**Off-road access – a part of the solution**

**Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission**

Our transport network must change dramatically for it to favour low and zero-emission transport. This change must extend beyond the built roads that Waka Kotahi manages. We need to build off-formed-road tracks and trails to create a network that crosses public land, private land, council land and land over which local hapū and Māori organisations hold mana whenua.

In many parts of NZ, outdoor recreation routes have become important active transport routes for bikers and walkers. There is a clear overlap between recreational trail resource availability and active transport engagement.

Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission, is the Crown agent responsible for providing leadership on outdoor access issues. Our role is to advise on and advocate for free, certain, enduring and practical access to the outdoors. We play a key role in negotiating, establishing and improving outdoor access for New Zealanders. This includes making people and organisations aware of public access locations and ensuring that access endures over time. Our mandate includes all forms of public access, including by foot, bike, horse and vehicle.

Our presentation will showcase the regional trail strategies we are helping local communities to develop and implement. These are based in Taranaki, Te Tairawhiti, Matakana to Pūhoi and North Waikato.

In each of these projects, private landowners — whether they are commercial foresters, farmers, developers or hapū — have a crucial role in helping Aotearoa rebalance its transport system to better provide for walking and cycling. In each case, we are working with communities to find a balance between competing public and private demands for space and resources.