

MEDIA RELEASE  
17 July 2019



## **Te Araroa Trust plots a course for next three years**

Reducing road-walking and delivering a high-quality experience for people walking New Zealand's Te Araroa trail are among the top priorities identified by Te Araroa Trust in its latest three-year strategy.

The Trust is responsible for the 3,000 km national trail, which stretches from Cape Reinga in the far north to Bluff at the bottom of the South Island. More than 1,100 people walked the full length of the trail during the 2018/2019 walking season and tens of thousands more completed individual sections throughout the year.

Te Araroa Chief Executive Mark Weatherall said the popularity of the trail and the need to manage it in a sustainable way were major drivers for the strategy update.

The new strategic plan identifies five focus areas for the Trust through to 2022. In addition to facilitating a high-quality experience for walkers and improving trail infrastructure, the Trust will focus on strengthening relationships with stakeholders, clearly communicating trail information to walkers and securing the sustainability of the trail and Trust through partnerships and new funding streams.

"Volunteers and supporters have done an outstanding job developing Te Araroa trail through its formative years and this strategy aims to build on all their hard work," Mr Weatherall said.

"It's about plotting a course for the future and making certain that all of our efforts are sustainable, focused and for the benefit of walkers and the many iwi, landholders and communities the trail touches."

Mr Weatherall said the Trust would develop and implement an operational plan to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan in collaboration with its stakeholders and regional network.

Te Araroa Trail was opened by former Governor-General Sir Jerry Mateparae in December 2011, following more than two decades of work by Geoff and Miriam Chapple along with many dedicated volunteers and trail supporters to create and link a nationwide network of tracks. In the years since, it has been ranked among the best long walks in the world by CNN and National Geographic.

**ENDS**

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