

Gisborne Inner Harbour

The Provincial Growth Fund will provide \$2.3 million to redevelop the Gisborne Inner Harbour as part of a wider tourism investment programme.

The Gisborne Inner Harbour Development includes landscaping, changes to road layout, improved pedestrian links, more street furniture, improved light and upgraded parking facilities along The Esplanade, Crawford St and Rakaiatane Rd.

“This NZ Transport Agency project is being undertaken in collaboration with the Gisborne District Council and Eastland Port and is part of a wider \$10 million regional tourism investment programme.

“It’s one of six projects under the Tairāwhiti Navigations umbrella endorsed by the 2009 Regional Economic Development Strategy and is a key part of the Tairāwhiti Economic Action Plan.

“There’s simply no need for such projects to languish any longer and I’m pleased the Fund is able to get this work under way.

“The total cost of the Inner Harbour Development is \$3.5 million. The Tourism Infrastructure Fund has contributed \$1.2 million so the balance is being sought from the Fund, primarily for capital works,” Mr Jones says.

Tourism package

The Provincial Growth Fund will support Tairāwhiti to develop its tourism sector, which has the potential to improve the local economy.

The Government will contribute \$1 million to the programme to commemorate the first encounters between Māori and Europeans and – alongside Air New Zealand and Activate Tairāwhiti – \$60,000 to the cost of developing three specific tourism products, the Mount Hikurangi tourism experience, Chardonnay Express and Waka Hourua Tairāwhiti.

“Tairāwhiti has enormous tourism opportunities but there’s an acknowledged gap in what’s on offer for visitors, as well as some infrastructure constraints,” Mr Jones says.

“Supporting Tairāwhiti to boost tourism will lift productivity, create new jobs and provide economic development opportunities for the community – of which Māori represent 49 per cent.

“Tairāwhiti will be a host for *Tuia – Encounters 250*. The commemorations will be held throughout the region, including in Gisborne, Anaura Bay and Tolaga Bay.

“An additional 10,000 visitors are expected to visit the region over the week of commemorations next year. *Tuia* will attract national and international attention, raising the region’s tourism profile so it can become a catalyst for the development of authentic cultural experiences.

The three tourism products in development are an effective way of getting things underway while a more comprehensive regional tourism strategy is progressed.

“Mount Hikurangi is within the rohe of Ngāti Porou and is the iwi’s most significant icon. There’s appetite to develop a fully-guided overnight visitor package and offer a unique cultural and outdoor experience.

“The wonderfully-named Chardonnay Express will see visitors board the historic WA165 steam locomotive highlighting the region’s history, landscape, and food and wine.

“Waka Hourua Tairāwhiti is a double-hulled vessel used to navigate and voyage the Pacific Ocean. It has the potential to become an attractive tourism product, and a resource to generate income and create jobs for Tairāwhiti students who participate in educational programmes.

“Tairāwhiti is brimming with potential and untapped opportunities and I look forward to continuing to work closely with the region’s leaders, businesses, iwi and community organisations to deliver tangible benefits,” Mr Jones says.

Gisborne: Wood Processing Centre of Excellence

The Provincial Growth Fund will provide \$200,000 to kick-start the creation of a \$20 million Wood Processing Centre of Excellence in Gisborne.

The money will help develop a business case for a proposal that could create 167 jobs when the Centre is up and running.

“The Centre plans to be a hub for wood processing, wood product, marketing and distribution, training and research,” Mr Jones says.

“There is no other wood processing centre like this in New Zealand. Wood processors would be incentivised to produce value-added products and increase their productivity, providing tangible downstream benefits to the regional economy and broader forestry sector.

“We want to fast-track the development of the business case so that, if feasible, the Centre can take advantage of the large local log supply that will be doubling in the next three years to 3.2 million tonnes per annum.

“Forestry is one of the main contributors to the Gisborne economy with more than 151,000 hectares of radiata pine plantations – contributing 14 per cent to New Zealand’s overall log exports.

“If this Centre gets underway it will contribute to the housing market, create jobs and benefit the entire economic wellbeing of the region,” Mr Jones says.

The Centre of Excellence will be at the previously decommissioned Prime Wood Site in Gisborne and its processing activities will focus on wood chip production, thermal timber modification, wood engineered technology (WET) expansion, and fibre board.

The development of the business case will be co-funded by the Eastland Community Trust with \$100,000.

Whakakī Lake Mānuka plantation

The Provincial Growth Fund will invest in planting Mānuka trees to support a recirculating wetland to filter water.

The \$100,000 funding will help establish a Mānuka plantation over the next five years on 80 hectares of retired land next to the Whakakī Lake in the Wairoa district.

“This is an investment ready proposal that has buy-in and funding support from key stakeholders – Wairoa District Council, Hawke’s Bay Regional Council, Whakaki Lake Trust, the Ministry for Primary Industries, the Ministry for the Environment, the Department of Conservation and Whakakī landowners,” Mr Jones says.

The \$580,000 project has secured funding from the Ministry for the Environment and the Hawke’s Bay Regional Council.

“The local community is often put under pressure when the lake floods surrounding farm land. This innovative project will promote sustainable land use while reducing the impacts of flooding and improving water quality.

“It will also provide economic return for landowners in the form of carbon credits and Mānuka honey. About 88,880 Mānuka trees will be planted through this project over the next five years.

“This proposal has a range of positive environmental outcomes, including improving water quality, enhancing biodiversity, promoting sustainable land use and helping meet National Environment Standards for Freshwater Management.

“This is an example of what can be achieved when local and central government work in partnerships with communities to tackle the issues they face,” Mr Jones says.

Wairoa-Napier rail

The Provincial Growth Fund will provide \$5 million to reopen the Wairoa-Napier rail line for logging trains by the end of the year.

The Government, KiwiRail and the Hawke’s Bay Regional Council are working together to see the line reopened as the amount of timber coming out of the region continues to grow.

“The wall of wood is expected to reach peak harvest by 2032 so reopening this line will get logging trucks off the road and give those exporting timber options that they currently do not have,” Mr Jones says.

“It makes sense to consolidate that timber in Wairoa and use rail to take it to the Port of Napier.

“The State Highway from Wairoa to Napier is a challenging road that is not well equipped to handle significant growth in logging trucks without major investment.

“Taking trucks off the road is a better solution – it delivers environmental benefits in the form of lower greenhouse gas emission, and safer roads.

“KiwiRail estimates that shipping logs from Wairoa to Napier by train will take 5714 trucks a year off the road.

“It will also mean 1,292 fewer tonnes of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere each year.

“Plans to refurbish the line and bring it up to a level where a low-speed forestry service can run have been in the pipeline for some time. I’m pleased the Fund is able to make this project happen by injecting the capital needed,” Mr Jones says.

Makauri Managed Aquifer Recharge trial

The Provincial Growth Fund will provide about \$543,000 for the next stage of the Makauri Managed Aquifer Recharge trial in Gisborne.

The aim of the trial is to try and use managed aquifer recharge technology to inject water from the Waipaoa River into the aquifer to increase water levels and sustain its availability on the Poverty Bay Flats. The Makauri Aquifer has seen declining water levels for decades.

“Poverty Bay has 18,000 hectares of some of New Zealand’s most productive horticulture land,” Mr Jones says.

“The 3000 hectares that is irrigated produces \$160 million annually and employs 1,100 people – about 10 per cent of the local workforce.

“Water availability is a significant issue. The Makauri Aquifer represents almost a third of all available water on the Poverty Bay Flats and is a crucial part of the local economy.

“If successful, the aquifer recharge concept has the potential to provide the additional groundwater storage needed to increase the availability of water for high-value horticultural and arable crops in the region boosting the local economy and creating jobs.

“The potential for this recharge to work has been shown in the successful installation and operation of an injection bore last year.

“The next phase of funding will investigate whether the Managed Aquifer Recharge is feasible, environmentally robust, and economically sound,” Mr Jones says.

The project is co-funded and lead by the Gisborne District Council.