



**MANU BAY  
(WAIKERI)  
RECREATION  
RESERVE**

**MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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**September 1996**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Manu Bay (Waikeri) Recreation Reserve is a very popular area which provides:

- access to exceptionally high quality left hand break surf
- the only boat launching facilities to the open sea on the west coast of the Waikato, avoiding the need to cross the Whaingaroa (Raglan) Harbour entrance bar
- a vantage point to view outstanding coastal scenery
- a family picnic and recreation area
- access to a major mahinga kai area
- an important landing area for marine safety and rescue services

This plan outlines the development and management framework for the reserve. It has been developed in consultation with representatives of reserve user groups, and suggestions from various members of the public. The plan recognises the terms upon which the land was purchased from tangata whenua.

The reserve will also be managed in accordance with other policy documents including the Resource Management Act 1991, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, the Regional Policy Statement, the Regional Coastal Plan, the District Plan, and the District Dog Control Policy.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION

The traditional name for the locality is “*Waikeri*”, which means “*surging or swirling waters*.” The area has long been of significance to tangata whenua. It is a traditional source of kaimoana, and continues to be a major food gathering area. Waikeri is part of one of four Native Reserves established in the vicinity in the 1850s.

The reserve is located south of Raglan and forms part of the rugged west coast (Figure 1). It is legally described as part Whaanga 1B2B2, Whaanga 1B2C1, and part Whaanga 1B2C2B Block IV Karioi Survey District. It has an area of 6.77 hectares. It was purchased from local Maori by Raglan County Council in 1971 for public recreational use. The understanding reached at the time of purchase was that the Council shall manage the land as a recreational area, with free public access and continued access to shellfish resources for tangata whenua.

The reserve faces north with topography varying from relatively steep slopes descending from Whaanga Road to flat low-lying land. Some of the area was originally a wetland; partial drainage has occurred and some low-lying areas remain swampy. The foreshore is composed of a boulder beach. Shoreline erosion is occurring at the eastern end of the reserve. A large stand of Kanuka exists at the eastern end of the reserve and seedlings of other native species have recently been planted amongst gorse adjacent to the Kanuka on the steep slope. The site is exposed to westerly weather, and this adds to the outdoor experience available at the reserve.

### **3.0 USES**

The reserve provides excellent views of the coast, plus access to coastal waters for shellfish gathering, surfing and fishing, and has been long recognised as an area of outstanding value. Shellfish gathering from this part of the coastline has been a traditional activity of tangata whenua, and it remains an important part of local culture. Sightseeing and picnicking are also popular activities on the reserve.

However it is as a base for surfing and fishing that Manu Bay (Waikeri) Recreation Reserve receives its greatest use. It was first used as a fishing and surfing base in the 1950s and was purchased by the Council because of the demand for public land to cater for these water-based activities. Usage has continued to increase over the years. It is not just a summer or week-end venue; it is used throughout the week and throughout the year.

Casual observation suggests that during favourable conditions several hundred people use the reserve in the course of a day, and numbers can exceed well over one thousand people during ideal conditions on a public holiday. Several thousand people per day visit the reserve during major surfing events. About ten fishing and surfing events are based at the reserve each year, and there is an increasing demand for more events to be held. The reserve is regularly used by people from throughout the Greater Waikato, and it has become an established venue for international surfing events making it a facility of regional, national and international significance.

The topography of the reserve is such that in broad terms sightseers, surfers, and boat users tend to divide into different areas. Boat users use the boat ramp and the extensive parking area adjacent to it, surfers park in the central area, and picnickers and sightseers use the central and elevated western parts of the reserve. There is, of course, considerable intermingling by the various user groups. Reserve development will aim to enhance the natural advantages each area has for the different uses. Use of the flat land near the toilet block has been limited due to its swampy nature.

The pattern of use is also dictated somewhat by the location of the access road. A narrow strip of land (approximately 5-10 m wide) between the road and the foreshore is the most intensively used area.

### **4.0 DEVELOPMENTS**

Developments to date have been low-key; nevertheless changes to the natural character of the area have occurred. An access road has been built to the boat ramp and breakwater. The ramp and breakwater have been built and maintained through the efforts of the Manu Bay Fishing and Boating Club. A toilet block and septic tank system has been built, along with an outside shower for surf riders. Attempts have been made to establish native plants on the steeper slopes, but growth has been impeded by gorse. A limited amount of amenity planting has also occurred but growth has been slow due to the difficult climate conditions. Drains have been dug to lower water tables through the low-lying parts of the reserve.

Most of the area is in grass, and has been grazed for management purposes. Concerns have been expressed about stock grazing not being compatible with recreation, with references being made to possible health issues and people feeling uncomfortable about being near cattle.

Substantial improvements to both conservation and recreation values could be made through careful development of the site.

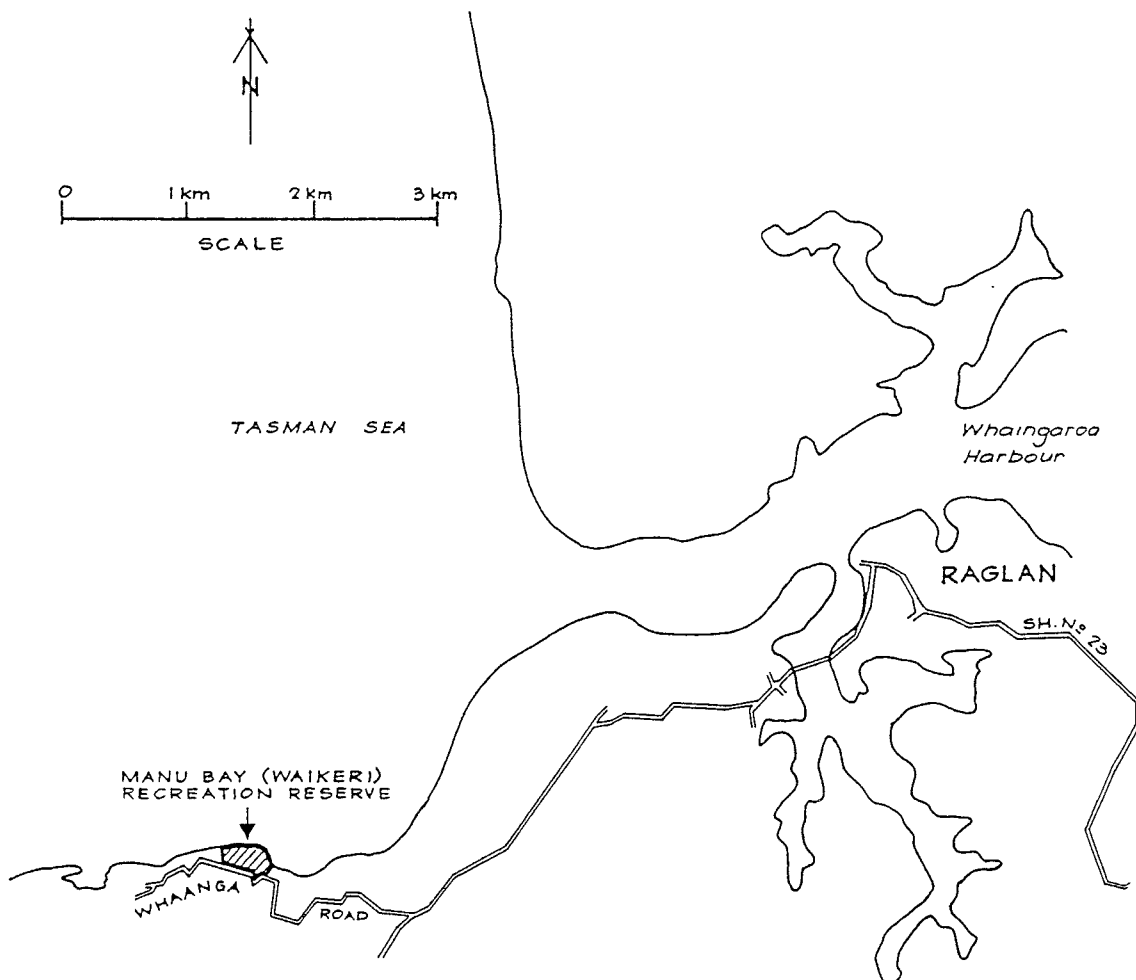


Fig.1 : LOCATION OF MANU BAY (WAIKERI)  
RECREATION RESERVE

## **5.0 ISSUES**

The following issues need to be addressed in the management plan:

- maximising recreational values while safeguarding environmental values
- providing landing facilities for marine safety and rescue services
- providing adequate facilities to meet reserve user demands, particularly ensuring sewage is disposed of in a manner which ensures that no health risks are created
- enhancing the foreshore as a “people park” rather than a “car park” for safety and amenity reasons
- resolving the conflict between having stock on the reserve for management purposes and the impact this has on recreational and conservation values, and health standards
- establishing a balance between catering for informal uses, and catering for competitions which can conflict with informal use
- addressing environmental issues such as maintaining the natural character of the coastline, coastal erosion and water quality
- ensuring tangata whenua continue to have access to traditional kaimoana resources
- the equitable financing of developments and maintenance

## **6.0 OBJECTIVES**

1. To maintain and enhance the natural character of the reserve.
2. To maintain and enhance amenity values and environmental standards to provide for a range of active and passive uses.
3. To adequately provide for marine safety.
4. To maintain public access to the reserve.
5. To foster a partnership between Council and the local community, including tangata whenua, in regard to reserve management and development.
6. To ensure an appropriate balance between various reserve uses.
7. To ensure that reserve development is funded in an equitable way.

## 7.0 POLICIES

### 7.1 *Natural Character*

- P1: To landscape the steeper slopes of the reserve using native species which would occur naturally in the area and which are derived from local sources.
- P2: To landscape the reserve in a manner which is in keeping with the natural features of the reserve, including the use of natural colours and materials wherever possible.
- P3: To have a toilet block as the only building on the reserve.
- P4: To ensure that full account is taken of recreational, natural and cultural values when any foreshore works and structures, including erosion control measures and boating facility improvements are designed and constructed.
- P5: To direct stormwater flows to enhance wetland values wherever this is practical and economic.

#### *Implementation*

The concept plan is shown in Figure 2. The plan seeks to maintain and enhance amenity values while retaining the open, rugged natural character of the area. Native species will be progressively planted and gorse will be controlled to allow the native plants to become established and eventually dominate the gorse. All tree pruning will be done in accordance with sound arboricultural practice. Boulders may be used in preference to bollards to define landscape features and to control vehicle movements.

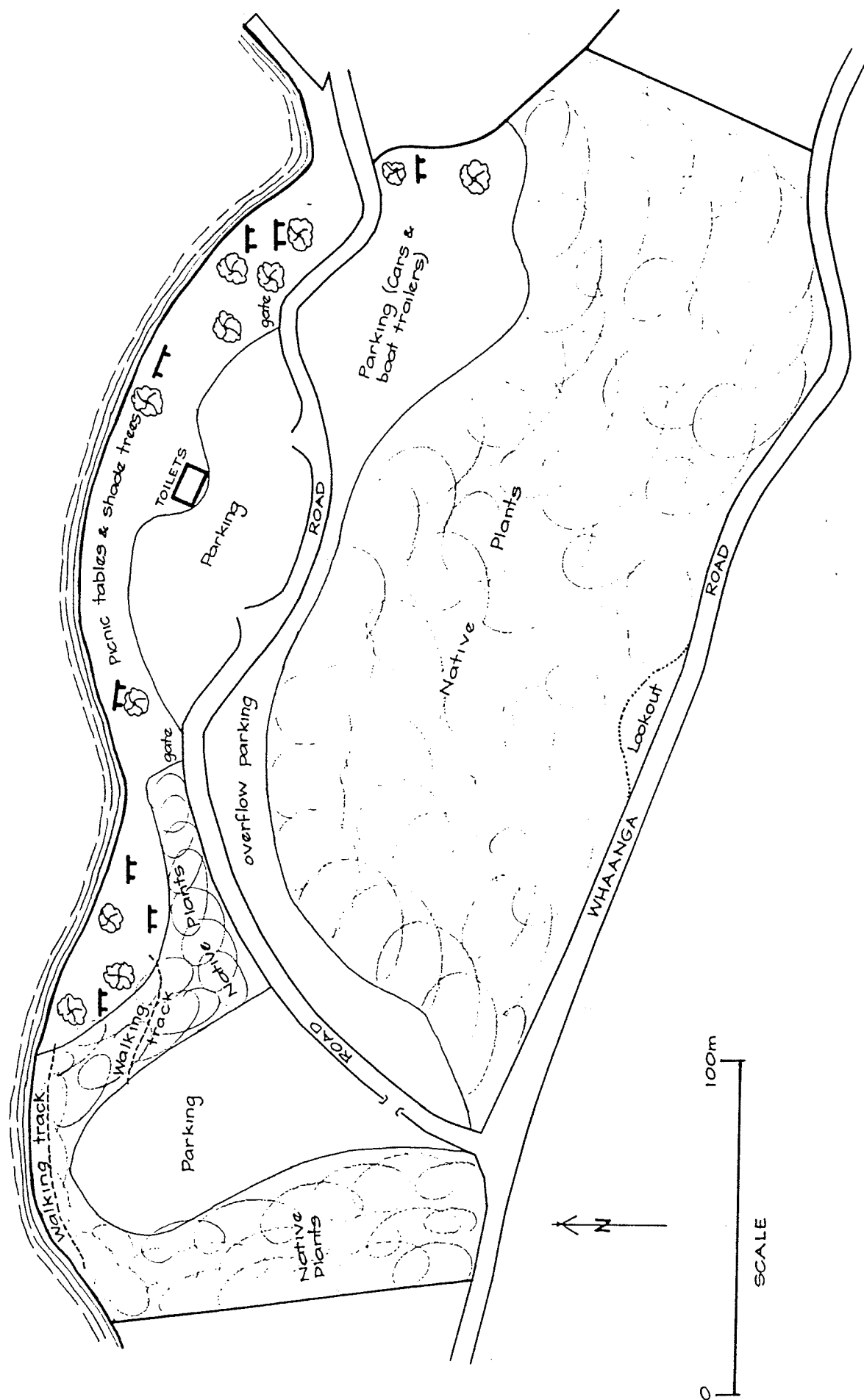
The toilet block is to remain in its current location. Consideration was given to relocating it away from the foreshore but this will not occur because of the high relocation costs and because it would be less conveniently located for reserve users.

A clubhouse on the reserve is inappropriate because it would detract from the natural character of the area and the outdoor experience of other reserve users. It would also be subject to vandalism. Having a ranger living on site would overcome vandalism problems, but this would further detract from the area's natural values.

Erosion near the boat ramp is detrimentally affecting the reserve in terms of land loss and diminished landscape values. Increased sediment movement in the area may also be adversely affecting marine life, including kaimoana resources. Studies are needed to determine ways of controlling erosion while ensuring that recreational, natural and cultural values are protected. (Also refer to P14.)

Stormwater flows from the road will be diverted into the wetland area wherever this is practical and economic.

# MANU BAY



MANU BAY (WAIKERI)  
Fig. 2 : RECREATION RESERVE CONCEPT PLAN

## 7.2 *Amenity Values and Environmental Standards*

- P6: To retain the open space nature of the reserve by having flat areas predominantly in grass, and mowing these areas.
- P7: To provide toilet and shower facilities while ensuring that waste water disposal methods do not create any environmental health problems and do not detract from the amenity values of the reserve.
- P8: To develop the foreshore as a pedestrian area by realigning the access road to near the base of the north-facing slope and defining parking areas near to the toilet block.
- P9: To improve amenity values by such measures as seating, picnic tables, walkways, shade trees, and a fish weighing station while ensuring that ocean views from the reserve are not unduly restricted.
- P10: To maintain the car parking capacity of the reserve.
- P11: To prohibit fires and camping.
- P12: To prohibit food vending on the reserve, except as occasional fund raising exercises by local non-profit making organisations or when associated with events organised for the reserve as authorised by Council.
- P13: To maintain and improve the navigational safety of the boat launching facilities, by such measures as installing navigational lights, and structural alterations as appropriate.
- P14: To promote an investigation and full public consultation into structural options to improve boat launching facilities, including breakwater alterations, widening the boat ramp, and creating a surge free basin.
- P15: To install an emergency telephone.

### *Implementation*

Flat areas will generally be retained in grass. Grazing of these areas will cease and maintenance mowing will occur. This will preserve the open space experience offered by the reserve, and will ensure that parking capacity is retained. The boat trailer parking area will be retained as a square grassed area; some tree planting may occur around its perimeter but not within the parking area.

The toilet and shower block will be retained in its current location. Shower water may be used for wetland enhancement. On-site sewage disposal will continue because of the high cost of transporting the waste off-site. If the Raglan sewerage scheme is extended to Whale Bay then the public toilets will be linked to the system. Any such extension will only proceed after full public consultation and with community agreement.

An emergency telephone shall be installed when power is supplied to the site, subject to funding.

The road will be widened and realigned away from the foreshore when finance becomes available. Parking will also be set back about 10 metres from the foreshore. The foreshore area will then be developed as a pedestrian and recreation area with dispersed shade trees (possibly using exotic species). Other amenities such as seating, picnic tables, and walkways may also be installed. Ocean views from the sloping portion of the access road and from parking areas will not be significantly hindered by these developments.

Boat launching improvements are desirable because launching is often difficult due to waters surging around the boat ramp. Improved launching facilities would result in considerable regional benefit because people would not have to launch within the harbour and then cross the harbour entrance bar. Boat launching improvements would also be of considerable benefit during sea rescue operations. It may be possible to improve boat launching facilities through structural changes such as breakwater alterations, widening the boat ramp, and creating a surge free basin. Before any such works are undertaken, it is essential that detailed investigations are made and full public consultation is undertaken to determine the best design and to determine the likely effects of the developments. It is vital to ensure that any structural changes will result in significant improvements for boat launching, and will not result in significant adverse effects on kaimoana resources, surf conditions and the natural character of the area. Council will join with reserve user groups to promote an investigation into these issues and will seek to involve the community in the decision-making process. Boating safety will be enhanced through installing navigational lights.

Council will work in conjunction with local groups to landscape the reserve. A possible approach is for Council to meet capital costs, and enlist the help of the local community to plant and maintain areas.

### 7.3 Administration

- P16: To promote local community involvement in developing and maintaining planted areas, in accordance with this management plan.
- P17: To allow competitions to be staged from the reserve, including a limited number of major events per year, while recognising the importance of the venue for informal uses by the regional community.
- P18: To consult with reserve user groups including surf riders, tangata whenua, local residents and fishing interests prior to scheduling events on the reserve.
- P19: To generally require event organisers:
- to provide portable toilet facilities when crowd numbers are expected to exceed the capacity of the permanent toilet facilities and to have the toilets cleaned regularly during events
  - in the case of major events to provide traffic marshals to ensure parking space on the reserve is used efficiently, and possibly prepare a traffic management plan in conjunction with the Police when significant off-site parking will be needed
  - to allow other reserve users continued access to the reserve during events
  - to be responsible for litter control and for tidying the reserve during and at the completion of events
  - to advise Council at least three months in advance of a proposed major event; at least one month notice is needed for local events
  - to provide a contingency plan for an alternative (back-up) venue if the organiser wishes to have an alternative site available; the plan should address such matters as toilet provision, litter control and traffic management.
- P20: To ensure full account is taken of tangata whenua kaimoana access requirements when scheduling events on the reserve.
- P21: To seek to have the reserve formally gazetted as a recreation reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.
- P22: To further consider the need for honorary rangers to be appointed or a reserve committee to be established, and to appoint such rangers and establish such a committee if this is desirable.
- P23: To prohibit aircraft from using the reserve unless there is an identified public good resulting from the aircraft activity.

#### *Implementation*

Council will seek to enlist local people to assist with the day-to-day management of the reserve. Initially, Council will seek to set up a reserve advisory committee made up of representatives of Council, tangata whenua, Point Boardriders Club, Manu Bay Fishing and Boating Club, local residents, and the Raglan Community Board.

Council will consult with this advisory committee on reserve administration and development matters. This approach will be reviewed, and Council will consider formally constituting a reserve management committee if this is appropriate. Council would ensure that all user groups were adequately represented on the reserve committee. Honourary rangers may also be appointed to assist with management and enforcement issues.

Council will seek a balance between meeting informal reserve user needs and catering for requests to hold local, national and international events when it considers applications for events to be staged from the reserve. The need for tangata whenua to have access to kaimoana resources will be fully considered during this process.

Event organisers will be required to meet certain conditions when events are held. These conditions will be specified when consent for the event is granted, and will vary according to the circumstances at the time. P19 lists typical conditions.

In accordance with the Reserves Act 1977 Council will publicly notify its intention to gazette the land as a recreation reserve and will call for objections. This will be followed by a resolution to declare the land a reserve, and forwarding the resolution (along with any objections) to the Minister of Conservation. Gazettal will ensure the land remains as a public reserve, and will increase Council's management powers.

Aircraft activity on the reserve should be kept to a minimum because of the danger that aircraft pose to the public. Aircraft will only be allowed to use the reserve when there is an identified public good resulting from the activity (*eg* search and rescue, and air ambulance services.)



**Fig 3: Manu Bay (Waikeri) is a popular surfing venue** (*photograph courtesy of Barrie Rogerson*)

## 7.4 *Funding*

P24: To recognise the local, regional and national significance of the reserve, and to seek development and maintenance funds accordingly.

### *Implementation*

Council acknowledges previous contributions from Manu Bay Fishing and Boating Club and accepts its offer of an ongoing contribution. This particularly relates to boat launching facilities.

Council will seek funds from regional and national sources for investigations into erosion control measures and boat launching facility improvements, and for undertaking development works such as realigning the road, foreshore works (if these are necessary and desirable) and landscaping.

Council will fund landscaping work from its reserves contributions account.

Council will meet additional maintenance costs from the general rate.

Major capital expenditure on the reserve by Council shall be subject to the Annual Plan process, through which priorities and budget levels are set. The Annual Plan process involves public consultation each year.



**Fig 4: Reserve use is very high during fishing and surfing events**