

The community was empowered to deliver this initiative via the PWG, with representatives from FNDC, four iwi (Te Rarawa, Ngati Kuri, Te Aupouri, NgaiTakoto), Kaitaia Business Association (KBA), Takiwa, Awanui ratepayers, the project manager and a local landscape architect. A PWG Memorandum of Understanding sets out terms of engagement and each member is able to influence decision-making. Figure 4 shows the governance structure for the project. Oversight is challenging due to the large programme of works and number of parties involved. The project management team meets weekly, PWG meets fortnightly and other stakeholders are involved at similar frequencies to ensure all members of FNDC and the community that should be, are involved in the project.

Procurement is complex; many suppliers work across all 81 projects. Integrity of the agile procurement strategy implemented by the PWG is vitally important. Procurement plans are reviewed and approved by the appropriate delegated authority within FNDC - even low-value, direct-award contracts. For higher-value acquisitions the procurement plan, then supplier recommendation reports, are presented to FNDC's Tender Panel or Infrastructure Committee. This builds trust, provides transparency and enables auditability.

FIGURE 4







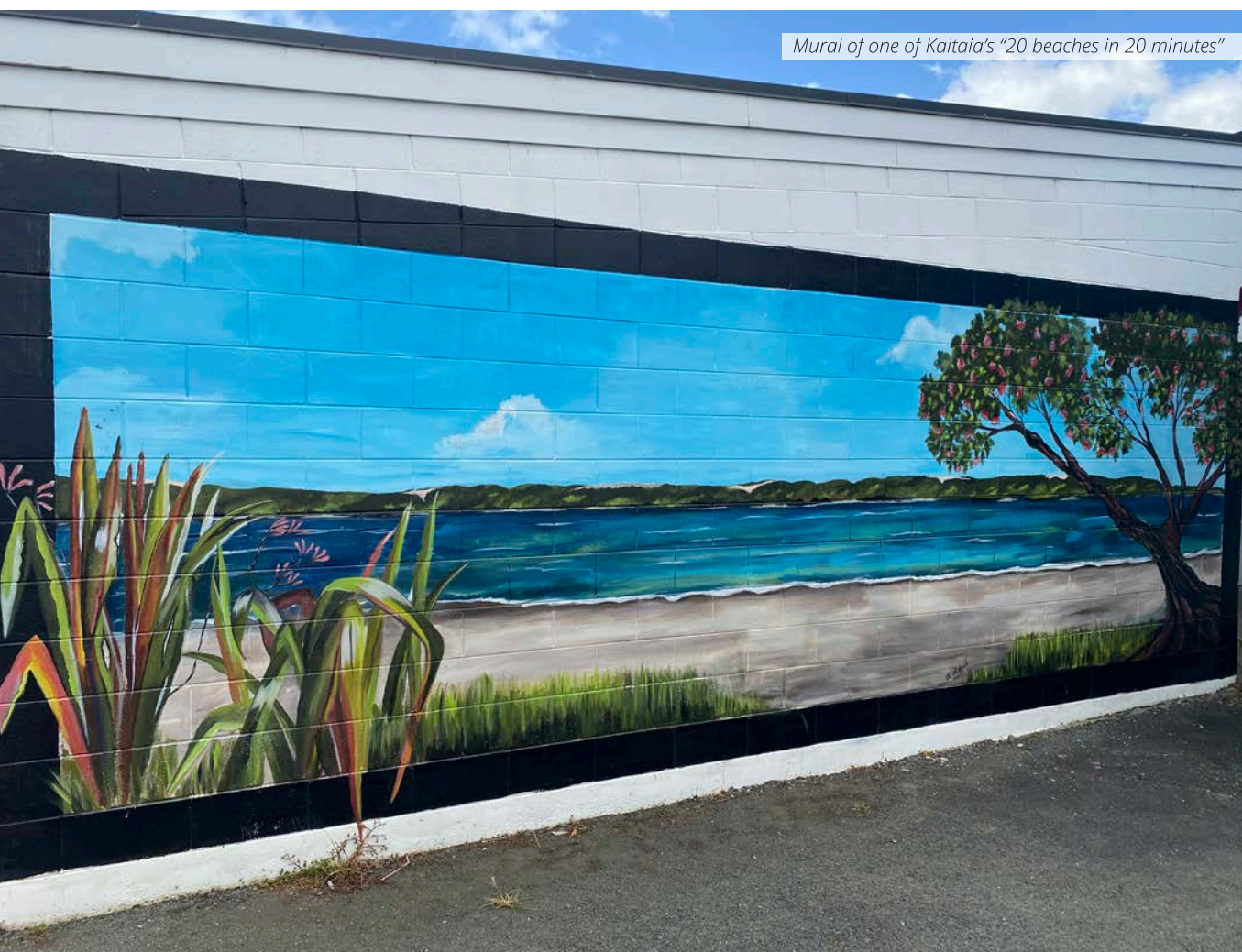
### ***Resources driving quality:***

A dedicated Te Tai Tokerau-based project management team was established to ensure FNDC also delivered their business-as-usual programme of works:

- senior management: FNDC oversight and connections
- project management: Te Hiku connections and relationships, quality monitoring to FNDC engineering standards
- procurement specialist: consultation with local businesses, procurement integrity
- safety specialist: upskill contractors and individuals, monitor safety performance on site

### ***Timeframe***

The original 12-month duration was extended to 24 months due to supply-chain delays caused by the pandemic.



*Mural of one of Kaitia's "20 beaches in 20 minutes"*

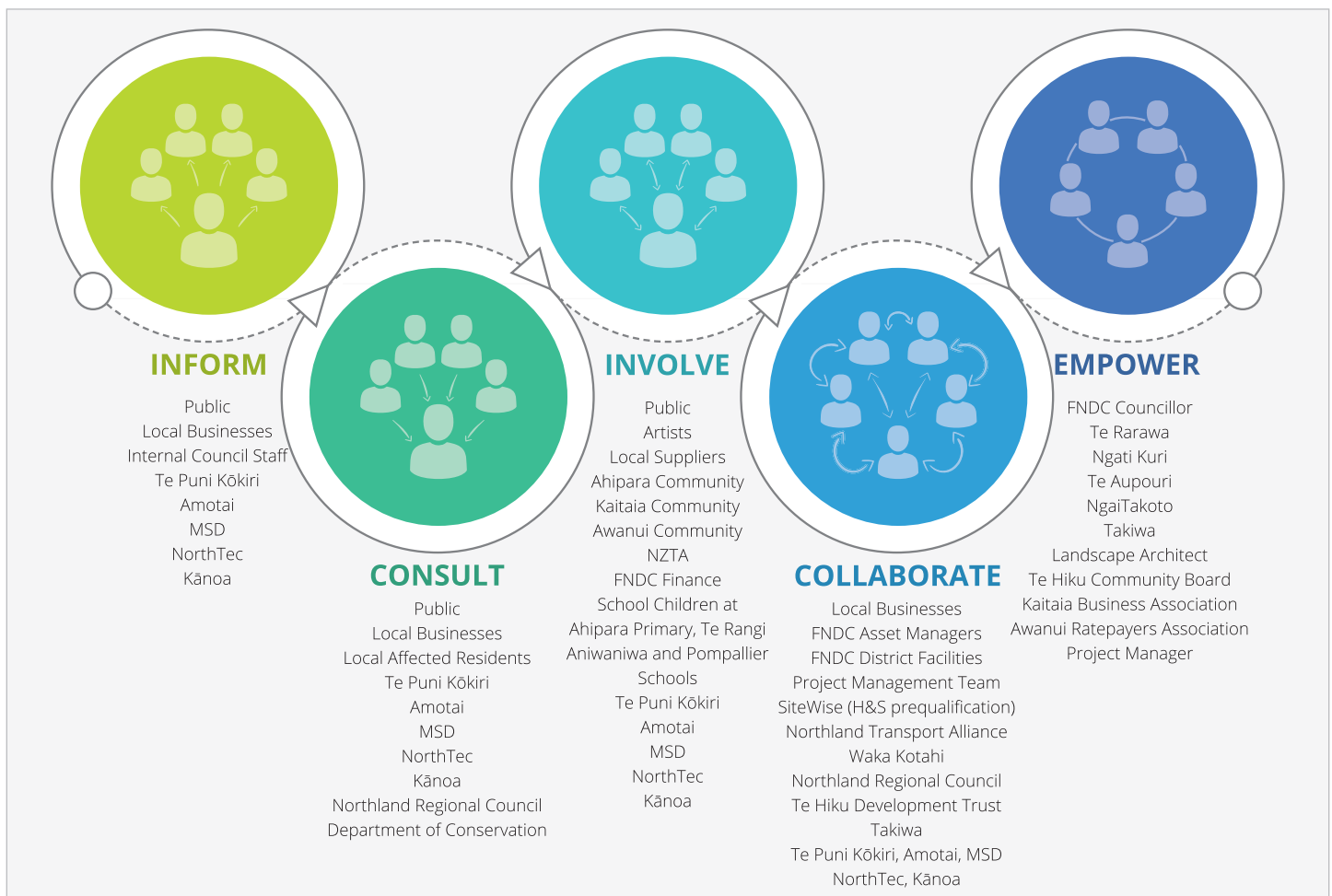




## RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Relationships are the heart and soul of this initiative and they are everywhere. The vast number of stakeholders (Figure 5) and their diverse interests and contributions means this initiative lives or dies on the effectiveness of our engagement. Our success results from empowering the community via the PWG. Procurement workshops gave PWG members the knowledge and tools to refine FNDC's procurement approach to be more agile and deliver social outcomes at pace.

FIGURE 5







**Example: Hard-to-reach audiences - Contractors without SiteWise**

To increase the number of suppliers able to work on the 81 projects, local businesses were consulted with and empowered to upskill. Initial consultation (via questionnaire) got local businesses invested in attending a forum where we:

- acknowledged top 3 difficulties working with council
- demonstrated the programme of work
- committed to helping them upskill to work for FNDC now and beyond.

Together FNDC, government agencies and contractors built the relationships needed to deliver our initiative. This meaningful engagement facilitated growth and connections for small businesses and increased their resilience.

**Example: Stakeholder engagement - Tangata whenua**

The five Te Hiku iwi and local community co-created a clear vision of cultural identity that we wanted to achieve with the project. Four of the five iwi are represented on the PWG and empowered to influence the initiative's outcomes and direction. Formal partnering agreements also engage iwi to design and deliver core elements that define Te Hiku's cultural identity.

**Communication tools and channels**

Many tools built community connection to the project, allowing us to reflect their mana throughout the initiative:

- public competition: streetscape artwork submissions; community-led sub-committee selected winners to produce murals
- school workshops: tamariki led playground design
- community planting projects
- informative stalls at Saturday markets
- community meetings
- social media updates and feedback
- fortnightly newspaper column



SiteWise course run in Kaitia for contractors





## PROJECT SUCCESS

### SITUATION BEFORE AND AFTER

Kaitiaia, Awanui and Ahipara lacked identity and connectivity, and have high levels of social and economic deprivation (Figure 1). The aim of this initiative is to address as many of those issues as possible. With 11 months still to go, 27 of the 81 projects have been completed, 18 are under construction and the rest are on track.

We are proud to have already facilitated the growth of Far North businesses and individuals through training to give them better opportunities for the future.

Streetscaping in Kaitiaia, Awanui and Ahipara has already delivered vibrant identity with artwork showcasing local history and culture, and seating and BBQs providing space for people to connect. Locally-commissioned artwork and carvings provide the sense of place and connection that has been missing from these towns for so long:

- stunning murals have been created that connect us to the history and mana of the area
- informative plaques have been installed alongside murals and important places to tell meaning and local history
- imposing pou are being carved locally and will stand at strategic points. These will further enhance the sense of identity and place.



Example of informative panel showing the meaning of the artwork in the immediate area





## SUCCESS CRITERIA AND EVIDENCE

We have far exceeded our original expectations with this initiative and it has demonstrated the sheer scale of what can be achieved with clear intent and collaboration.

The key to our success has been identifying risks and barriers, and embracing them. We treated them like a project in their own right, problem solving until we found a way around them.

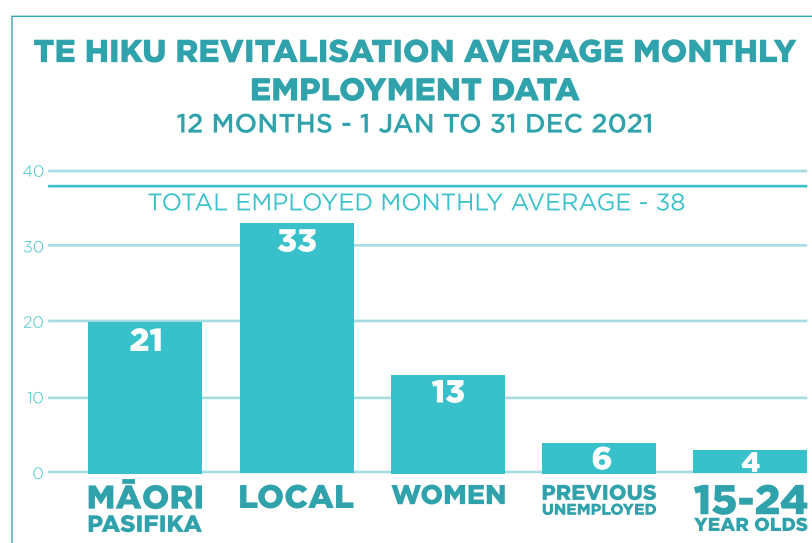
Empowerment, partnership and communication nurtured the relationships that form the heart of this initiative and drive outstanding outcomes. The initiative quickly gained momentum, opening more opportunities to reach further and strive for more.

We are so excited to see tangible results flow from our initial vision. By creating resilience in businesses and individuals we are creating a stronger, more vibrant community.

### ***Boost employment within targeted demographics: local, Māori or Pasifika***

Monthly reporting allows us to track the demographic that we've employed through this project. Figure 6 shows the average monthly achievement of the target groups.

FIGURE 6



### ***70% of work undertaken by local businesses (Māori and Pasifika in particular)***

Of spend that we can influence, 88% has been spent in the Far North and 47% has gone to Māori businesses. There are some specialised projects (such as pump track design) that can't be fulfilled within Te Hiku or the Northland region. In these instances the supplier's contract specifies the use of local subcontractors.



**Provide skills and training to enable local individuals and organisations to continue as council-approved suppliers beyond this initiative**

This initiative has created an enduring legacy for local individuals and businesses:

- training increases individual employment opportunities
- SiteWise accreditation and Master Services Agreements allow continued engagement on FNDC projects.

FIGURE 7

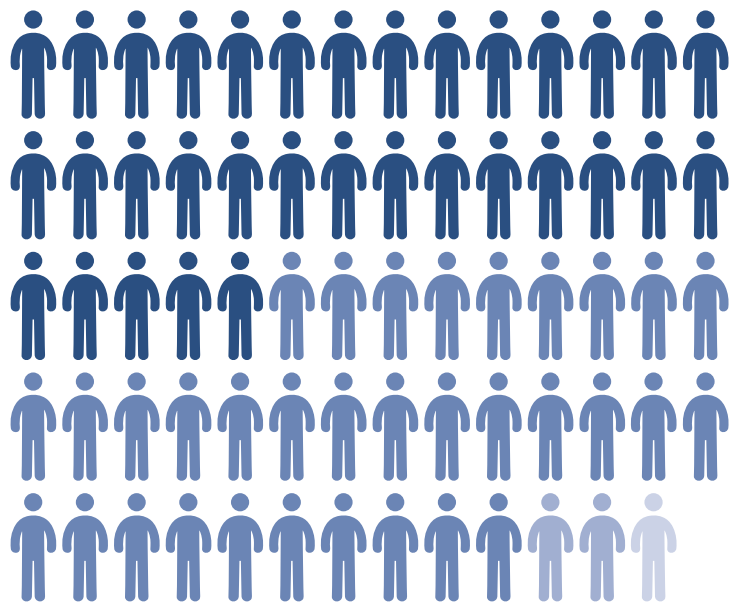
**88%**  
**FAR**  
**NORTH**  
**SPEND**

**69**  
**INDIVIDUALS**  
**TRAINED**

**47%**  
**SPENT**  
**WITH**  
**MĀORI**  
**BUSINESS**

**45**  
**LOCAL**  
**BUSINESSES**  
**UPSKILLED**

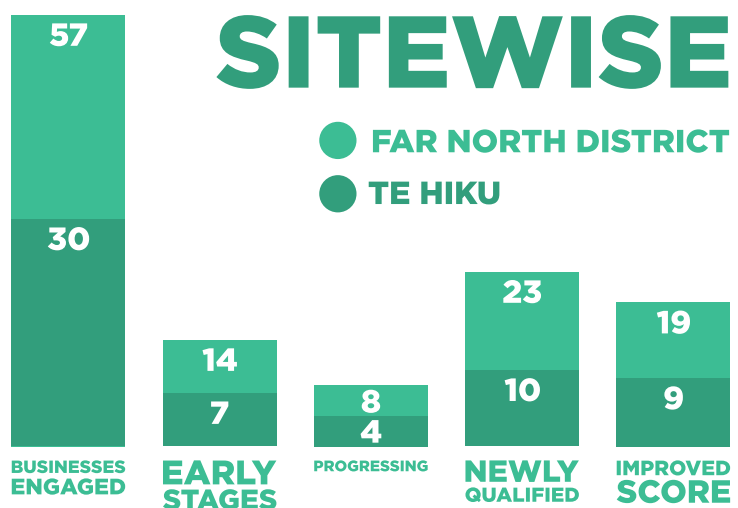
**TE HIKU SAFETY TRAINING**



<b>WORKING AT HEIGHTS</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>ELEVATED WORK PLATFORM</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>CONFINED SPACES</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES</b>	<b>1</b>

**SITewise**

- FAR NORTH DISTRICT
- TE HIKU







### ***Enhance and restore the vibrancy and mana of Kaitaia, Awanui and Ahipara***

Kaitaia has just been named New Zealand's Most Beautiful Small Town of 2021, due largely to the revitalisation achieved so far. And we have not yet finished!

FIGURE 8



### ***Ensure all 81 projects contribute in some way to council's environmental objectives***

An FNDC councillor and a landscape architect sit on the PWG and ensure that designs consider sustainability and FNDC's strategic objectives. We incorporate four pillars of sustainable design:

- Social: multi-purpose spaces facilitate social connection
- Human: shared paths and areas to exercise and play
- Economic: local contractors
- Environmental: shared paths (alternative transport), sustainable local materials (reused piles from Unahi Wharf), landscaping, riparian margin plantings, coastal dune plantings.

### **BARRIERS TRAVERSED**

#### ***'Agile' procurement - procurement at pace***

'Business as Usual' procurement could not have met deadlines outlined in the COVID Recovery funding agreement. Adaptations to FNDC's procurement processes, approved by elected members, supported procurement at pace to achieve challenging delivery timelines and social procurement objectives.

What emerged was an entirely new 'agile' procurement strategy that FNDC applied to all externally-funded projects with tight delivery timeframes.

This project has proved that procurement agility does not mean a reduction in transparency or an increase in procurement risk. It means leveraging recent market experience, taking advantage of work already completed and taking a fit-for-purpose but robust approach.





### Cultural competency

Within the context of complex cultural and unresolved historical matters we have built a cohesive vision to reflect the mana of Te Hiku. This initiative has brought the community and five iwi together to design and construct a project at pace and with strict milestones. Meaningful engagement has empowered iwi and built relationships that encouraged trust.

Respect for the inner workings of their organisations has allowed iwi time and space to work within their different organisations to navigate the challenges and responsibilities that come with this package of work.

### LESSONS LEARNT AND SHARING

One of our most powerful lessons has been in what a community can achieve when you empower it to work together from concept through to delivery.

Using local people to define, and local connections to deliver, this project has created the meaningful and vibrant sense of identity and pride we set out to achieve. It can feel daunting to empower a group of 'outside' people to deliver a project but the results can be staggering. Our progress and lessons are already being shared within FNDC via a detailed council-wide monthly report, and in the CEO's weekly newsletter.

Excited by the scale and momentum of achievements on this project, the team is finding opportunities to apply what we've learned to other projects. It is already shaping the way we approach new projects and we're assessing where we can transfer some of the strategies, particularly around relationships, wider afield.

FIGURE 9







## PLANS TO INTEGRATE THE PROJECT INTO BUSINESS-AS-USUAL

This project demonstrates the economic and productivity benefits that can be achieved with agile and robust procurement. With 139 procurement exercises undertaken in just over a year, we've streamlined our processes to ensure a fit-for-purpose approach.

It shows what can be achieved with clear intent, empowerment and collaboration. Our results give us confidence to apply these lessons to other projects and communities and we aim to share it with strategic areas within FNDC to further elevate our business-as-usual.

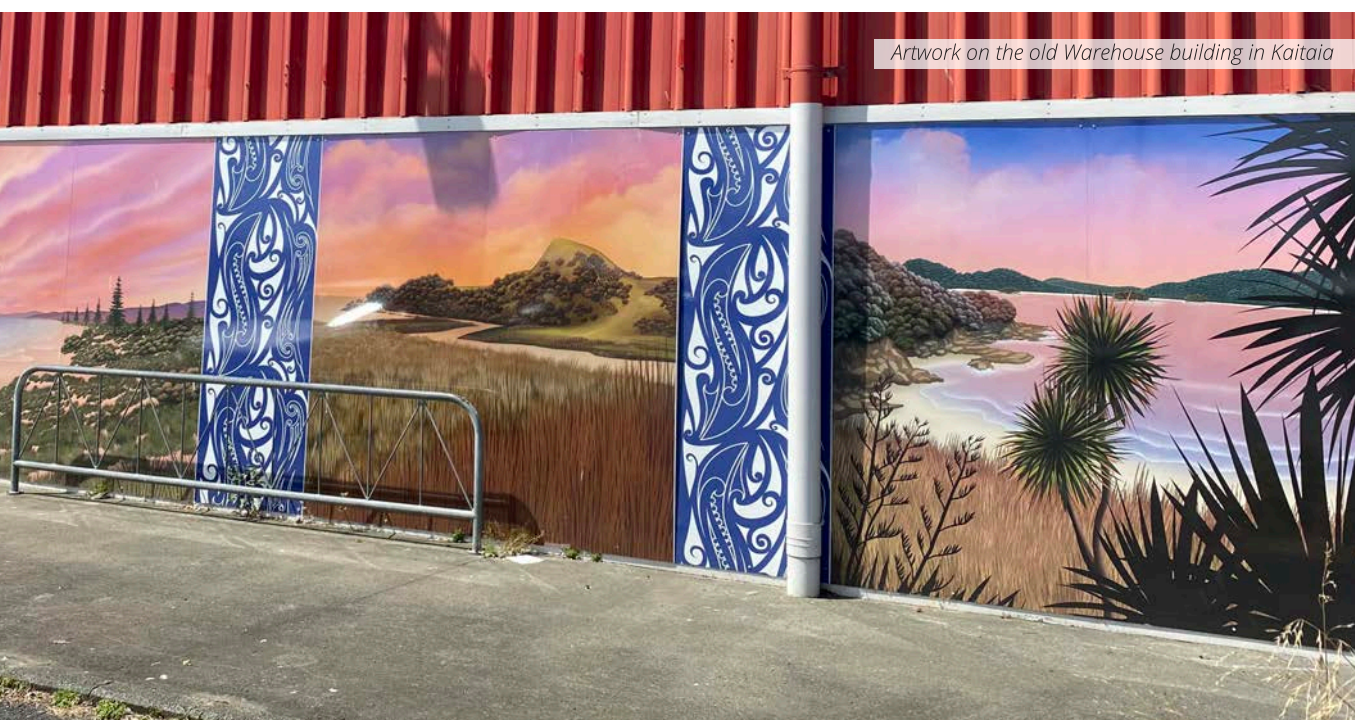
## KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Te Hiku o te Ika Revitalisation Project provides proof-of-concept for agile procurement within local government in New Zealand. Most local economies would benefit from a more agile approach that favours social outcomes.

Understanding what you want to achieve and building a robust, transparent strategy is the key to minimising procurement risk and generating the buy-in you need. In this way a council is able to predict, audit and trust the process, while realising productivity and social benefits.

Removing barriers to make it easier for local businesses to work for council increases your ability to achieve social outcomes and grow resilience in your community.

Many towns around New Zealand lack reflection of their heritage and their vibrant local community. Drawing the community into urban enhancement work through already-established groups like iwi, local business associations and community groups provides councils with a way to connect with a large population that might ordinarily be out of their reach. Building partnerships through this type of engagement allows relationships to flourish between local government and the communities it serves.



Artwork on the old Warehouse building in Kaitia





**Far North  
District Council**

*Te Kaunihera o Tai Tokerau ki te Raki*