

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a night sky. The Milky Way galaxy is visible, stretching diagonally from the lower left towards the upper right. The sky is filled with numerous stars. In the lower portion of the image, there is a modern architectural structure. It features a large, dark, curved, metallic-looking band that sweeps across the frame. Below this band, there are some tall, golden-brown grasses or reeds, illuminated from below, creating a warm glow. The overall composition is a blend of natural celestial beauty and modern human-made design.

BLUFF MOTUPŌHUE TOURISM MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

November 2025

“Tārere ki whenua uta” Swing the waka towards the shore

The great Māori explorer Tamatea was said to have made this command from his waka Tākitimu, as he sailed along the coast, past what we now call Bluff.

He wished to see the wonders of this beautiful place.

Working together we can offer visitors to our place a wonderful experience.

**BLUFF
COMMUNITY BOARD**



CONTENTS

5 REFRESHING YOUR MEMORY

6 HUBS AND PRECINCTS

8 WIDER REGIONAL CONTEXT

16 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

20 PROJECT SHOWCASE

30 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

34 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROJECTS

34 Te Taurapa o Te Waka
 - Motupōhue Bluff Hill Experience (TToTW)

36 Product Packaging and Capability
 Development for Operators

38 Development and Sharing of
 the Motupōhue Bluff Story

40 Other Areas of Focus

**43 CONCEPTS, PROJECTS AND
 STAGING STATUS UPDATES**

BLUFF MOTUPŌHUE TOURISM MASTER PLAN

REFRESHING YOUR MEMORY

Motupōhue Bluff is a popular destination attracting visitors for a variety of reasons. Its rich history and culture is represented throughout various attractions, and its links with Rakiura Stewart Island go beyond providing the ferry service which runs across Foveaux Strait. However, while a significant number of visitors are welcomed each year, their length of stay in Motupōhue Bluff tends to be short.

The Southland Murihiku Destination Strategy 2019 – 2029 identified significant potential for Motupōhue Bluff to benefit more from the opportunities presented by tourism and was the catalyst for the development of the Bluff Motupōhue 2020 Tourism Master Plan.

Great South facilitated the development of the Master Plan with partners Invercargill City Council and Te Rūnaka o Awarua, to provide concepts for the future development of Motupōhue Bluff as a jewel in the crown of the Southland region.

The Master Plan was informed by research, analysis and consultation with local community groups and residents, organisations, businesses and government agencies. It reflects a valued partnership with Te Rūnaka o Awarua and will be used to guide the revitalisation of the area over the next 20 years.

The ultimate aim of the Master Plan is to transform and revitalise Motupōhue Bluff to make it a more attractive place to live, work, play, visit and invest in. By developing products and experiences that fit with people and place and showcase the unique and compelling aspects of Motupōhue Bluff as a destination, it encourages visitors to stay longer and spend more.

To achieve this revitalisation the Master Plan identified 11 overall hubs or precincts and then a more specific list of 24 transformational concepts, projects and staging which fit within them. This spatial approach has meant that different areas can be progressed separately while also being viewed alongside each other collectively.



While these concepts, projects and stagings leverage tourism and increase visitation to Motupōhue Bluff, they also benefit the local community with the development of community accessible assets and the opportunity for economic development with both commercial and small-medium business opportunities.

HUBS AND PRECINCTS

BLUFF GATEWAY ENTRANCE HUB

This hub proposes significant landscaping and signage to create a strong sense of arrival into Motupōhue Bluff. The current location, situated in close proximity to Ocean Beach, aims to provide a gateway entrance which reflects the marine related focus of Motupōhue Bluff and its unique history and heritage. This is hoped to evoke interest and excitement from visitors and a strong sense of pride from locals. In addition, the elevated and visually striking setting offers exceptional photographic and scenic opportunities, encouraging visitors to pause, reflect, and capture the essence of Motupōhue Bluff's natural beauty and cultural significance.

OCEAN BEACH AQUACULTURE PRECINCT

Ocean Beach NZ have a vision to create Aotearoa New Zealand's foremost land-based aquaculture park. As part of this vision, they are partnering with industry to create world class hatcheries and grow-out facilities for finfish, shellfish and seaweed. Aquaculture and Bluff Distillery tours are now available with artisan retail and hospitality venues showcasing Murihiku Southland arts, crafts and produce on the site currently being developed.

The Ocean Beach NZ team are also working to improve the connection of Te Araroa Trail, coastal walkways and walking and cycling trails to Stirling Point and Motupōhue Bluff.

HERITAGE LANDSCAPE PRECINCT

This is a gateway precinct into Motupōhue Bluff which provides the potential for public art and harbour edge connectivity. It should be well landscaped and provide an attractive area for locals and visitors to evoke a strong sense of local pride. Te Araroa Trail traverses through or beside this area so this should be considered as plans progress.

COMMUNITY RECREATION PRECINCT

This is a dedicated precinct to help meet the needs of locals first and foremost. Its purpose is to provide a safe and easy link to the water for swimming and recreational activities including an improved boat ramp and a renewed indoor community swimming pool. The area could consist of a dedicated public event space if the Maritime Museum were to ever relocate.

ACTIVE RECREATION PRECINCT

The vision is to create a precinct where people interested in exploring Motupōhue Bluff's outdoor environment (with a focus on mountain biking and running/walking) can visit to learn more and enjoy what is on offer. Local sports amenities (including Bluff Pool) complement the offering in this area.

There is a need to carefully develop and maintain this precinct in a way that does not impact on the biodiversity enhancement work progressing on Motupōhue Bluff Hill and surrounds.

BLUFF CENTRAL TOURISM PRECINCT

This is the primary visitor hub in Motupōhue Bluff. It provides the ferry link to Rakiura Stewart Island and could contain a variety of tourism related visitor attractions, facilities, amenities and services. Over time it will develop, creating a visitor focussed hub with various experiences, many of which can be clustered together. Its location is close to the commercial precinct for easy access to shops and cafes.

COMMERCIAL PRECINCT

The commercial precinct aims to provide sufficient space for future commercial growth to support the local community, its businesses and the visitor economy. The purpose of the commercial precinct is to ensure that commercial ventures can be clustered together, to leverage off one another and to help improve connectivity between commercial businesses and related events.

STIRLING POINT PRECINCT

Stirling Point is a significant site being either the beginning or end of Te Araroa Trail, the location of the famous 'Bluff Signpost', as well as the dispersal point for many walking trails. This precinct aims to improve the visitor experience particularly during peak season periods when parking is challenging and pedestrian movements are constrained. It suggests the potential for a 'Park and Ride' service from the Bluff Central Tourism Precinct car park to Stirling Point to help reduce parking congestion, improve safety and create better walking trail links for local users in particular.

MOTUPŌHUE/BLUFF HILL LOOKOUT HUB

It is proposed to enhance the existing road to the top of Motupōhue Bluff Hill with a small attractive cluster of activities, potentially including an expanded parking facility, star gazing experience (with a focus on Aurora Australis) and a Pouwhenua or 'Taurapa' stern post. The strong cultural significance of Motupōhue Bluff Hill, with its Tōpuni status, underpins all suggested concepts.

This hub also acknowledges that Motupōhue Bluff is the starting point for any journey north through Aotearoa New Zealand and as such the symbolic positioning of a Pouwhenua at the summit will strengthen and recognise the connection of mana whenua to the land and this will assist travellers on their journey north.

There is a need to carefully develop this hub in a way that does not impact on the biodiversity enhancement work progressing on Motupōhue Bluff Hill and surrounds and in particular, the Predator Free Bluff initiative. A number of walking tracks can also be accessed from this hub, including many of the new and improved multi-use trails that make up Te Wahi Tākaro o Motupōhue Adventure Park.

SOUTH PORT HUB

The South Port hub recognises the significant operational requirements of the port and the need to maintain a safe and effective separation between port activity and non-port related vehicle and pedestrian movements. The port needs to retain flexibility to enable changes to port activity and shipping over time. It also has the potential for tourism activity to become a more dominant element if desired. Its strategic location allows it to effectively link to the Bluff Central Tourism Precinct and Community Recreation Precinct.

WIDER BLUFF AREA

While the scope of this Master Plan focusses on Motupōhue Bluff, it is acknowledged that there needs to be consideration of other projects and initiatives in surrounding areas. This includes Te Ara Taurapa the Motupōhue Bluff to Waihōpai Invercargill cycle trail, Te Araroa Trail and other Awarua, Waituna, Catlins and Ōmāui projects. Motupōhue Bluff also remains an essential gateway to various islands including Rakiura Stewart Island and as such there are also important biosecurity and accessibility considerations.

WIDER REGIONAL CONTEXT

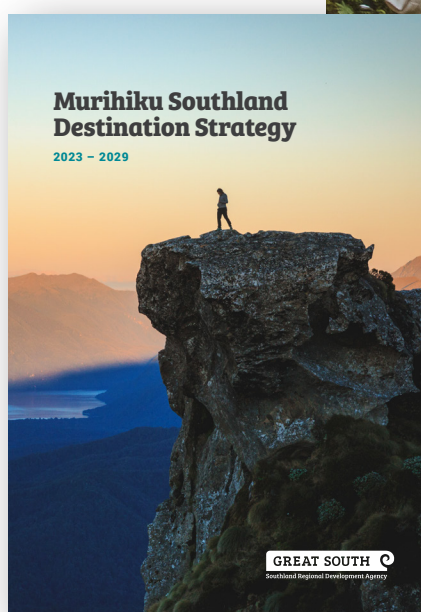
MURIHIKU SOUTHLAND DESTINATION STRATEGY 2023 - 2029

The Murihiku Southland Destination Strategy 2023–2029 (MSDS) provides a region-wide framework for shaping the future of tourism in Murihiku Southland. Rather than focusing solely on destination marketing, the strategy embraces a destination management approach - taking a holistic view of how the region plans for, and sustainably grows its visitor economy. It seeks to balance economic opportunity with environmental stewardship and cultural integrity, ensuring tourism contributes positively to community wellbeing and regional identity. Great South is the guardian and driver of the strategy, working in partnership with Murihiku Southland's councils, mana whenua, and other key stakeholders.

Motupōhue Bluff was identified as a key area of focus within the MSDS, recognising its strategic importance to Murihiku Southland and its role as the gateway to Rakiura Stewart Island. Several Motupōhue Bluff-related initiatives are embedded within the strategy, including a cruise sector assessment, visitor management planning at Stirling Point, and the enhancement of the visitor experience through Te Taurapa o Te Waka. The strategy also supports the development of mana whenua cultural narratives, the implementation of the Bluff Motupōhue Tourism Master Plan (BMTMP), and the regional network of Matariki Wayfinding Pouwhenua.

While the development of accommodation options is a regional priority, opportunities for Motupōhue Bluff in this area may emerge as part of broader efforts to encourage longer stays and improve visitor dispersal across Murihiku Southland. Touring network development is also a strategic focus of the strategy, aimed at improving regional connectivity and encouraging movement across multiple destinations.

Collectively, these initiatives position Motupōhue Bluff as a distinctive and high-value destination within Murihiku Southland's tourism offering.



SURROUNDING AREAS

WAIHŌPAI INVERCARGILL

Waihōpai Invercargill is undergoing a major transformation, with the Invercargill Central redevelopment revitalising the city's heart. The project, a joint venture between Invercargill City Council and O'Donnell Family Investments, has reimagined a full city block with modern retail, hospitality, and commercial spaces, while preserving heritage façades and creating pedestrian-friendly laneways. This renewed city centre has re-established Esk Street as a vibrant destination and strengthened Waihōpai Invercargill's appeal as a regional hub.

Adding to this momentum is the opening of the Distinction Invercargill Hotel, a 4.5-star, 150-room property offering luxury accommodation and high-end amenities such as private dining spaces and a stylish restaurant and bar. Its presence strengthens Waihōpai Invercargill's capacity to host business events, a growing priority for the city. With recent conferences like TECNZ choosing Waihōpai Invercargill as a host location, the city is positioning itself as a centre for tourism innovation and professional gatherings. This evolution has positive implications for Motupōhue Bluff, which stands to benefit from increased visitor flows, regional itineraries, and event-linked travel. Strengthening the connection between Motupōhue Bluff and Waihōpai Invercargill supports shared opportunities in tourism, hospitality, and destination development.



RAKIURA STEWART ISLAND

Rakiura Stewart Island is a vital part of Murihiku Southland's nature-based tourism offering, known for its remote wilderness, rich biodiversity, and cultural heritage. With approximately 40,000 annual visitors, the island continues to attract both domestic and international travellers. Tourism priorities focus on enhancing infrastructure to support sustainable growth, including improved walking tracks, upgraded wharf facilities, and better visitor amenities. The island's designation as an International Dark Sky Sanctuary adds to its appeal, drawing stargazing enthusiasts and reinforcing its reputation for immersive natural experiences.

A major development has been the Rakiura Oneke Southern Wilderness Experience, which delivered new tracks, shelter facilities, and conservation upgrades at Oneke (The Neck). Rakiura Stewart Island is also the focus of Predator Free Rakiura, a long-term conservation initiative aiming to remove invasive predators and restore native ecosystems. Motupōhue Bluff plays a complementary role in this vision, with local organisations such as the Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust actively involved in predator control and habitat restoration. This shared commitment to biodiversity strengthens the ecological and tourism connection between Motupōhue Bluff and Rakiura Stewart Island, supporting broader regional goals.



MURIHIKU SOUTHLAND CYCLE TOURISM OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT

The Murihiku Southland Cycle Tourism Opportunity Assessment identifies cycle tourism as a high-value opportunity for the region, supporting economic diversification, low-emission travel, and enhanced wellbeing. Motupōhue Bluff plays a key role in this strategy, with Te Ara Taurapa trail offering a 25km off-road cycling and walking route between Waihōpai Invercargill and Motupōhue Bluff. The trail provides a culturally rich experience featuring Ngāi Tahu storytelling, views of Motupōhue Bluff Hill, coastal landscapes, and heritage sites.

Te Wāhi Tākaro o Motupōhue Adventure Park was established with support from Invercargill City Council and MBIE through the Tourism Infrastructure Fund (TIF), with the vision of developing Motupōhue Bluff Hill into a nationally significant mountain biking destination. The project has delivered new and upgraded trails, improved signage and wayfinding, trail counters, increased parking, and new amenities including a rest area and accessible toilet block. Developed in partnership with mana whenua and local organisations, the park blends recreation, environmental stewardship, and cultural heritage. Its scale and quality also create strong potential to attract cycling events, which would bring wider economic and social benefits to Motupōhue Bluff and the Murihiku Southland region.



INVERCARGILL CITY COUNCIL

Invercargill City Council is driving a bold vision for the city's future through its Long-Term Plan, Our City with Heart – He Ngākau Aroha. With Waihōpai Invercargill experiencing growth and increasing diversity, Council is focused on creating a vibrant, inclusive urban environment that supports new industries, community wellbeing, and sustainable development. Strategic investments are being made across infrastructure, public spaces, and community facilities to ensure the city remains a thriving regional centre.

Council's regeneration efforts are most visible in the heart of Waihōpai Invercargill, where public investment has supported major city centre developments and complementary improvements such as streetscape upgrades at Wachner Place, expanded CCTV coverage, and support for community events. These enhancements are helping to create safer, more welcoming public spaces and reinforce the city's role as a hub for business, tourism, and civic life.

Council is also investing in Motupōhue Bluff, supporting infrastructure upgrades that improve access, safety, and visitor experience. Projects such as the Bluff Boat Ramp upgrade and trail connectivity improvements reflect a commitment to supporting Motupōhue Bluff's development alongside the city's growth. Together, these initiatives are reshaping the urban and coastal landscape, positioning both Waihōpai Invercargill and Motupōhue Bluff as key contributors to Murihiku Southland's future.



BEYOND 2025 SOUTHLAND

Beyond 2025 Southland is the region's long-term strategic plan, launched in 2023 to guide Murihiku Southland through a changing social, economic, and environmental landscape.

Facilitated by Great South, the strategy was developed through extensive engagement with councils, mana whenua, businesses, and communities. It is structured around five key themes: environment and climate change, economic diversification, strengthening local business, resources and infrastructure, and population and people. Within these themes, 16 workstreams have been established to drive targeted action and ensure regional alignment.

The strategy identifies both aquaculture and tourism as major opportunities for economic diversification. Motupōhue Bluff, with its existing marine infrastructure and proximity to productive waters, is well positioned to benefit from future aquaculture investment and innovation. Similarly, tourism is recognised not only for its economic potential but also for its ability to support cultural storytelling, community development, and regional connectivity. Motupōhue Bluff's role as a gateway to Rakiura Stewart Island and its unique cultural and natural assets make it a key location for tourism-related initiatives.

Beyond tourism, the strategy outlines priorities that are relevant to Motupōhue Bluff's broader development. These include addressing housing availability and affordability, improving transport and digital connectivity, and supporting community capability building and business enablement. These areas are essential for supporting population retention, workforce development, and local enterprise growth. Overall, Beyond 2025 Southland provides a framework for integrated regional development, with Motupōhue Bluff recognised as a strategically important community that can contribute to and benefit from wider initiatives in sustainability, infrastructure, and economic resilience.



MURIHIKU SOUTHLAND AQUACULTURE PATHWAY 2025

The Murihiku Southland Aquaculture Pathway sets out a collaborative vision to grow a sustainable, innovative aquaculture industry that supports economic diversification, environmental stewardship, and community wellbeing. Developed by Great South in partnership with iwi, councils, industry, and government agencies, the Pathway identifies Murihiku Southland's natural advantages, including cool, clean waters and extensive coastline, as key to unlocking aquaculture's potential. It outlines opportunities across both ocean and land-based farming, including salmon, pāua, whitebait, and seaweed.

Motupōhue Bluff is central to this approach, with the Ocean Beach Aquaculture Hub identified as a key site for early-stage land-based aquaculture development. Specific projects include Fjordland Group's land-based salmon farm and processing facility, which is currently in development and could support 110 employees and contribute \$368m to the local economy each year. The Ocean Beach site also hosts early-stage farming of pāua, whitebait, and seaweed. These developments, and the Pathway document, require Motupōhue Bluff to become a 'marine hub' capable of meeting the future needs of a multibillion-dollar aquaculture industry. To achieve this significant investment in infrastructure, amenities, and services is required, and this must be aligned with broader planning efforts. The Pathway highlights Motupōhue Bluff's potential to contribute significantly to Murihiku Southland's goal of becoming a \$1 billion aquaculture region by 2035.



IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

It has now been five years since the Master Plan was launched, and four years since the initial implementation plan was released. During that time progression and implementation of key projects has continued, being a core focus for stakeholders and partners.

PROJECT COORDINATOR ROLE

In June 2022 Great South established a part-time Project Coordinator to manage implementation progress of the Master Plan. This position was funded for an initial 12 months through the Strategic Tourism Assets Protection Programme (STAPP) funding from MBIE, which was part of the wider central government COVID-19 recovery funding. Continuation of the role is now reviewed annually based on funding availability.

There is consensus from all Master Plan stakeholders that the Project Coordinator position has been integral to ensuring continual engagement and implementation progress. This is supported by the regular stakeholder hui held (either as a group or individually) to discuss progress and ensure connection between various projects, which are often moving forward simultaneously.



IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

The Master Plan sets out a bold 20-year vision, anchored by 24 transformational projects designed to reshape the future of the area. However, turning this vision into reality depends heavily on sustained support from key stakeholders, particularly local and central government, and the community. Progress will also be influenced by the level of resourcing available, both from public investment and private sector contributions.

The status of the concepts, projects and staging within the Master Plan has been categorised in the following four ways:

Complete

Project is complete.

Ongoing

Project is long term and has no specified end date.

In Progress

The project is currently underway and is progressing.

Initial Investigation Underway

Stakeholders are in the process of undertaking feasibility studies and/or options to frame the project brief.

Future Focus

The project is not yet started, or it requires other projects and concepts to be completed before progress can be made.

Based on this premise, the table below outlines an overall status update on Master Plan projects. A detailed summary of each project's current status can be found towards the end of this document.

Status	Number of projects
Complete	5
Ongoing	2
In Progress	7
Initial Investigation Underway	3
Future Focus	7

The completed projects have set a strong base to support growth in tourism; the visitor welcome bay provides a 24 hour storytelling and orientation point, the ferry terminal changes have created an improved visitor experience, upgrades to the old wharf have allowed improved access for public fishing and sightseeing, and the completion of both Te Ara Taurapa, the Waihōpai Invercargill to Motupōhue Bluff cycle trail and Te Wahi Tākaro o Motupōhue Adventure Park provide a significant drawcard to attract visitors to Motupōhue Bluff.



PROJECT SHOWCASE

VISITOR WELCOME BAY

The Motupōhue Bluff Visitor Welcome Bay, officially opened in October 2022, is a key tourism asset and a successful example of community collaboration. Designed to serve as a multifunctional welcoming orientation point, the kiosk provides 24/7 access to local information, maps, and storytelling panels that connect visitors to the cultural and natural heritage of Motupōhue Bluff.

Its strategic location on the town's green belt along State Highway 1 (which forms part of Te Araroa Trail) makes it an ideal first stop for travellers, helping them navigate the area and discover key attractions. The surrounding landscaped area, featuring a bike stand, seating, and picnic table, encourages visitors to pause, explore, and engage with the space. The project was delivered through the combined efforts of the Bluff Community Board, Bluff 2024, Te Rūnaka o Awarua, Bluff Promotions, and ICC Parks, with support from local businesses and volunteers.



Artist: Te Mauri Tini
Photo credit: Tammi Topi



Photo credit: Tammi Topi

TE ARA TAURAPA - WAIHŌPAI INVERCARGILL TO MOTUPŌHUE BLUFF CYCLE TRAIL

Te Ara Taurapa is a 25km off-road cycle and walking trail connecting Waihōpai Invercargill to Motupōhue Bluff, offering a safe and scenic alternative to State Highway 1. The trail follows a historic transport corridor and forms part of the national Te Araroa Trail. It was developed by Environment Southland in partnership with Invercargill City Council, with support from Waka Kotahi NZTA, Te Araroa Trails Trust, ILT Foundation, Community Trust South, and various landowners. The trail enhances active transport options and unlocks new tourism potential by showcasing Murihiku Southland's coastal landscapes and heritage sites.

To enhance the visitor experience, six cultural interpretation panels were installed along the trail and officially completed in March 2022. The project was led by Great South and funded through MBIE's Strategic Tourism Assets Protection Programme (STAPP), as part of the government's wider COVID-19 recovery support. Developed in collaboration with Te Rūnaka o Awarua and Waihōpai Rūnaka, the panels share Ngāi Tahu stories and highlight key aspects of Motupōhue Bluff's Māori and early European history. The trail's name, Te Ara Taurapa—meaning “the pathway along the stern of the waka Aoraki”—was gifted by mana whenua, reflecting the cultural significance of the journey and the deep connection to place that the panels help convey.



TE TAURAPA O TE WAKA

Te Taurapa o Te Waka is the culmination of Te Rūnaka o Awarua's long held vision to highlight the cultural importance of Motupōhue. The project would draw visitors to this nationally iconic site, placing them among imposing storytelling sculptures and carvings, allowing them to connect to the stories they represent.

The current project concept includes a 25-metre tall sculptural Taurapa (canoe sternpost), visible from the base of Motupōhue as the centre piece of an entire experience with two pou representing tūpuna (ancestors) flanking the existing roadway to the summit, conveying the significance of the site. The project concept also includes an interpretation centre, sculpture trail, walking track, car parking, and use of digital, location-based storytelling. A larger-than-life-size puka (anchor stone) marks the beginning of the sculpture trail, which relates to several kōrero such as Te Waka o Aoraki and the oral tradition of Te Ara a Kiwa. The rope of the puka (anchor stone) would wind its way to the summit, where the broken waka of Aoraki would be represented.

A key objective of the project is to encourage visitors to make the journey to the summit of Motupōhue Bluff Hill, in addition to Stirling Point, when they visit Motupōhue Bluff. To achieve this requires a combination of developing a world-class visitor

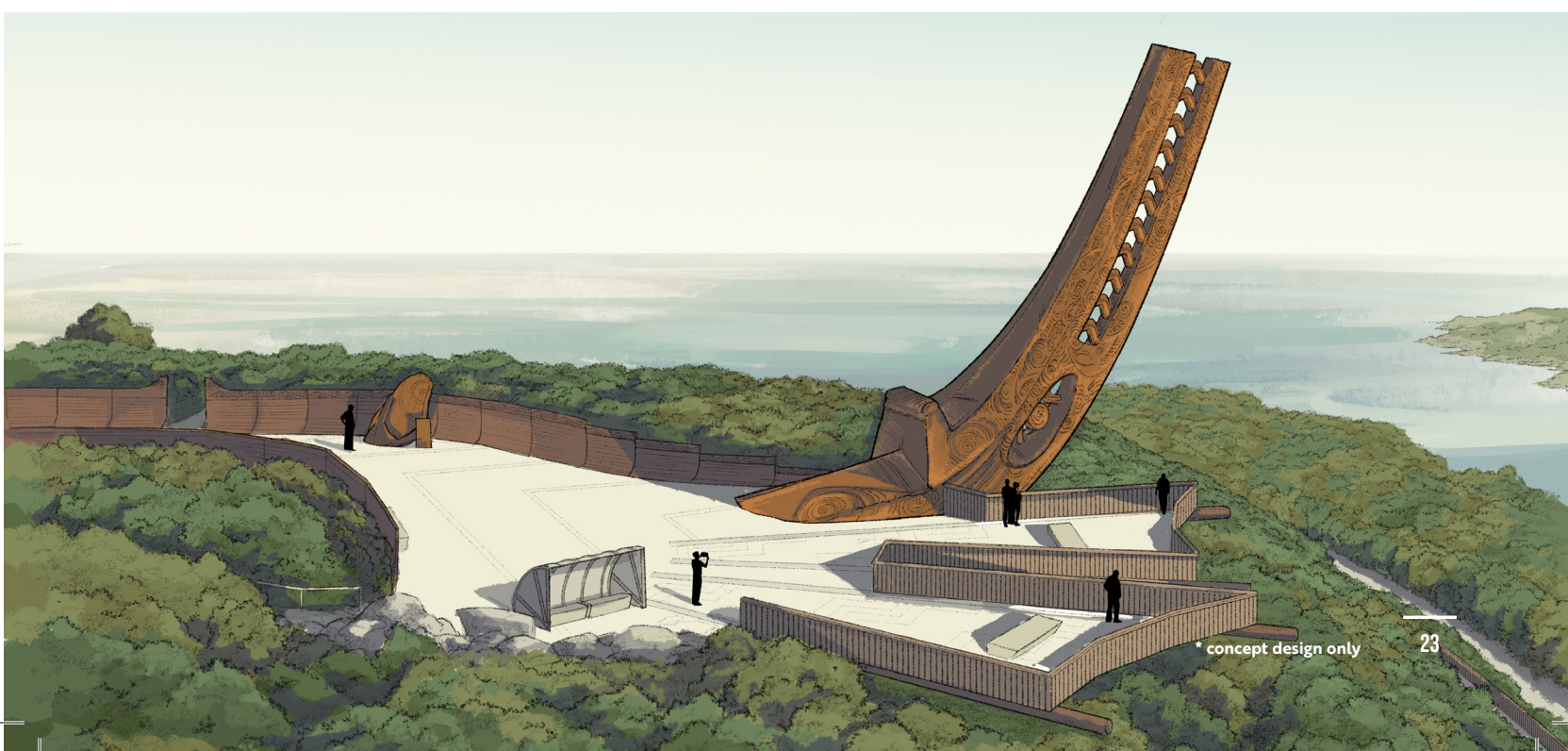
attraction on the summit, creating car parks and accessible walkways for the site, developing signage, orientation, and wayfinding on key tracks, and marketing the site as a destination on-line and at visitor hubs.

The creative concept for Te Taurapa o Te Waka was designed by Te Rūnaka o Awarua with support from place-based storytelling agency Locales.

'Te Taurapa o Te Waka project will be a nationally significant, iconic site. There is no other installation and integrated visitor experience in Aotearoa of this scale that creates such a stunning cultural imprint on the landscape and that enables visitors to connect with mana whenua stories.' Chris Hay, Locales

In 2024 the project was shared with key stakeholders and the wider community. It was also presented to Invercargill City Council with a positive response and to both the Minister for Conservation and Māori Development and the Minister for Tourism.

The projects next steps require completion of a business feasibility and fundraising strategy, and a planning assessment will be required. Once these pieces of work are complete, efforts to obtain funding to make the project a reality can be progressed and the design can be finalised.



OCEAN BEACH NZ

Ocean Beach NZ is fast becoming a national leader in land-based aquaculture, transforming a historic industrial site into a hub for sustainable seafood production. With over 50 hectares, 45 repurposed buildings, and large-scale seawater infrastructure already in place, the site is primed for commercial expansion and currently incorporates The New Zealand Abalone Company's Pāua farm operation, Manaaki Whitebait, the CH4 Global seaweed farm and Kelp Blue's seaweed hatchery.

Bluff Distillery, proudly located on-site, is Aotearoa New Zealand's first carbon-neutral gin distillery. Their award-winning Bluff Gin is now available at retail outlets nationwide and has earned multiple internationally recognised accolades. In response to growing demand and continued success, the distillery is enhancing both its interior and exterior spaces to offer an even more engaging visitor experience. Complementing this, Ocean Beach NZ has expanded its guided tours to include the distillery, creating more opportunities for visitors to explore and enjoy the site.

Central government have included a Motupōhue Bluff based aquaculture project in their fast-track approvals bill, Fjordland Group Ltd.'s sustainable and climate-resilient aquaculture project which involves the construction and operation of a land-based salmon farm and processing facility. In addition to this, Maris Vitae's premium tinned seafood venture aims to meet strong global demand while utilising local seafood products. This business will also be based at Ocean Beach NZ.

Site remediation has also been a key focus, with the foreshore project completed in September through collaboration with ICC, DOC, Ngāi Tahu, and the local community, while broader beautification efforts continue. In 2026, Ocean Beach NZ will host two major events expected to attract visitors to Motupōhue Bluff, showcasing local seafood offerings, and entertainment for locals. The team also continues to grow its educational programmes, supporting learners from primary school through to university placements.



PREDATOR FREE BLUFF / ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION INITIATIVES

BLUFF HILL MOTUPŌHUE ENVIRONMENT TRUST

The Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust (BHMET) is a community-led organisation committed to restoring the ecological and cultural health of Motupōhue. Since 2008, the Trust has made significant progress in predator control, native planting, and invasive species removal. Over 1,600 traps have been deployed, removing more than 17,000 pests and allowing native birdlife and vegetation to flourish. The successful completion of the Jobs for Nature project in July 2024 marked a major milestone—predator numbers are now under control, and the maunga is alive with birdsong and healthy forest regeneration.

To build on this success, BHMET has secured funding from Trees That Count, enabling the planting of 25,000 native trees annually through to 2027. This coincides with the development of new mountain

bike and walking tracks, which have opened up large areas for future planting. The Trust has also received support from Murihiku Rūnaka and the Rio Tinto / NZAS Community Development Fund to upgrade 100 automatic traps with AI-enabled technology. These smart traps provide real-time data to guide predator control strategies and improve operational efficiency.

Looking ahead, BHMET's goal is to secure long-term, sustainable funding to maintain and expand its restoration efforts. Their work is grounded in kaitiakitanga and supported by iwi, volunteers, and local partners, ensuring the maunga's restoration continues to benefit both nature and community.



BLUFF BOAT RAMP

The Motupōhue Bluff Boat Ramp upgrade, part of ICC's Long-Term Plan and the Bluff Motupōhue Tourism Master Plan, has made steady progress throughout 2025. Throughout the project, Council has actively engaged with the Motupōhue Bluff community, Bluff Yacht Club, recreational fishers, and the Southland Trailer Yacht Club to ensure the design meets the needs of all users.

Stage One, focused on upgrading the eastern and western jetties, has recently been completed. Final works are underway on the eastern gangway bridge, which will improve accessibility and overall functionality.

Stage Two includes a new toilet unit, fish processing station, and car park scoping. Installation of the toilet and fish station is scheduled for November and December, ahead of the busy summer season. Car park planning is progressing to ensure future capacity and usability.

Fee collection infrastructure has been installed, including signage and a licence plate recognition camera. From 1 July 2025, casual and annual permits have been introduced for recreational and commercial use. Fees were set following financial recovery modelling, national benchmarking, and public consultation through the 2024 Long-Term Plan.



TE WĀHI TĀKARO O MOTUPŌHUE - ADVENTURE PARK

Opened in November 2024, Te Wāhi Tākaro o Motupōhue Bluff Adventure Park is a new recreational development offering over 10km of mountain biking and walking trails across Motupōhue. The 27 named tracks cater to a range of skill levels and are inspired by Motupōhue's natural features, biodiversity, and cultural heritage. Infrastructure upgrades, including a car park, toilet block, and bike wash station, have also improved the overall visitor experience. The park is already proving to be a valuable asset for the Motupōhue Bluff community, providing a safe and engaging space for families, schools, and recreational groups to enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature.

The project was delivered through a strong partnership between Invercargill City Council, Great South, Southland Mountain Bike Club, Te Rūnaka o Awarua, Te Ao Mārama, Bluff Community

Board, Department of Conservation, and the Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust, with funding support from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Tourism Infrastructure Fund. In addition to its community value, the park has strong potential to attract visitors seeking nature-based and adventure experiences. It supports local businesses, encourages longer stays, and contributes to Motupōhue Bluff's growing reputation as a destination that values recreation, environmental stewardship, and cultural connection. The scale and quality of the trails also present opportunities to host events such as mountain biking competitions, trail running festivals, and community gatherings - bringing further vibrancy and economic benefit to the area.

Work on the additional Pump Track skills area is expected to commence in late 2025 and be completed in early 2026.



HE KARAPITIPITINGA MARIKO: IMMERSIVE AND REGENERATIVE TOURISM EXPERIENCES

Part of a Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Endeavour project (2024–2028), this initiative explores how technology can support a more sustainable tourism future for Aotearoa New Zealand. The focus is on creating virtual and mixed-reality technologies that complement existing tourism experiences, enhance locally based opportunities, reduce carbon emissions from long-distance travel, provide safe access to environmentally sensitive areas, and ensure tangata whenua retain control over how knowledge is shared.

The project brings together university partners (Otago, Massey, Canterbury, Griffith, Auckland, Wellington), the Department of Conservation,

tourism industry representatives, and core community partners across the West Coast, Far North, and Murihiku Southland. In Murihiku Southland, work with Awarua Rūnaka Limited and Great South is centred on immersive experiences and future scenarios. This includes virtually “being there” tourism experiences, virtual welcomes for manuhiri, and the sharing of cultural experiences. Additional work looks at three-dimensional pre-visualisation of future projects, augmented experiences around Motupōhue Bluff Hill, and virtual storytelling opportunities for Te Ara Taurapa.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Master Plan set a strong foundation and pathway forward for the development of Motupōhue Bluff as a visitor destination. However, the environment we are operating within continues to change and evolve. Due to this it's important that the Master Plan is reviewed at several stages within its lifecycle in order to prioritise areas of focus and evaluate new tourism related economic development opportunities that may arise. Prioritisation can also help to inform projects for inclusion within the Invercargill City Council Long Term Planning process.

THE PROCESS

With several years now passed since the Master Plan was launched, a focused planning process to review its progress and develop a revised Implementation Plan was initiated by Great South. This process was designed to identify three priority projects to be progressed over the next 3–5 years, providing a clear and coordinated focus for short-term implementation.

WORKSHOP APPROACH

To support the development of the revised Implementation Plan, a dedicated workshop was held with key stakeholders involved in tourism and economic development in Motupōhue Bluff. The session was designed to help refine the focus of short-term delivery efforts and ensure alignment with current opportunities in the area.

Participants worked through a review of existing Master Plan projects and considered additional opportunities for the Motupōhue Bluff community. The aim was to identify a small number of high-impact initiatives that could be realistically progressed over the next 3–5 years, providing a more targeted and coordinated approach to implementation.

In reviewing potential projects, participants considered decision-making factors such as increasing visitor length of stay and spend, both indicators of greater value being captured from tourism. While these outcomes were not formally agreed upon as criteria, they supported the discussion. It was noted that Motupōhue Bluff-specific data is currently limited, and future funding could support improved measurement at the local level.



Port Maintenance by Marie Frewen Wilks
Photo credit: Tammi Topi



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The workshop included a cross-section of community and industry representatives alongside the Bluff Community Board. This group was selected to provide a strong understanding of local perspectives and tourism-related opportunities. Participants included:

- ➔ **Te Rūnaka o Awarua**
- ➔ **South Port**
- ➔ **Ocean Beach NZ**
- ➔ **Great South**
- ➔ **Local tourism and event operators**
- ➔ **Motupōhue Bluff business community members**

PROJECT PRIORITISATION & OUTCOMES

Through the workshop process, three priority projects were identified that align with the broader goals of the Master Plan and are considered feasible for delivery and/or progression within the next 3–5 years. These options were subsequently taken to the Bluff Community Board for approval, ensuring alignment with local governance and wider community priorities.

The approved projects will form a core focus not only for the Bluff Community Board, but also for the wider group of stakeholders involved, including the Master Plan Project Coordinator and Great South. This shared focus will help ensure coordinated effort and momentum across all partners.

FOCUS ON COLLABORATION

Throughout the workshop the importance of working together and supporting projects to completion was seen as important. This includes projects being worked on by key stakeholders where other stakeholders and/ or the community could help, such as those being led by Council, South Port, Te Ao Mārama, Te Rūnaka o Awarua, Environment Southland and DoC.

The Master Plan Coordinator plays a key role in connecting with these stakeholders and the wider community. While the Implementation Plan projects take precedence keeping connected and/or holding stakeholder hui will support this outcome.



PROJECT 1 - TE TAURAPA O TE WAKA - MOTUPŌHUE BLUFF HILL EXPERIENCE (TTOTW)

OVERVIEW

Te Taurapa o Te Waka is a flagship initiative that brings together three interrelated projects from the Master Plan. It aims to transform the Motupōhue Bluff Hill Lookout into a culturally rich and visitor-ready destination through storytelling, astro-tourism, and infrastructure upgrades. A project of importance for mana whenua and regional stakeholders, with strong tourism potential.

INCLUDED MASTER PLAN PROJECTS

- **Project 7** – *Expanded Visitor Parking at Motupōhue Bluff Hill Lookout*
- **Project 8** – *Pouwhenua at Motupōhue Bluff Hill Lookout*
- **Project 20** – *Stargazing Experience*

KEY COMPONENTS

- **Planning Assessment and Feasibility Study:** *Required to progress to the fundraising stage, including commercial opportunity assessment.*
- **Matariki Pou Installation:** *A potential early activation element, contributing to the regional network of eight Matariki Pou across Murihiku Southland.*
- **Site Transformation:** *Cultural and infrastructure upgrades to enhance visitor experience and storytelling.*

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

- Anchors Motupōhue Bluff's cultural identity and storytelling at a key visitor site.
- Aligns with regional and national tourism strategies.
- Supports mana whenua-led development and regional connectivity through the Matariki Pou network.

PROJECT OWNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- **Project Owner:** *Te Rūnaka o Awarua*
- **Support Partners:** *BMTMP Coordinator, Great South*

BUDGET AND FUNDING

- **Estimated Budget for Preparatory Stages:** *Planning assessment and feasibility study approximately \$60,000*
- **Matariki Pou Costs:** *To be confirmed*
- **Funding Strategy:** *Focused on securing funding for preparatory work to enable full project delivery.*

NEXT STEPS

- Work to secure funding for planning and feasibility stages.
- Engage stakeholders to refine potential early activation opportunities, which may include Matariki Pou integration.
- Develop a strategy to secure funding for full project implementation.



PROJECT 2 - PRODUCT PACKAGING AND CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT FOR OPERATORS

OVERVIEW

This newly identified project responds to a clear need within the local tourism sector to strengthen operator capability and product visibility. While not part of the original Master Plan, stakeholders and businesses have highlighted this as a critical building block for Motupōhue Bluff's tourism development. The project aims to support tourism operators in Motupōhue Bluff, particularly in digital engagement and product packaging, to better connect with visitors and meet market expectations.

KEY COMPONENTS

- **Training Programme:** *Focused on digital skills, and other related requirements as identified by operators.*
- **Product Packaging Guidance:** *Support for creating bundled experiences tailored to cruise passengers and group tours.*
- **Motupōhue Bluff-Focused Itineraries:** *Development of itineraries showcasing local attractions and experiences.*
- **Accommodation Provision:** *Consideration of current and future accommodation needs to support growth.*

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

- Builds local capability and professionalism.
- Enhances Motupōhue Bluff's appeal to key visitor segments.
- Supports sustainable tourism growth and community benefit.

PROJECT OWNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- **Project Owner:** *BMTMP Coordinator, Great South*
- **Support Partners:** *Bluff Tourism Network Coordinator*

BUDGET AND FUNDING

- **Estimated Budget:** *Relatively low, with potential to utilise Great South staff capability.*
- **Funding Strategy:** *Additional sources may be sought depending on training scope and delivery needs.*

NEXT STEPS

- Conduct operator needs assessment.
- Design and deliver training programmes required.
- Create product packages and itineraries.
- Review accommodation capacity and identify opportunities.



PROJECT 3 - DEVELOPMENT AND SHARING OF THE MOTUPŌHUE BLUFF STORY

OVERVIEW

This is another new area of focus not originally included in the Master Plan, but now recognised by stakeholders as a vital component of Motupōhue Bluff's tourism offering. The project aims to develop and share the Motupōhue Bluff story in a way that is engaging and accessible to visitors, connecting it to the broader Murihiku Southland narrative and enhancing cultural understanding.

KEY COMPONENTS

- **Story Development:** *Creation of a cohesive narrative aligned with the wider Murihiku Southland story being shared within Te Unua Museum of Southland*
- **Interpretive Signage:** *Placed at key visitor sites with the option to include QR codes linking to further digital content.*
- **Digital Integration:** *Online storytelling hosted on existing tourism focussed sites*
- **Virtual Storytelling:** *Support Te Rūnaka o Awarua's work in developing immersive digital experiences.*

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

- Enhances visitor engagement and cultural appreciation.
- Strengthens Motupōhue Bluff's identity and connection to the regional story.
- Supports mana whenua-led initiatives and aligns with national tourism trends.

PROJECT OWNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- **Project Owners:** *Te Rūnaka o Awarua, BMTMP Coordinator, Great South*
- **Support Partners:** *Department of Conservation, Invercargill City Council*

BUDGET AND FUNDING

- **Estimated Budget:** *To be determined based on scope.*
- **Funding Strategy:** *Additional funding required for story development, signage, and digital content.*

NEXT STEPS

- Undertake an audit of existing signage within the Motupōhue Bluff area
- Establish the process to identify untold stories and key stakeholders/ partners
- Identify key sites for signage
- Develop and publish digital content



OTHER AREAS OF FOCUS

EXISTING MOTUPŌHUE BLUFF MASTER PLAN PROJECTS

Several other projects of importance were noted throughout the process to develop this Implementation Plan. These haven't been specifically included here as they already have a clear owner who is actively driving progress forward. Advocacy for these projects should be given alongside support from other stakeholders where required.

- **Project 13 - Ocean Beach Development** – owner *Ocean Beach NZ*
- **Project 22 - Ecological Restoration Initiatives**– owner *BHMET*
- **Project 23 - Predator Free Bluff** – owner *BHMET*



INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ASSETS

An additional area of focus identified during the implementation planning workshop relates to the improvement of existing infrastructure, community facilities, and assets in Motupōhue Bluff. Although not included within the scope of the formal implementation plan, this work is considered essential to ensuring the quality and readiness of current tourism offerings. It reflects a shared view among stakeholders that existing projects and assets should be fully completed and brought up to a high standard before new developments are introduced. This includes undertaking a stocktake of current infrastructure and assessing outstanding components within previously delivered Master Plan projects. Action on this area is expected to be progressed through the Invercargill City Council's Long-Term Plan process, with the Bluff Community Board Chair responsible for determining priorities and raising them with Council.

DATA & INSIGHTS

Data and insights were also identified as a priority area to support tourism development in Motupōhue Bluff. While not a formal project within the implementation plan, improving access to reliable, Motupōhue Bluff-specific data is seen as essential for tracking progress, understanding visitor behaviour, and strengthening future funding applications.

Current datasets at the local level are limited, and new approaches should be explored. These may include the use of spend data to monitor visitor transactions, installation of traffic counters near key sites such as Stirling Point and Motupōhue Bluff Hill, and establishing a feedback loop with tourism operators to capture qualitative insights from their visitors. The extent to which this work can be progressed will be dependent on available budget and resourcing, but it will become a strategic focus over the next 3–5 years.





An aerial photograph of a coastal town and harbor. The town is built on a peninsula, with a road and buildings visible. The harbor is large and blue, with several ships docked at a pier. In the background, there are mountains and a body of water under a clear sky.

CONCEPTS, PROJECTS AND STAGING STATUS UPDATES

The following section provides updates on the 24 transformational concepts, projects and staging from the original Master Plan, including those that have been showcased previously.

Their status has been categorised in the following ways:



Complete

The project is complete



Ongoing

The project is long term and has no specified end date



In Progress

The project is currently underway and is progressing



Initial Investigation Underway

The stakeholders are in the process of undertaking feasibility studies and/or options to frame the project brief



Future Focus

The project is not yet started OR it requires other projects and concepts to be completed before progress can be made

COMPLETE

PROJECT	PROGRESS TO DATE	STAKEHOLDERS	HUB/PRECINCT
Visitor Welcome Bay	<p>The completed 24 hour Information Kiosk on Gore Street showcases local storytelling with stunning imagery connecting both the community and visitors to Motupōhue Bluff.</p> <p>Features installed in the surrounding landscaping such as a bike stand, table and seating are welcome additions and encourage people to stop and enjoy the space. Its location also draws attention to the Oyster Cutter sculpture located nearby.</p> <p>The project was led by the Motupōhue Bluff community, with representatives from Bluff 2024 Rejuvenation Group, Bluff Promotions and Te Rūnaka o Awarua, and project coordination support from ICC.</p>	<p>Bluff 2024 Rejuvenation Group</p> <p>Bluff Promotions Group</p> <p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua</p>	<i>Bluff Central Tourism Precinct</i>
Completion of Waihōpai Invercargill to Motupōhue Bluff cycle trail	<p>Te Ara Taurapa, named by local Rūnaka, is the trail connecting Waihōpai Invercargill to Motupōhue Bluff and forms part of Te Araroa Trail. Officially opened in March 2022, the trail includes six interpretation panels placed at culturally significant sites, sharing mana whenua stories and enhancing the experience for both locals and visitors.</p> <p>The section from Stead Street to Motupōhue is complete, and Invercargill City Council has worked with Waka Kotahi to address alignment and safety considerations for the remaining portion between Suir Street and the new information kiosk in Motupōhue Bluff. This upgrade has now been completed, including a sealed section along the greenbelt edge and the installation of lane delineators along Ocean Beach Road. As vehicles reduce speed from 100km to 50km when entering Motupōhue Bluff, these improvements enhance safety for trail users by clearly separating the trail from the roadway.</p>	<p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Environment Southland</p> <p>Waka Kotahi NZ Transport</p> <p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua</p> <p>Great South</p>	<i>Bluff Gateway Entrance Hub</i>
Enhanced Stewart Island Ferry Terminal Development	<p>Real NZ have completed improvements to the ferry terminal located in Motupōhue Bluff, reconfiguring the ticketing and waiting areas.</p> <p>While this project is technically complete, South Port are taking it a step further, assessing where improvements to traffic flows through the area could be made. A consultant has been engaged to support this work, and South Port are currently awaiting their recommendations.</p>	<p>Real NZ</p> <p>South Port</p>	<i>Bluff Central Tourism Precinct</i>
Restoration of Old Harbour Wharf for Possible Public Fishing	<p>In August 2022 South Port completed a partial reconstruction of the Motupōhue Bluff historic Town Wharf.</p> <p>Due to this significant upgrade a section of the old wharf was able to safely open for fishing and sightseeing in late December 2022, enabling people to reconnect with Motupōhue Bluff Harbour.</p> <p>Seating and lifesaving equipment have also been added to this area, which is proving very popular for public fishing.</p>	<p>South Port</p> <p>Bluff Community Board</p> <p>Invercargill City Council</p>	<i>Bluff Central Tourism Precinct</i>

COMPLETE			
PROJECT	PROGRESS TO DATE	STAKEHOLDERS	HUB/PRECINCT
Development of an Active Recreation Precinct	<p>In 2022, Invercargill City Council (ICC), with support from Great South, successfully secured funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's (MBIE) Tourism Infrastructure Fund (TIF) for improvements to trails on Motupōhue Bluff Hill.</p> <p>The completed project, now known as Te Wāhi Tākaro a Motupōhue Adventure Park, includes over ten kilometres of purpose-built mountain biking, multi-use, and walking trails designed to cater to a range of skill levels and recreational users. It also features an expanded car park and new public toilet facilities. These upgrades support increased use of Motupōhue Bluff Hill by both the local community and visitors, strengthening its role as a valued recreational asset and outdoor destination.</p> <p>The "Stage 2" Pump Track Skills Project has a budget of \$300k which has been reduced from the initial \$400k planned project. Funding opportunities have not been as productive as anticipated and the project will progress forward with a slightly narrower scope. It is intended that construction of the pump track and skills area will commence late in 2025 and be finished in early 2026.</p>	<p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Southland Mountain Bike Club</p> <p>Department of Conservation</p> <p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua</p> <p>Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust (BHMET)</p> <p>Great South</p>	<p>Active Recreation Precinct</p>



ONGOING

PROJECT	PROGRESS TO DATE	STAKEHOLDERS	HUB/PRECINCT
Predator Free Bluff	<p>Since the launch of the Jobs for Nature project, the Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust (BHMET) has made major strides in restoring Motupōhue Bluff Hill's ecological health. The project wrapped up in July 2024, with predator numbers now under control and native ecosystems regenerating.</p> <p>Additional funding from Murihiku Rūnaka and the Rio Tinto / NZAS Community Development Fund has upgraded 100 automatic traps with AI and remote monitoring, strengthening predator control. BHMET has also taken over the assets of the Ōmāui Landcare Charitable Trust, expanding its focus to the Motupōhue-Ōmāui peninsula and planning a network of AI-enabled traps to protect wading birds around the Motupōhue Bluff harbour watershed.</p> <p>With significant effort now being directed toward Predator Free Rakiura, there is growing recognition of the need for increased predator control on the mainland in Motupōhue Bluff. Strengthening these efforts locally is essential to support the success of both the Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust and the broader Predator Free Rakiura initiative.</p>	<p>Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust (BHMET)</p> <p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Department of Conservation</p> <p>Ocean Beach NZ</p>	<p><i>Predator Free Bluff encompasses the whole of Motupōhue Bluff, including the Bluff Hill Motupōhue Lookout Hub, Active Recreation Precinct, Ocean Beach Aquaculture Precinct, Community Recreation Precinct, Stirling Point Precinct, and Bluff Central Tourism Precinct</i></p>
Ecological Restoration Initiatives	<p>An MOU is in place between ICC, DOC, and the Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust (BHMET) to allow a co-ordinated approach to habitat restoration across the whole of Motupōhue Bluff.</p> <p>Building on this success, BHMET has secured funding from Trees That Count to continue restoration through to 2027, committing to plant 25,000 native trees annually. This aligns with the development of new mountain biking and walking trails, opening up areas previously dominated by gorse and enabling at least two more years of intensive planting. Strong support from local corporate groups and volunteers has boosted these efforts.</p> <p>BHMET is actively undertaking predator control, pest plant control and replanting mahi with the active support of ICC, DOC, Ocean Beach NZ, and other landowners.</p>	<p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Department of Conservation</p> <p>Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust (BHMET)</p> <p>Ocean Beach NZ</p>	<p><i>Bluff Hill Motupōhue Lookout Hub</i></p>

IN PROGRESS

PROJECT	PROGRESS TO DATE	STAKEHOLDERS	HUB/PRECINCT
Upgrade to Boat Ramp	<p>The Bluff Boat Ramp upgrade continues to advance, with strong community input shaping its design. Council has worked closely with local stakeholders including the Bluff Yacht Club, recreational fishers, and the Southland Trailer Yacht Club to ensure the facility meets diverse user needs.</p> <p>Stage One, focused on upgrading the eastern and western jetties, is now complete, with final work underway on the eastern gangway bridge to improve access and usability.</p> <p>Stage Two is progressing well, with installation of a new toilet unit and fish processing station scheduled for November–December 2025. Car park scoping is also underway to support future demand.</p> <p>Fee collection infrastructure is now in place, with casual and annual permits introduced from 1 July 2025. Fees were set through financial modelling, national benchmarking, and public consultation as part of the 2024 Long-Term Plan.</p>	<p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Environment Southland</p> <p>Bluff Community Board</p> <p>South Port</p> <p>Bluff Yacht Club</p>	<i>Community Recreation Precinct</i>
Ocean Beach	<p>Ocean Beach NZ is fast becoming a national leader in land-based aquaculture, transforming a historic industrial site into a hub for sustainable seafood production. The site now spans over 50 hectares with 45 repurposed buildings and large-scale seawater infrastructure, supporting operations such as The New Zealand Abalone Company's pāua farm, Manaaki Whitebait, CH4 Global's seaweed farm, and Kelp Blue's seaweed hatchery.</p> <p>Bluff Distillery, Aotearoa New Zealand's first carbon-neutral gin distillery, is also open on-site, with Bluff Gin now available at retailers throughout Aotearoa and winning multiple international awards. Ocean Beach NZ continues to expand its guided tours, which include the distillery, positioning the site as a key attraction for cruise visitors and other tourists.</p> <p>Central government has included a Motupōhue Bluff-based aquaculture project by Fjordland Group Ltd in its fast-track approvals bill, involving the construction and operation of a land-based salmon farm and processing facility. Maris Vitae's premium tinned seafood venture will also be based at Ocean Beach, aiming to meet strong global demand using locally sourced seafood.</p> <p>Environmental and community initiatives remain a strong focus. Ocean Beach NZ has signed an MOU with the Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust to support pest eradication and is working with the Trust on potential planting initiatives to support native wildlife reintroduction. Site remediation efforts are ongoing, with the foreshore project completed in September 2025 through collaboration with ICC, DOC, Ngāi Tahu, and the local community. Broader beautification work continues, and in 2026, Ocean Beach NZ will host two major events to showcase local seafood and provide entertainment for locals and visitors. The team also continues to grow its educational programmes, supporting learners from primary school through to university placements.</p>	Ocean Beach NZ	<i>Ocean Beach Aquaculture Precinct</i>

IN PROGRESS

PROJECT	PROGRESS TO DATE	STAKEHOLDERS	HUB/PRECINCT
Pouwhenua at Bluff Hill Motupōhue Lookout	<p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua, supported by Great South and working with experience design consultants Locales, has developed concept designs for Te Taurapa o Te Waka—a nationally significant cultural and visitor experience proposed for Motupōhue Bluff Hill. Concept development was funded through MBIE's Strategic Tourism Assets Protection Programme (STAPP), part of the central government's COVID-19 recovery initiative.</p> <p>The project aims to celebrate the cultural importance of Motupōhue and create a meaningful space for both the local community and visitors to connect with mana whenua stories. At its heart is a 25-metre tall sculptural Taurapa (canoe sternpost), designed to be a visually compelling landmark. Flanked by two pou representing tūpuna (ancestors), the installation forms the centrepiece of a broader cultural experience.</p> <p>The concept includes a sculpture trail, interpretation centre, walking track, car parking, digital location-based storytelling, and integration of Mātai whetū (star observation). A larger-than-life puka (anchor stone) sculpture would mark the beginning of the sculpture trail, with its rope winding to the summit where the broken waka of Aoraki would be represented—connecting people to kōrero such as Te Waka o Aoraki and Te Ara a Kiwa.</p> <p>The project was shared with stakeholders and the wider community in 2024, receiving strong support from Invercargill City Council and positive engagement with relevant Ministers. The next steps include completing a business feasibility, planning assessment, and fundraising strategy to progress the project and finalise the design.</p>	<p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua Invercargill City Council Department of Conservation Great South Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust (BHMET)</p>	<i>Bluff Hill Motupōhue Lookout Hub</i>
Mātai Whetū (star observation) at Bluff Hill Motupōhue Lookout	<p>As part of the wider Te Taurapa o Te Waka cultural and visitor experience concept for Motupōhue Bluff Hill, a dedicated Mātai Whetū (star observation) element is being explored. This initiative aims to celebrate celestial navigation and Māori astronomy, offering both educational and cultural value to the local community and visitors.</p> <p>The project aligns with the regional Matariki Pou initiative recently led by Southland District Council and Te Ao Mārama, which has seen eight pou installed across Murihiku. Plans are now underway for the ninth pou—Pōhutukawa—to be located at Motupōhue Bluff Hill, further enhancing the cultural significance of the site. Funding will now need to be secured to enable its inclusion in the regional network.</p>	<p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua Department of Conservation Great South</p>	<i>Bluff Hill Motupōhue Lookout Hub</i>

IN PROGRESS

PROJECT	PROGRESS TO DATE	STAKEHOLDERS	HUB/PRECINCT
Potential for Enhanced Community Swimming Access	<p>As part of ongoing efforts to improve community infrastructure in Motupōhue Bluff, the Bluff Pool Trust has completed a significant upgrade to the town's pool facility. Supported by grants of \$150,000 from Community Trust South, \$75,000 from the ILT Foundation, and \$200,000 from the Lotteries Community Facilities Fund—alongside the Trust's own reserves—the project has delivered a major heating and ventilation upgrade to improve comfort and energy efficiency.</p> <p>Additional improvements include interior painting to refresh the space for the new season, and a mechanical upgrade featuring strengthened entry doors with keycard access for users. New ground pipework and a liner for the pool tank is planned to be complete in 2026. These enhancements support the long-term sustainability of the facility and improve accessibility for the Motupōhue Bluff community.</p> <p>Further investigation around safe outdoor swimming access is being undertaken by ICC, alongside partners Environment Southland and South Port. Regulatory, logistical and infrastructure development requirements will be key considerations as this progresses.</p>	<p>Bluff Community Board</p> <p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Bluff Pool Trust</p> <p>South Port</p>	<i>Community Recreation Precinct</i>
Motupōhue Bluff Gateway Entrance Signage and Landscaping	<p>Significant volunteer planting work and installation of the large BLUFF sign, based on Motupōhue Bluff's nautical heritage, instigated the makeover of the town's highway entrance.</p> <p>Parking, access, and surface upgrades are still needed, along with improved visibility and entry to the nearby walking track. Council responsibilities include surfacing, landscaping, and lighting. NZTA approval for lighting has been secured, with installation planned for this financial year.</p> <p>Port Maintenance have completed a large-scale mural depicting a visual story trail of key features in Motupōhue Bluff and added picnic tables to the area. They have made other significant visual improvements including regenerative plantings in collaboration with BHMET and landscape works, with more beautification aspirations in mind.</p> <p>There is desire from multiple stakeholders to see a speed reduction of the state highway in this area. Advocacy for this will be sought from Council and Bluff Community Board.</p>	<p>Bluff Community Board</p> <p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency</p> <p>Ocean Beach NZ</p> <p>Department of Conservation</p> <p>Port Maintenance</p> <p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua</p> <p>Bluff 2024 Rejuvenation Group</p>	<i>Bluff Gateway Entrance Hub</i>
Upgraded and Expanded Coastal Walking Tracks	<p>As part of wider efforts to improve access and visitor experience at Motupōhue Bluff Hill, the Department of Conservation (DOC) has recently upgraded and installed new signage across the existing walking tracks. These improvements support better orientation and storytelling for both locals and visitors exploring the area.</p> <p>DOC is also progressing a broader programme of work focused on upgrading the coastal walking tracks, including the Foveaux Walkway which circumnavigates Motupōhue Bluff Hill. This work aims to improve track quality and create stronger linkages between the coastal routes and the tracks that traverse the hill, enhancing connectivity and accessibility across the entire site. This coastal route is also part of Te Araroa Trail.</p>	<p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Department of Conservation</p> <p>Ocean Beach NZ</p>	<p><i>Stirling Point Precinct</i></p> <p><i>Ocean Beach Aquaculture Precinct</i></p>

INITIAL INVESTIGATION UNDERWAY

PROJECT	PROGRESS TO DATE	STAKEHOLDERS	HUB/PRECINCT
Waka Landing Interpretation	Te Rūnaka o Awarua have secured the lease for the slipway where this interpretation would be located and are developing a plan to restore the building and site.	Te Rūnaka o Awarua	<i>Ocean Beach Aquaculture Precinct</i>
Expanded Visitor Parking at Motupōhue Bluff Hill Lookout	During 2023 visitor parking at Motupōhue Bluff Hill Lookout was refreshed, with additional bollards readjusted around the perimeter. Further carparking alternatives and expansion have been scoped as part of Te Taurapa o Te Waka and are a core part of this project.	Department of Conservation Invercargill City Council Te Rūnaka o Awarua Great South Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust (BHMET)	<i>Motupōhue Bluff Hill Lookout Hub</i>
Public Event Space	<p>A new multi-purpose Community Hub is being explored as part of Motupōhue Bluff's broader development plans. Initial seed funding has been secured to undertake a feasibility study, which will help determine the potential scope and function of the facility.</p> <p>The investigation into possible uses for the Hub, including community and event spaces, is closely linked to the progress of other key projects—particularly development of the Bluff Southern Marine Discovery Centre and the potential relocation of the Maritime Museum. These projects will help shape future needs and inform how the Hub could best serve Motupōhue Bluff's residents and wider community.</p>	Bluff Maritime Museum Trust Invercargill City Council	<i>Community Recreation Precinct</i>

FUTURE FOCUS

PROJECT	PROGRESS TO DATE	STAKEHOLDERS	HUB/PRECINCT
Enhancement of Commercial Precinct and Possible Consolidation of Zoning	<p>Central government is progressing a major reform of New Zealand's resource management system, which will change how planning decisions are made across the country. The reform aims to simplify and streamline the planning framework, replacing the Resource Management Act with new legislation focused on environmental outcomes, regional planning, and community wellbeing.</p> <p>As the process for updating district plans becomes clearer under the new system, future zoning for Motupōhue Bluff is expected to be on the agenda. This will be an important opportunity to align local land use and development priorities with emerging projects and long-term aspirations for the area.</p>	Invercargill City Council Bluff Community Board Te Rūnaka o Awarua Private landowners	<i>Commercial Precinct</i>
Expanded Visitor Parking at the end of Gunpit Road	<p>The investigation of expanded car parking at Gunpit Road will be contingent on further development of other key projects linked to Stirling Point and Bluff Central Tourism Precinct.</p> <p>With momentum and progress on both the Active Recreation Precinct and Pouwhenua at Motupōhue Bluff Hill Lookout, it will be important to consider the links with these projects as they progress.</p>	Invercargill City Council Department of Conservation Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust (BHMET)	<i>Stirling Point Precinct</i>

FUTURE FOCUS

PROJECT	PROGRESS TO DATE	STAKEHOLDERS	HUB/PRECINCT
Park and Ride Facility for Stirling Point	<p>The investigation of a park and ride facility is contingent on further investigation and development of other key projects linked to both Stirling Point and the Bluff Central Tourism Precinct.</p> <p>A potential private sector product is currently being investigated, and a Stirling Point specific workshop with ICC has been held to discuss concerns relating to the appearance and function of this key site. As a next step, community and stakeholder consultation is planned.</p>	<p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency</p>	<i>Stirling Point Precinct</i>
Development of the Bluff Southern Marine Discovery Centre	<p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua have undertaken a feasibility study for the proposed Bluff Oyster World with pleasing results indicating the strength of the opportunity. Further progression is dependent on the priorities of Te Rūnaka o Awarua and resource required being available.</p>	<p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua</p>	<i>Bluff Central Tourism Precinct</i>
Bus Drop-off and Pedestrian Improvements at Stirling Point	<p>The potential for bus drop off and pedestrian improvements is contingent on further investigation and development of other key projects linked to both Stirling Point and the Bluff Central Tourism Precinct.</p> <p>A Stirling Point specific workshop with ICC has been held to discuss concerns relating to the appearance and function of this area. As a next step, community and stakeholder consultation is planned.</p>	<p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency</p>	<i>Stirling Point Precinct</i>
Heritage Sculpture Trail and Public Art in Harbour-Edge Precinct	<p>Further investigation is required into possible opportunities with this precinct, which includes defining the final location of any public art in the first instance.</p>	<p>Bluff Community Board</p> <p>Invercargill City Council</p> <p>Community Groups</p> <p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua</p>	<i>Heritage Landscape Precinct</i>
Motu Piu Dog Island Eco-tourism	<p>Motu Piu Dog Island has been identified as a potential island sanctuary that could be an educational resource for kaitiakitanga and species protection, while illustrating its Māori, European, and maritime history.</p>	<p>Department of Conservation</p> <p>Te Rūnaka o Awarua</p> <p>Great South</p>	<i>Wider area concepts</i>

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