



## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Environment & Planning Committee

**FROM:** Stephanie Trevena, Policy Planner

**REFERENCE:** L206

**SUBJECT:** **REPORT ON THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MAORI ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND WAAHI TAPU IN THE TASMAN DISTRICT - REPORT EP08/04/08** - Report prepared for the 24 April meeting

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

A copy of the report "Cultural Significance of Maori Archaeological Sites and Waahi Tapu in the Tasman District" dated April 2008 has recently been received from Mitchell Research. The Council contracted Tiakina te Taiao Ltd to complete this work as part of the ongoing policy review in relation to archaeological sites and waahi tapu (Maori sacred places). Tiakina te Taiao commissioned the services of Hilary and John Mitchell.

A copy of the report is available for Councillors to view at the meeting and extra copies can be made available as required. The report is also available in Council's electronic database. The research project comprises a written report, 12 appendices and a series of 75 maps which identify the known archaeological sites and waahi tapu in the District plus additional sites based on the Mitchells' research. This research work complements other research work undertaken regarding archaeological sites and waahi tapu. The other research is detailed in Section 5 of Report EP07/08/18. In summary, there has been a series of research projects in relation to the archaeological sites database to improve knowledge and understanding of the location of the sites, the extent of sites (where possible) and the values / significance of sites. The most recent study into the significance of sites considered a number of values including archaeological, scientific and historic values. It did not include an assessment of the Maori cultural values, hence the requirement for iwi to contribute this advice.

Hilary and John Mitchell will be present at the meeting to briefly speak to their report. Representatives from Tiakina te Taiao have also been invited to attend.

### 2. SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

The researchers have broken the District into eight geographic areas for the convenience of assessing the cultural values of sites. They have drawn on their extensive knowledge of the history of the District (and the top of the south generally) and a large number of information sources to carry out their assessments. The patterns of occupation and use of the District and key events in the more recent history of the District are described.

Although reference is made to events as far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the report focuses predominantly on significant events in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

For each of the geographic areas identified, the authors address the following factors in Chapters 3 to 10 of the report:

- a) an outline of the history of Maori occupation and use of the area;
- b) the relationship between the history and the archaeological sites and precincts (i.e. areas where there is a cluster of archaeological sites);
- c) the significance of some individual sites and precincts;
- d) the identification of additional culturally significant sites that are not recognised in the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) records.

In addition, 75 maps showing the archaeological sites have been annotated and tables summarising relevant information for each geographic area have been prepared. The summary tables are included as appendices 4 to 11.

The report concludes with some general observations and comments about the significance of different types of site, such as middens/ovens, stone working sites and waahi tapu and urupa. Some key outstanding issues are also identified (in Section 11.3):

- a) the loss of previously recorded sites suggesting the need to protect or investigate sites that are at risk;
- b) the refusal by some landowners to allow archaeologists to have access to their land to carry out the site location survey. This suggests that some landowners sense trouble if there is an archaeological site on the property. There is a role for Council in educating landowners as to the values and significance of sites;
- c) the widespread destruction of sites in some localities in the District such as the Aorere and the Takaka valleys, due to land use and development is a warning that allowing certain land uses to proceed without any regard to the archaeological material that may surface during work is reckless. Even if there is no evidence of archaeological material present, there could be evidence of past occupation and cultures just below the damaged surface layer;
- d) the authors recommend that if there is to be a change of attitude to prevent further loss or damage to existing recorded sites, the Council would be advised to devise a campaign to create a climate of appreciation, pride and respect for the history of the District.

### 3. OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Mitchell report provides a valuable source of information regarding the Maori cultural values of archaeological sites and waahi tapu in the District. This information is required to contribute to the development of policy options for the protection of sites. It is now necessary to dovetail this information into the archaeological information. The combined data sources will contribute to the policy paper which will set out policy options and ultimately, to the preparation of a proposed variation (or change) to the TRMP. The issues raised in Section 11.3 of the report present a number of possible methods that could be employed to assist in the protection of archaeological sites and waahi tapu. Some of these methods could be incorporated into the policy paper. The additional sites that have been identified by the authors will be considered for inclusion in the proposed variation. Ideally these sites will be added to the NZAA database.

### 4. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee receive the report prepared by Mitchell Research, titled "Cultural Significance of Maori Archaeological Sites and Waahi Tapu in the Tasman District", dated April 2008.



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