

RANGITIKEI DISTRICT COUNCIL

HERITAGE STRATEGY 2016



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Rangitikei District has a vast range of heritage resources which contribute to the well-being of the community. These resources range, from outstanding natural landscapes, places of natural beauty, to areas of cultural significance and physical resources. All of these heritage features tell stories of the past and provide an important link through the present and into the future.
- 1.2 It is recognised that our heritage assets provide benefit for the community, creating communities and a District with a distinct identity. They are also potential attractions for visitors and thus may contribute to growth of the District's economy. However, the District has a wide range of other factors which contribute to community well-being. Ensuring communities are vibrant places of economic and social activity is essential. Importance needs to be placed on consideration of the management of heritage resources within the wider context of overall well-being of local communities and the potential end use of the site.
- 1.3 Heritage is also preserved, promoted and supported through the documentation of narratives and stories. These can be the stories of the lives, or traditions of local communities and tangata whenua or the social or cultural context surrounding built and natural heritage. These oral histories and experiences contribute to an important part of Rangitikei's heritage resource which, if not documented, may be lost over time.

2 Rangitikei Tangata Whenua Perspective – Heritage Protection

- 2.1 Toi tu te kupu, toi tu te mana, toi tu te whenua – a plea to hold fast to our culture, for without language, without mana, and without land, the essence of being Maori would no longer exist but be a skeleton which would not give justice to the full body of Maoritanga.
- 2.2 This well-known saying reflects upon heritage being an important aspect to the overall drive for the sustainability of iwi Maori in general and also to hapu and iwi within the

Rangitikei District. This is demonstrated by the extensive involvement of local hapu and iwi in ensuring their respective korero is nurtured for future generations.

- 2.3 In all gatherings of our people whakatauki and pepeha are recited and speakers are supported by waiata which all have elements of korero that link the people to the land and the rivers. They also refer to events in our history which also provide insight into our respective relationships within this land. Physically protecting places of significance helps sustain the korero further whilst also giving it greater meaning and understanding to whanau, hapu, iwi and non – iwi within the District. The pending settlement of historic Treaty of Waitangi claims will clear a pathway for hapu and iwi to fulfil ambitions in heritage protection to take those responsibilities further to engage with their respective whanau and to an extent with all people.
- 2.4 Having a leading hand within this process is vital as the role of kaitiaki underpins the integrity of such pursuits to make it sustainable from a perspective of responsibility and also based upon a reciprocal relationship between people and place as well as with taonga and resources.

3 What is heritage?

- 3.1 Heritage is a term which is applied to buildings, sites, places, objects and other features of historical significance which are valued by people and communities. Heritage is inherited from the past and handed on for the benefit of future generations and includes:
- *Built heritage* – buildings and structures, such as those listed by the Heritage New Zealand.
 - *Natural heritage* – natural places, objects and intangible attributes, such as identified outstanding natural landscapes and notable trees.
 - *Cultural heritage* – objects and artefacts, places, language, stories, customs, protocols, knowledge and skills communities, groups and individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage, such as sites of Waahi tapu.
 - *Social heritage* – the history, traditions, knowledge and identities of local communities, such as the stories behind built heritage.

4 Statutory context

- 4.1 Rangitikei District Council has responsibilities for managing heritage within the District as follows:
- *Resource Management Act 1991* – as a matter of national importance¹ to ensure heritage is recognised, provided for and protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
 - *Reserves Act 1977* – reserves may be classified as historic reserves and vested in local authorities to control and manage.

¹ Section 6(f)

- *Building Act 2004* – the need to facilitate the preservation of buildings of significant cultural, historical or heritage value needs to be taken into account². The Building Act 2004³ also contains a number of provisions regarding the need to ensure public safety and the priority to remedy issues with dangerous and insanitary buildings⁴.
- *Public Records Act 2005* – the requirement to ensure adequate protection and preservation of ‘protected records’⁵.
- *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* - promotes the identification, protection, preservation and conservation of the historical and cultural heritage of New Zealand. Under this Act, the New Zealand Heritage List/ Rārangī Kōrero identifies historic buildings, sites or areas, or Waahi tupuna, Waahi tapu sites or areas. The Act also provides for the of protect archaeological sites.

4.2 There is no specific mention of heritage in the Local Government Act 2002. However, when ‘well-being’ of the community formed part of the purpose of local government, this was generally viewed as including a heritage dimension.⁶

5 Purpose

5.1 This strategy provides the long term vision to guide Council’s management of heritage resources throughout the Rangitikei District.

5.2 Heritage should be managed in accordance with the overarching goal and seven sub-goals:

Overarching Goal:

Recognise Rangitikei District’s heritage and support its promotion, documentation and long term use in a manner that benefits the community and future generations

Goal 1: Document cultural and local histories.

Goal 2: Promote cultural and local histories of the Rangitikei.

Goal 3: Support tangata whenua to discover and document their physical, natural and intangible heritage.

Goal 4: Recognise the local context, providing management options which consider the overall and long term well-being of the community.

Goal 5: Consider the past use, current use and condition of the heritage resource⁷ and the potential long term use of the heritage resource and/or site.

² Section 4(2)(l)

³ Subpart 6 of Part 2

⁴ The Buildings (Earthquake Prone Buildings) Amendment Bill will prescribe more vigorously how dangerous buildings should be treated, including heritage buildings.

⁵ Section 40

⁶ Original purpose statement in section 10.

⁷ Heritage resource can refer to a variety of heritage aspects such as; built heritage, cultural sites and natural landscapes.

Goal 6: Partner with the community in the preservation and management of heritage resources.

Goal 7: Seek opportunities for regional/national collaboration and funding to assist with the protection of the District's heritage.

6 Challenges

- 6.1 The management of heritage resources presents a wide range of challenges for both the Council and the community. The main challenges include:

Tension between the public benefit of heritage protection and the private cost of doing so

- 6.2 Often the cost or disadvantages associated with protecting heritage resources falls on the private property owner, hapu group, museum or historical society. However, the overall benefit of protecting the heritage resources may accrue to the wider community.

Cost of earthquake strengthening buildings

- 6.3 It is common for heritage buildings to be earthquake prone and require strengthening. Many are under-used and in need of general refurbishment. Often the cost of this work is prohibitive, with rents gained from tenants in the renovated building not able to cover that cost. Not doing this runs the risk of such buildings being abandoned and eventually being demolished and not replaced. In the meantime, they do not meet the needs of local businesses and the wider community.

The economic and demographic context

- 6.4 Rangitikei is a District which is experiencing a slow population decline, with economic activity within the town centres also declining. This has resulted in an oversupply of commercial buildings. These factors, combined with the costs of earthquake strengthening can result in vacant buildings. Main streets with empty buildings reduce the amenity of these areas and can adversely affect community well-being.

Capacity of Tangata Whenua

- 6.5 Tangata whenua often have limited capacity for identifying, managing and enhancing their cultural heritage. There are a large number of Waahi tapu sites which are known only to the tangata whenua, and often the public recognition of these sites is not desirable.

Capacity of Council

- 6.6 Council has limited resources to identify, manage and enhance heritage resources. However, because of its leadership role in the community, it has some ability to attract sponsorship and relationships which support heritage initiatives.

Capacity of local museums

- 6.7 The Rangitikei District's five museums are operated solely by volunteers⁸. This provides a number of challenges for long term sustainability of the management of the heritage resources the museums care for. These challenges include: the number of volunteers available, obtaining funding (funding is often sought via external funders), adequate facilities to care for collections and ongoing training of volunteers.

Present heritage can obscure past heritage

- 6.8 Often buildings, now considered as heritage, have replaced older buildings, whose appearance and use is effectively lost. In some situations there may be opportunities to resurrect some tangible evidence of the earlier structure or use.

7 METHODS

- 7.1 There are a wide range of possible methods for heritage management. The main methods Rangitikei District Council seeks to use through this strategy are:

- Rangitikei District Plan
- Rates Remission Policy
- Heritage Inventories
- Waiving of internal consenting fees
- Information education and support
- Advocacy for external sponsorship/funding
- Promotion of the Rangitikei District

8 Rangitikei District Plan

- 8.1 A key method for the management of heritage resources throughout the District is the Rangitikei District Plan. The District Plan provides for protection of natural, cultural and physical heritage through identification of valuable heritage resources and controls surrounding their use and development.

- 8.2 The District Plan provides the strategic direction for the management of heritage resources - to provide for the reuse of heritage in a manner which is appropriate for the particular context. It also seeks to ensure that the considerations surrounding the destruction of heritage resources involves how the replacement activities will provide for social, cultural and economic well-being of the affected community.

9 Rates Remission Policy

- 9.1 Rangitikei District has a Rates Remission Policy which provides remissions for owners of earthquake prone buildings. As most heritage buildings are highly likely to be earthquake prone, this policy is highly relevant to the District's physical heritage resources.

⁸ Bulls, Marton, Hunterville, Mangaweka and Taihape.

9.2 The Rates Remission Policy provides remissions for up to six months during strengthening/construction works, as well as up to three years upon completion of the building work. These provisions seek to encourage property owners to develop the building so that they can be better used.

10 Heritage Inventories

10.1 The District's museums already have inventories of their own collections, increasingly available online. The inventory process, however, is not limited to what is collected but rather what should be known: the development of a comprehensive heritage inventory increases the documentation and understanding about heritage resources throughout the District. Creating an inventory ensures that heritage resources are remembered, without necessarily requiring the physical resource to remain in perpetuity. It will be a continually evolving document, with new sites and items added as they are recognised and new information added when discovered.

10.2 Two heritage inventories could be developed, one for the built heritage resources and one for Māori heritage. Having a separate inventory for Māori sites would ensure that it would remain a confidential document where appropriate. The development of a Māori heritage inventory would need to occur in partnership with Iwi and hapu. This will include discussions with Te Roopu Ahi Kaa, as well as with individual Iwi and hapu. There is also the opportunity to develop further inventories for the District's natural heritage resources.

10.3 The heritage inventory process naturally extends to collecting information on narratives and associated collections from locals. These narratives and collections will provide an insight into Rangitikei's early history. Where possible such collections should be digitised for long-term protection and access.

11 Waiving of Internal Consenting Fees

11.1 The waiving of internal consenting fees for work on heritage buildings will be determined on a case by case basis by Council⁹. The internal consenting costs are the staff time required to process building and planning related consent applications¹⁰. To provide some guidance, the areas of consideration by Council when deciding whether to waive fees could be, but are not limited to:

- The extent to which heritage values will be retained or reused.
- The end use of the proposed development.
- The benefits of the proposed development.
- The significance of the heritage resource for the community.
- The significance of the social context behind the heritage resource and how it could be preserved.
- The degree of impact (positive/negative) for tangata whenua.

⁹ 15/RDC/031

¹⁰ Costs not included as part of this provision are; external experts, such as fire safety experts, geotechnical advisors, heritage experts or the costs related to hearings processes.

12 Information Education and Support

- 12.1 Information and education are useful methods to increase awareness of heritage in the District and to engage communities with these resources. Information and education will be provided to local communities through the following methods.

Support for the Rangitikei Heritage Group¹¹

- 12.2 Provision of resources to support the ongoing activities of the Rangitikei Heritage Group. This support will be through providing administrative assistance, assistance applying for grants, the continued sharing of heritage information, or assistance through the Community Initiatives Fund.

Information about heritage resources

- 12.3 The Heritage Inventory will provide this information which could be supplied to property owners and interested community members. It will be available (once published) in the District's libraries, information centres and museums as well as being uploaded to the Council's website.

Support for the Treasured Natural Environment Group

- 12.4 Continue to share environment issues, provide administrative support and assistance for applying for grants for projects which enhance community engagement with the natural environment.

Use of the District libraries

- 12.5 The libraries hold a small collection of historical published works on the District. The databases accessible through the libraries are a key resource in finding historical information held in other places.

Archives Central

- 12.6 The Council's archives are housed in a purpose-built public facility shared with neighbouring councils in Feilding. An online database is available and there is an ongoing programme of scanning of high-use records such as rating books.

13 Advocacy for external sponsorship/funding

- 13.1 Council is able to provide co-ordination for major projects, and develop relationships with major heritage and funding agencies. For some initiatives this will be critical.
- 13.2 Council is also well-placed to be aware of regional or national programmes which could have potential application to assist with heritage identification, preservation and access within the Rangitikei.

¹¹ The Rangitikei Heritage Group consists of representatives from the District's museums and historical societies (Bulls, Marton, Hunterville, Mangaweka, Taihape, Turakina), from Te Roopu Ahi Kaa, and from other interested heritage groups (Whanganui Regional Heritage Trust).

14 Promotion of the Rangitikei District

- 14.1 Promotion of a vibrant town supports adaptive re-use possibilities for heritage buildings. Council supports and develops partnerships with key promotional organisations such as Project Marton, Taihape Community Development Trust and Bulls and District Community Trust, the provision of information centres and support for Town Centre Planning and community based place-making development.

15 Action Plan

Goal	Activity	Groups Involved	Completion
Development of a heritage inventory of built heritage.	Research into heritage resources (as identified by the Rangitikei Heritage Group). Publication of research.	Rangitikei District Council Rangitikei Heritage Group	2016
Development of a heritage inventory of Māori narratives and collections	Research, interviews and publishing of stories.	Rangitikei District Council Local Iwi/hapu Ratana Community	2016/17
Development of a heritage inventory of European / non-indigenous settler narratives and collections.	Research, interviews and publishing of stories.	Rangitikei District Council Rangitikei Heritage Group	2017/18
Joint place naming	Using both the English and Māori place names in key Council correspondence/ documentation.	Council Iwi groups	2016
Support the development of local businesses	Rates Remission Policy Waiving of internal consenting fees.	Council	On-going
Support heritage documentation and preservation, local historical groups and environmental groups.	Support Rangitikei Heritage Group Support Treasured Natural Environment Group Utilise libraries and Archives Central.	Council	On-going

Promotion of vibrant towns	Support local development organisations, support town centre development.	Council	On-going
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16 Review

The strategy will be due for review 1 December 2018.