

A SUBMISSION TO GREATER WELLINGTON  
REGIONAL STRATEGY COMMITTEE ON  
BEHALF OF TE ARAROA WELLINGTON



**The proposal is that the work of the Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust be formally endorsed by the Regional Strategy Committee.**

***Background***

The Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust has been established to secure a right of access for walkers from Levin to Wellington, as a sector of the 'Long Pathway' from Cape Reinga to Bluff. The entire project is being put in place under the direction of the Te Araroa National Trust, based in Auckland. A pathway the length of New Zealand is the 'dream' of Geoff Chapple, writer and environmentalist of Auckland, who is actively driving things along with the aim of completion by year's end 2010.

The concept for Te Araroa rests on three principles:

- the path should link in with communities, rather than being confined to high and remote territory, and
- the path should serve local and community interests in providing access to the outdoors and promoting fitness, and
- the route should traverse a variety of New Zealand landscape

At the same time commercial opportunities are anticipated in accommodation and supply.

In summary, it is intended that this be a national project, firmly based in local and regional communities, and supported by them on a continuing basis into the future. The path is not intended for 'through walkers' only; it is assumed that local people will take to the path for their own expeditions of a day or more.

The Te Araroa programme is not a government project, but it has been endorsed by government and because much of the route crosses Crown land it involves close collaboration with the Department of Conservation (DOC). DOC has received additional funding to support the necessary work. The prime movers are, however, the groups of enthusiastic walkers in the Regional Trusts. They undertake the necessary consultations with local authorities, interest groups and DOC, negotiate with stakeholders, define and mark the route and seek funding etc. This is all on a strictly 'pro bono' basis.

*Te Araroa – a hiking trail from Cape Reinga to Bluff by year's end 2010*  
[www.teararoa.org.nz](http://www.teararoa.org.nz)

## ***The Greater Wellington area***

The Wellington Trust has received strong support from Wellington City Council, Porirua City Council and Kapiti Coast District Council. The chosen route, which best meets the Te Araroa principles and local interests, is:

- From Levin: a three day 'bush walk' through the Tararuas – avoiding the main range – to Otaki Forks;
- From Otaki Forks: a two day walk to Waikanae via the upper Waikanae River Valley;
- From Waikanae: a day walk down the Waikanae River and along the coast via Queen Elizabeth Park to Paekakariki;
- From Paekakariki: a climb up and along the escarpment above the Coastal Highway to Pukerua Bay and from there to Plimmerton and Porirua, making use of existing PCC tracks;
- From Porirua: a one or two day walk – up and over Colonial Knob and down into the Ohariu Valley; up the Old Coach Road and along the WCC Northern Walkway to Ngaio; down into Trelissick Park and the WCC walk along the upper Kaiwharawhara Stream; up to Wadestown and down across Tinakori Hill to the Botanical Gardens, finishing at the top of the Cable Car.

In 2007 Mayor Prendergast unveiled a stone at the viewing area at the top of the Cable Car - to mark the beginning and end of the North Island sector and to help establish the concept of Te Araroa in the Wellington region.

(Through walkers wishing to dip their boots in the waters of Cook Strait and so truly complete the North Island sector from Cape Reinga, could take the WCC's City to Sea path from there to Island Bay!)

### ***A caveat***

A map is attached to give an idea of the proposed line. It should be understood that on several sections (Levin to Otaki Forks; Otaki Forks to Waikanae; and the 'escarpment' route to Pukerua Bay) there is not yet an established Te Araroa path, although we believe that there are feasible routes which require both track work and negotiations before access is secured. Consultations are proceeding with DOC on the route through Tararua National Park and planning is underway to raise the large sum of money needed to ensure that the 'Escarpment' walking path can be built.

### ***The Escarpment***

This sector, from Paekakariki to Pukerua Bay, will provide the key link in the Wellington area. We are very grateful for the support of the Porirua City Council in funding a scoping report, which has now been submitted. This study makes it clear that the proposed route, climbing high above the sea, is not only feasible but will offer

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a hugely rewarding day walk. Pedestrians will not have to cross busy SH1 as it will be possible, subject to the necessary consents, to construct a path under the highway bridge just south of Paekakariki. Because the proposed route will link the railway stations at Pukerua Bay and Paekakariki, the walk will be available to the community at large and encourage the use of public transport.

Construction of this track to a proper walking standard will also greatly facilitate the work of Nga Uruora, a Kapiti-based conservation group, as they engage in the huge task of replanting and weed control on the escarpment. This aspect of the planned route adds significant value to the overall concept as it will make it easier to carry plants and other necessary materials up the very steep slopes to advance the enhancement of the face above the coastal highway.

The path will be steep, airy and exposed, but it is intended that it be built to the required national standard for reasonably fit day walkers equipped for the Wellington climate. Te Araroa is intended as a walking path and there is no plan to encourage mountain biking on the escarpment; notices will be placed at both ends of the path to make that clear and to carry the necessary messages about respect for the rights of land-owners and Ontrack, the principal stakeholder. The proposed line maintains a steady climb and should not be too arduous, with the length of the path from the beginning of the climb no more than 7.7 kms. There will obviously be splendid views over the sea to the South Island and Kapiti Island. For the Te Araroa project as a whole, this path will provide a spectacular entry to the Wellington and Porirua areas. Te Araroa National Trust is especially enthusiastic and supportive of the project.

### ***The Proposal***

The Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust requests a firm declaration from the Regional Strategy Committee to the effect that the work of the Trust in the Wellington area fully conforms with GW aims and objectives, on the basis that establishment of the pathway will engage local communities, promote outdoor activities and create an asset (the pathway) which will be a 'plus' for the people of the region. It would be helpful if specific mention could be made of the importance to GW of completion of an escarpment pathway - in linking the wider Wellington community and in providing an exciting and new outdoors challenge .

It is also our intention to seek support from local iwi in view of their historic and other interests throughout the region. With this sort of backing the Trust will be in a strong position to seek funding from organisations such as the Lotteries Commission, Community Trusts and corporations, especially in respect of the escarpment project.

Denis McLean CMG  
Chair, Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust  
11 Dekka Street, Khandallah, Wellington 6035

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## **Trustees of Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust**

Chair: **Denis McLean** – writer, former senior public servant;

**Hugh Barr** – conservationist; active in promoting access rights for walkers;

**John Farrell** – lawyer (retired); former senior official in the field of banking and securities;

**Ken Fraser** – actively engaged with the Nga UraOra project for replanting and weed control on coastal cliffs in the Paekakariki – Plimmerton area;

**Clelia Lind** – massage therapist

**Suzanne Pollard** – communications specialist;

**Penny Redward** – member of Kapiti Coast Advisory committee for walkways;

**Andrew Simm** – specialist in land management and negotiations;

**Bill Wakelin** – consulting engineer;

**Tricia Wallbridge** – University administrator

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