

4 COASTAL HERITAGE AND USE

4.1 CULTURAL, SPIRITUAL AND HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Sites within the area are believed to record up to 1000 years of settlement. Owhiro Bay itself was a well-developed settlement when Europeans arrived. Iwi associated with the area prior to the arrival of Te Atiawa and Ngati Toa, the present day tangata whenua, include Ngati Mamoe, Ngai Tara, Ngati Ira and Rangitane.

Over the years, sites of cultural significance including waahi tapu along the South Coast have been severely degraded and some important historical places have been significantly modified - such as the Red Rocks headland. Few traces remain of early settlement areas, urupa or oven sites. These sites have deep spiritual significance to local iwi.

A number of pa sites are located along the coast, such as Rangitatau Pa, the canoe landing site in Tarakena Bay, Oruaiti Pa on the site that is now known as Fort Dorset, and the Ngati Mamoe pa at Te Rimurapa. The Ngai Tara stronghold on the Miramar Peninsula, Whetu-Kairangi, was protected by outposts along the coast as well as in the inner harbour.

Charred moa bones found on the sands of Lyall Bay (Hue-te-para) are evidence of moa hunting on the isthmus. Terraces (such as on the point above Te Raekaihau Point) and kainga sites (with evidence of middens, implements and ovens) found in a number of locations in the bays (such as Te Mapunga near the Island Bay Beach and Owhiro Bay) and overlooking the coast, show cultivation and occupation occurred at a number of sites.

The headland known as Pariwhero (Red Rocks) was frequented by early Maori inhabitants for its fishing and supply of bull kelp. Various legends explain the red colouration: Maui stained the rocks with blood from his nose (blood which he used to bait his hook prior to catching Te Ika a Maui - the North Island); Kupe wounded himself on paua; Kupe's daughters, despairing over his prolonged absence, dashed themselves on the rocks. Tapu te Ranga, the island that gives Island Bay (Paekawakawa) its name, was a small pa, used as a refuge by Ngati Ira following the Te Atiawa occupation of the area.

Te Rimurapa headland (Sinclair Head) was classified as Maori Reserve and an early settlement site. During World War II, the NZ Army had an observation post on the headland - the derelict remains are still evident. Other defence sites can be seen on the Miramar Peninsula.

The once isolated coastline has, since the 1900s, made a transition from a holiday location with baches and summer houses, to an urban coastline. Many parts of the coast have developed into urban areas including Breaker Bay, Owhiro Bay and Island Bay.

Island Bay became a centre for Italian, Greek and Shetland Islander fishing communities. Fishing boats still moor in the bay and land their catch near the Bait House. The coastal edge has in many places evolved from a natural state to a managed one with seawalls, roads and buildings. Formed roads were gradually extended along the area, reclamation of small areas occurred, and the construction of the airport significantly altered the shape of Lyall Bay.



Elevated view of a wooden dwelling overlooking Lyall Bay, circa 1900.

Photographer: T Stonebridge and Co. Source WCC Archives Ref 00138:0:11593.

Ships that have been wrecked on the South Coast between Karori Lighthouse and Owhiro Bay include the Tyne (the earliest, wrecked in 1843), Cyprus, Wellington, Nambucca, Crescent, La Bello, Progress and Penguin. Lives were lost on all these

wrecks. Very little physically remains of these wrecks. One of the explanations for the large number of wrecks is probably Thoms² Rock (Toka Haere), located off the Karori Stream mouth. This rock, which is part of a reef, was known as a toka tipua or demon rock, for its apparent ability to change position.

4.2 USES/ACTIVITIES

4.2.1 Recreation/Leisure

The length of coast covered by this Management Plan hosts a number of different uses and recreational activities. A high proportion of these relate directly to the marine environment including: boating, surfcasting, picnicking, building sandcastles, fishing, diving, surf lifesaving, surfing and swimming. The coastal areas provide a base to carry out these activities.

Other uses do not necessarily need to occur on the coast, but the coastal environment provides a desirable, high amenity location for carrying out the activity. These activities include: road and mountain biking, walking, running, on and off road driving, dog exercising, playing and just 'being there' and meeting people.

Coastal activities are supported by a number of facilities situated on land covered by the Management Plan such as boat ramps, changing sheds, toilets, club buildings, seating and carparking areas.

Land that does not border the coast, but that has coastal character, adds another layer of recreational assets. This land brings with it playareas, walking tracks, picnic areas, and areas of regenerating vegetation.

The coast therefore hosts a large number of both passive and active types of recreation. Access to and along the coastal area is a key aspect of the success of recreation in these areas.

4.2.2 Research

A number of research programmes have been conducted on the South Coast. A large influence on this is the presence of the Island Bay Marine Laboratory. This level of research is one reason for the proposed Taputeranga Marine Reserve.

4.2.3 Commercial

Commercial uses are limited by the provision of the Reserves Act for land classified as reserve. Commercial uses on other land (such as road reserve or un-classified land) are limited by Council policies. The Council's intention is to generally bring all coastal land (other than road reserve) under the umbrella of the Reserves Act (see section 6.13).

Current commercial uses of the coast include: mobile food vendors, tours to Red Rocks/Pariwhero and the seals, and dive training/trips. By way of their location, the Wellington International Airport and Clearwater Sewage Treatment Plant are also commercial uses of the coast.

² The rock is named after Joseph Thoms – a whaler of the area.

4.2.4 Residential

The baches at View Road South Headland Reserve and those accessed by the coastal road to Karori Stream are a mix of weekend/holiday accommodation and permanent residences.

