Far North District Council

TŪHONOTANGA MINITI ATTACHMENTS MINUTES

Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board Meeting

9 April 2026

Te Paeroa Kaupapa / Table of Contents

7.5 Chairperson and Members Reports

Attachment 1 Major Item not on the Agenda- Taupō Bay Steps Encroachment Objective number A5672741 refers 3

Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku o te Ika
Far North District Council

MAJOR ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA- Taupō Bay Steps Encroachment

Thursday, 9 April 2026

Time: **10:00 am**

Location: **Turner Centre**
43 Cobham Road
Kerikeri

Far North District Council

Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board Meeting

will be held in the Turner Centre, 43 Cobham Road, Kerikeri on:

Thursday 9 April 2026 at 10:00 am

Te Paeroa Mahi / Order of Business

7 Ngā Pūrongo / Reports....4

7.6 Taupō Bay Steps Encroachment....4

7 NGĀ PŪRONGO / REPORTS

7.6 TAUPŌ BAY STEPS ENCROACHMENT

File Number: **A5663728**

Author: **Ivan Ashby, Manager - Property & Facilities Manager**

Authoriser: **Hilary Sumpter, Group Manager - Delivery and Operations**

TAKE PŪRONGO / PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Approval for formation of a Working Committee to address accessibility on to Taupō Bay beach from the reserve area.

WHAKARĀPOPOTO MATUA / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In March 2026 FNDC Technical Operations staff removed steps from the Reserve areas at Taupō Bay, under the delegated authority, for Health & Safety reasons plus the steps were encroaching on the reserve.
- No information was shared with the community prior to the removal.
- 4 sets of steps were removed, only 1 of which was built by FNDC.
- The local ratepayers are extremely concerned that the access to the beach is now restrictive and that more damage is being done to the dunes without the steps.

TŪTOHUNGA / RECOMMENDATION

That the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board:

a) approve the establishment of a working group to address public accessibility to Taupō Bay beach from the reserve in a manner that is safe, compliant, and environmentally responsible; and

b) agree that the working group is to include representatives of the Taupō Bay community, elected members of the Bay of Islands–Whangaroa Community Board, Far North District Council staff, and be extended by invitation to Northland Regional Council; and

c) confirm that the purpose of the working group is to collaboratively identify and recommend appropriate long-term solutions for beach access, balancing community needs, public safety, and dune protection.

1) TĀHUHU KŌRERO / BACKGROUND

RFS4272211 – customer (resident of Taupō Bay) contacted Council to raise concerns about two newly constructed steps that go from private properties on Marlin Drive onto Taupō Bay foreshore. Issue is that these protrude onto the beach by 4 to 5 meters and are going to be very intrusive during the summer months when the beach is used by the public.

Subsequently the four sets of steps at Taupō Bay were removed, under the delegated authority of the Technical Operations team. This was done without consultation with the community.

A meeting with Taupō Bay ratepayers was held on Tuesday 31st of March on the reserve at the beach

Taupō Bay Foreshore – Recreation Reserve:

Assessment No.	2410278
GIS Area	23,548.20
No. Parcels	2
Non-Rate Description	Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977
Parcel IDs	5010522,5096435
Property Address	Lot 120, Taupo Bay Road, Mangonui 0494
Property Id	3310278
Ratepayer Address	Private Bag 752, Kaikohe 0440
Ratepayer Name	Far North District Council
RID Publication Status	Not Private
Titles	1191456
Valuation No.	00121-65700

Overview:

There are multiple variations of step structures along the Taupō Bay Foreshore. These have an effect on the dune system and public access along the beach. A decision needs to be made about the removal of these from the beachfront, keeping in mind that Council also has steps that are providing access to the beach.

The dune systems are a narrow band of sand between the sea and land and in their natural state can help to protect land and property from erosion. They are also natural habitats for native insects, lizards and birds. More and more dunes are being destroyed or highly modified as part of residential development. This sign is along the Taupō Bay beach front put up by NRC.

Council's steps onto the beach:

Private property step structures:

22/10/2025 11:50:03 am

22/10/2025 11:49:32 am

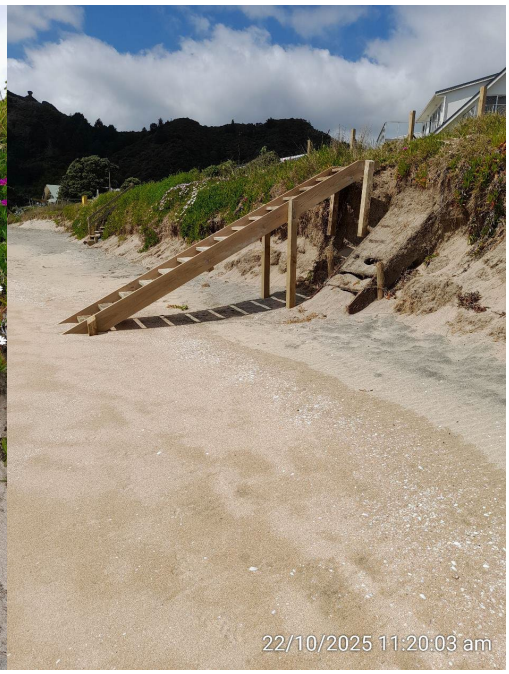
22/10/2025 11:33:21 am

22/10/2025 11:33:00 am

22/10/2025 11:32:29 am

22/10/2025 11:30:13 am

22/10/2025 11:28:01 am


22/10/2025 11:20:03 am

22/10/2025 11:18:56 am

22/10/2025 11:17:18 am

2) MATAPAKI ME NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA / DISCUSSION AND OPTIONS

Site Visit 22/10/2025:

Council's reserve runs along the foreshore – it's within this area that several sets of steps have been erected by private property owners from Marlin Drive to gain access to the beach down the bank (dune system).

Aerial mapping indicates that the esplanade reserve vested in 1965 has eroded and the recreation reserve (highlighted below) is almost entirely located above mean high water springs.

Council has 4 reserve access points from Marlin Drive and onto the beach, 3 of these have step structures that have also been built down the bank (dune system).

These were the sets of steps that were subsequently removed by FNDC. Only 1 set of these steps were an FNDC asset.

The local ratepayers are extremely concerned that the access to the beach is now restrictive and that more damage is being done to the dunes without the steps. They have asked for a working group to be set up to address what is needed to get stairs set up for the public to use at Taupō Bay. Please see attachment – Notes and actions from Taupō Bay meeting – 31 March 2026

TAKE TŪTOHUNGA / REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

This recommendation is at the request of Kahika Moko Tepania, after meeting with the community on Tuesday, 31st of March, that we form a working committee and resolve the issue as quickly as possible so the residents and visitors to the beach have easy, save, compliant and permitted means of access over the dunes.

3) PĀNGA PŪTEA ME NGĀ WĀHANGA TAHUA / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGETARY PROVISION

Budgetary provision is not included due to the nature of the solution not being determined.

ĀPITIHANGA / ATTACHMENTS

1. Taupō Bay Public Meeting 31.03.26 - A5669118

Hōtaka Take Ōkawa / Compliance Schedule:

Full consideration has been given to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 S77 in relation to decision making, in particular:

1. A Local authority must, in the course of the decision-making process,
   a) Seek to identify all reasonably practicable options for the achievement of the objective of a decision; and
   b) Assess the options in terms of their advantages and disadvantages; and
   c) If any of the options identified under paragraph (a) involves a significant decision in relation to land or a body of water, take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna and other taonga.
2. This section is subject to Section 79 - Compliance with procedures in relation to decisions.

He Take Ōkawa / Compliance Requirement	Aromatawai Kaimahi / Staff Assessment
State the level of significance (high or low) of the issue or proposal as determined by the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy	Low significance with the Taupō Bay community around safety, accessibility and erosion.
State the relevant Council policies (external or internal), legislation, and/or community outcomes (as stated in the LTP) that relate to this decision.	**Parks and Reserves Policy 2022** (on Council website) **Section 5** - Structures - (and Schedule 3) states that Council has sole discretion for the establishment of any structures, and that all structures must be safe and fit for purpose. **Section 7** – Encroachments states that Council will not grant retrospective authority for encroachments on parks or reserves unless this '*provides betterment to the public for enhanced use of the park or reserve, are deemed safe, fit for purpose and comply with appropriate regulatory and legislative requirements e.g. Building Act etc 3. The Council will require all unauthorised encroachments to be removed and the land reinstated by the landowner whose property is associated with that encroachment, at that landowner's cost'.* **Parks and Reserves Bylaw 2023** (on Council website) **15 Encroachments** - *No person may permit or allow any building, object or thing to encroach onto a Park or Reserve without prior Approval from Council.* **21 Removal or alteration of a work or thing** – Council may remove any structures in breach of the bylaw and recover the cost from the person who committed the breach **Encroachment Policy 2025** (internal) Establishes a framework for managing unauthorised encroachments. Major encroachments include *permanent structures … that substantially impact public use, safety or the environment* **Reserves Act 1977** **Section 94** Offences on reserves and Section 105B Unauthorised actions in reserves - Construction on a

	reserve including the erection of buildings or apparatus without approval from the administering body
State whether this issue or proposal has a District wide relevance and, if not, the ways in which the appropriate Community Board's views have been sought.	BOIW Board only. Although there could be precedent setting here.
State the possible implications for Māori and how Māori have been provided with an opportunity to contribute to decision making if this decision is significant and relates to land and/or any body of water. State the possible implications and how this report aligns with Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi.	BOIW Board only. Although there could be precedent setting here.
Identify persons likely to be affected by or have an interest in the matter, and how you have given consideration to their views or preferences (for example – youth, the aged and those with disabilities).	Contact will be sought on approval to set up working group.
State the financial implications and where budgetary provisions have been made to support this decision.	Representatives from key stakeholders will form as part of the Working Committee for this project.
Chief Financial Officer review.	Not Applicable

Summary: Taupō Bay Public Meeting

31 March 2026

Attending from FNDC: Mayor Moko Tepania, Deputy Mayor Chicky Rudkin, Cllr Arohanui Allen, Cllr Davina Smolders, Myjanne Jensen, Rachel Smith, Tania George

Context

- This is a public meeting between council representatives and the local community regarding the removal of beach access steps at Taupō Bay (also referred to as Kauhoe Bay).
- Strong community attendance and emotion, with many long-term residents speaking.

What happened

- Private and informal steps leading to the beach were removed by council after a complaint was received.
- Council officers identified the steps as:
  - A health and safety risk
  - Encroaching onto council reserve
  - Unlicensed (no Licence to Occupy)
- Council acknowledged that the process was poorly handled, particularly:
  - Lack of communication with the wider community
  - Acting quickly without proper engagement
- Council issued multiple apologies for how the situation was managed.

Council's position

- The land is council reserve, meaning council can be legally liable if someone is injured.
- Past coroner's findings were cited where councils were found liable for deaths (drownings/falls), reinforcing their safety-first approach.
- Council stressed they acted out of risk management, not bad faith.
- They acknowledged the decision created frustration and distrust.

Community concerns

- Removal of the steps has:
  - Increased safety risks, especially for elderly, children, and school groups
  - Worsened erosion, as people now scramble down cliffs
  - Created bigger hazards than the steps themselves
- Residents argued:
  - The steps had been used safely for decades
  - No one had been injured using them
  - Taupō Bay is a regional destination, not a quiet local beach

- Strong concern that Taupō Bay is being used as a **test case** for rules that may be impossible to apply district-wide.

Key themes raised

- Common sense vs bureaucracy
- Safety vs access
- Environmental damage and erosion
- Inconsistent application of rules (e.g. playgrounds, benches, tsunami towers also lacking licences)
- Community involvement being ignored

Moving forward

- Council committed to:
  - Working with the community on a solution
  - Exploring replacement steps
  - Considering costs, design, and environmental impact
  - Improving process and communication
- Community asked for:
  - Urgent action (not months of delay)
  - Practical, safe access restored
  - Council representatives to physically inspect erosion and access points

Overall tone

- Highly emotional but constructive
- Strong sense of community ownership of the bay
- Clear acknowledgment by council that mistakes were made
- Shared desire to find a fast, workable solution

Action:

Paper to go to CB next week with a recommendation that they approve the formation of a working group combining staff, CB members & local ratepayers. And work to restore the steps, through whatever process/es we need to take. (LTO, CB approval…). It will be the Chair's discretion to appoint committee members.