

FACT SHEET

Project Tāwhaki

A unique partnership for Kaitōrete

Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri a muri ake nei – for us and our children after us

Photo: Gareth Ruck

The origins of Tāwhaki

The name Project Tāwhaki draws on the Ngāi Tahu ancestral connection to Tāwhaki, a demi-god from Ngāi Tahu pūrākau (stories) who sought celestial knowledge from his gods. Tāwhaki was able to navigate his journey by seeking and building strong relationships, by being adaptive and innovative and using his sheer tenacity to keep going until he reached his goal. One particular aspect of these pūrākau relates to the creation story of Tuna (eels) and connect to one of the rare plants found on Kaitōrete. The themes of this pūrākau resonated strongly with the Project, which is built on a foundation of partnership and innovation.

Project Tāwhaki

Rejuvenating the environment, honouring deep cultural and historical links and building sustainable economic opportunities are the goals of Project Tāwhaki, a unique commercial partnership between Te Taumutu Rūnanga and Wairewa Rūnanga and the Crown.

Project Tāwhaki will see the purchase of a 1,000ha property on the Kaitōrete Spit to:

- › Protect and rejuvenate the Kaitōrete environment, an area of significant cultural importance to the Rūnanga and home to numerous threatened and locally endemic plant, invertebrate, birds, and reptile species, with internationally-recognised ecological value.
- › Develop aerospace activities and R&D facilities that have the potential to generate significant and sustainable economic opportunities through job creation, capital investment and adjacent sectors serving the aerospace economy.

The importance of Kaitōrete to mana whenua

Kaitōrete is a significant Ngāi Tahu cultural landscape renowned for its mahinga kai, taonga species and history. Te Taumutu Rūnanga and Wairewa Rūnanga are mana whenua and rangatira of Kaitōrete. Historically, the area was a major highway and trade route for ancestors, and the site of important battlegrounds. It has among the largest concentrations of middens, mahinga kai and pre-historic archaeological sites nationally.

The flora and fauna on Kaitōrete are of significant cultural importance for the Rūnanga, and are a living representation of the story and history of the area.

Kaitōrete Spit has internationally-recognised ecological value. It is home to rare and threatened flora and fauna species of international importance. It is a key part of the largest and most ecologically outstanding area remaining in lower Canterbury.

The area is also a critical gateway to Te Waihora, home to tuna, pātiki, piharau, inānga and other fish species that have been gathered here for over 60 generations.

Developing an aerospace sector

Aerospace is an exciting and growing industry in Aotearoa, contributing over \$1.7 billion to our economy each year.

The New Zealand Government is accelerating the growth of the aerospace sector through early space programme investments such as the establishment of a mission operations control centre for the MethaneSAT mission and space technology partnerships with NASA and the German Aerospace Center (DLR).

Leveraging New Zealand’s geographic and innovation advantages, the Government is also supporting R&D partnerships with global space firms such as LeoLabs and Maxar Technologies.

This work complements other activities to attract and develop the sector including through the Airspace Integration Trials Programme.

Aerospace is one of Christchurch’s ‘supernodes’, and Canterbury is the first region to develop an aerospace sector plan to grow and nurture the industry, with the goal of being New Zealand’s aerospace testbed by 2025. Project Tāwhaki will help to accelerate the sector’s development, with benefits to Christchurch, wider Canterbury and New Zealand as a whole.

This project will provide an exciting boost to the post-earthquake recovery of Canterbury by growing New Zealand’s emerging aerospace sector.

There are transformational economic opportunities in the use of space as a whole, not just in a launch industry – space research, materials development and testing, tourism, weather and atmospheric research.

Kaitōrete ticks all the boxes for key technical launch site criteria, along with other key advantages - for example, well-placed to provide access to desirable orbits, proximity to an internationally connected city, world class universities and a highly skilled local workforce as a result of the fast developing aerospace sector in Canterbury.

A phased approach will be taken to introduce aerospace activity, leveraging the work some innovators are already doing in the South Island to develop facilities and utilise the area.

We will see this activity grow as more operators see the immense benefit of the location, access to a highly-skilled local workforce and get inspired by the innovation already happening in the sector.

The types of aerospace activities are still being developed. The Rūnanga and the Crown, as partners, will work together to develop this. Environmental protection and harm mitigation will be a key part of the work.

Photo: Gareth Ruck

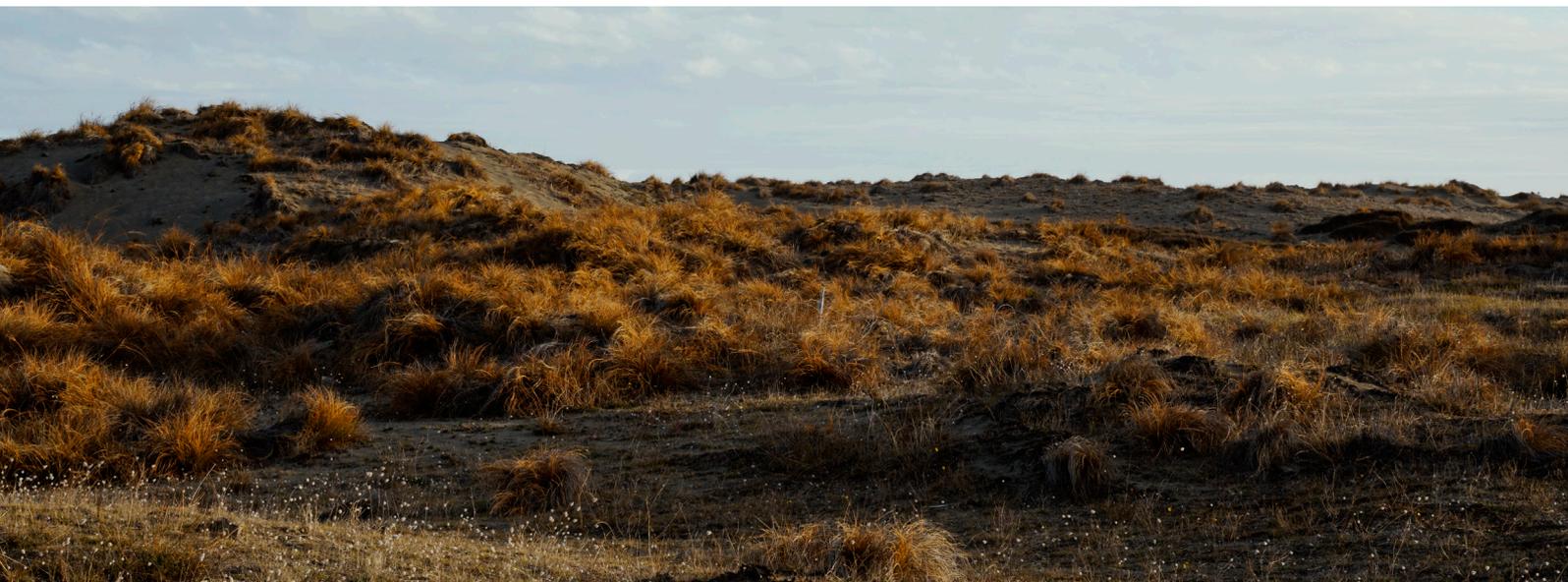




Photo 1: Gareth Ruck; Photos 2, 3, 4: Department of Conservation

Protecting the environment

Kaitōrete has rare and threatened flora and fauna species of international importance including the banded dotterel, South Island pied oystercatcher, and the New Zealand pipit. Many of the ecosystems and species existing on the sections of land are not represented or protected elsewhere.

While the land and the waters of Te Waihora are degraded, it retains the largest and most natural intact indigenous vegetation in the Canterbury Plains Ecological Region, including the last wild population of *Muehlenbeckia astonii* (Shrubby Tororaro), and numerous other threatened and locally endemic plants. It is also home to a number of at-risk or threatened lizard species, including the southern grass skink, the Waitaha/Canterbury gecko, and central Canterbury spotted skink, as well as threatened or notable invertebrates such as two Kaitōrete endemic moth species and the katipō spider.

Some of the land on Kaitōrete Spit has been identified by the Department of Conservation as a national priority for conservation purchase.

Environmental rehabilitation work on Kaitōrete Spit will get underway almost immediately, with the current landowner beginning a fencing programme, limiting farming on certain parts of the land, and starting to plant 5,000 native plants specifically from the area.

The income generated from use of the Spit is intended to provide the resources to help restoration work on Kaitōrete, Te Waihora and the surrounding wetlands.

Any development on Kaitōrete for the aerospace sector will ensure the environment and flora and fauna continue to be protected and enhanced.

The partnership between the Crown and the Rūnanga

The partners have entered a commercial joint venture and agreed the terms for governing, protecting, and using the land in the foreseeable future. The Crown is represented by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and the Department of Conservation. Kaitōrete Limited is the joint venture partner, representing Te Taumutu Rūnanga and Wairewa Rūnanga.

To purchase the land, ensure its protection and enable the development of aerospace R&D facilities, the Crown is investing \$16 million in the commercial partnership. The Rūnanga own land at either end of Kaitōrete Spit, and as mana whenua, and rangatira, are providing strategic direction and intellectual property. They also have a deep connection with the history of the site that needs to be preserved.

The Rūnanga have an enduring interest in protecting and preserving the land, and they have shared aspirations to create sustainable education pathways, employment opportunities through generating new business and high-skilled jobs, and attracting international investment.



Photo: Gareth Ruck

Summary of the joint venture agreement

The Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) is the formal contractual arrangement between the Crown and Kaitōrete Limited to purchase the land on Kaitōrete and establish the Tāwhaki Joint Venture.

The signatories to the JVA are the Minister of Research, Science and Investment, Kaitōrete Limited and Te Taumutu Charitable Trust. The Trust owns parcels of land at each end of Kaitōrete Spit and provides agreement for consenting on the future land use under the Joint Venture.

The JVA commits the parties to realising the purpose of the Project, which is purchasing critical parcels of land on Kaitōrete Spit to enable the:

- › preservation and advancement of the option to establish space launch and R&D facilities at Kaitōrete
- › protection and rejuvenation of the Kaitōrete environment

The Crown and Kaitōrete Limited each have 50 percent decision making and 50 percent profit sharing within this partnership. The JVA outlines the formal structure for the partnership, including providing details on the decision making processes, accounting and processes for reaching agreement.

Next steps – conservation and aerospace

The Joint Venture will work together with whānau members, local Christchurch organisations, universities and the aerospace sector on the development of aerospace activities and R&D facilities. This may include a space launch site in the future.

Any proposed activity involving the land, water or airspace will go through the usual regulatory approval processes that might include the Resource Management Act and other consenting mechanisms.

Along with implementing restricted farming activities, we are looking to utilise the property for domestic aerospace activity as soon as possible.

Conservation protection and rejuvenation will also commence immediately. We are working closely with our Rūnanga members, the Department of Conservation, Forest and Bird and others.

Environmental rehabilitation work will get underway almost immediately, beginning with fencing work, limiting farming on certain parts of the land, and starting to plant 5,000 native plants specifically from the area.

Over the next three years, the Crown and Rūnanga will develop the plans for further development and work with the aerospace sector in New Zealand and internationally on what the facilities should look like.