

Te Urewera hut case could cost Tūhoe \$200k

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(Harawira, W., 2022)



A number of ageing, colonial-design huts in Te Urewera have been earmarked for demolition in a plan by Tūhoe settlement entity, Te Uru Taumatua and the Department of Conservation. Photo / RNZ

By Wena Harawira of Whakaata Maori

The Tūhoe settlement entity, Te Uru Taumatua, says responding to a High Court injunction to stop the demolition of Te Urewera huts may cost \$200,000.

On November 9 the High Court at Rotorua ordered an immediate halt to the destruction of 48 huts following an application by Wharenui Clyde Tuna of Tūhoe, who was concerned about the loss of access to use the huts “as a base for food gathering, recreational and cultural purposes”. He said Te Uru Taumatua failed to consult on its plan.

Justice Mark Woolford granted the injunction, saying a hearing on the issues was needed. However, no date has been set.

In its December e-pānui to iwi beneficiaries, Te Uru Taumatua stated it had spent \$20,000 to respond to the injunction requests and estimated the process could cost \$200,000, a budget it had intended to allocate to build transitional huts.

It wrote that since Te Urewera became a legal entity in 2013, the Crown contributed \$8.87 million or an average of \$1.3m annually towards the maintenance of the area, but this was less than what the Department of Conservation (DoC) used to spend on Te Urewera National Park - around \$6m to \$8m a year.

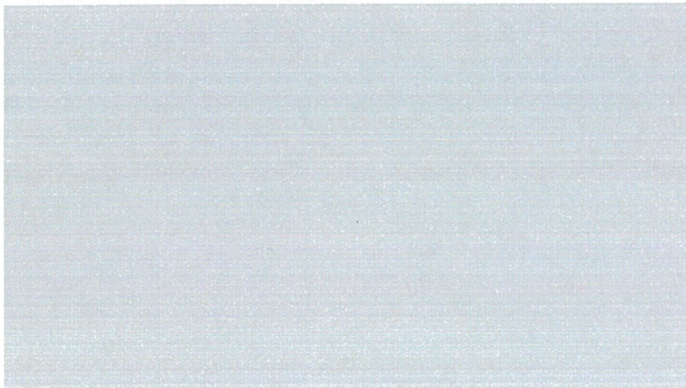
Te Urewera’s board had contributed \$6.63m of the \$15.51m spent over the past seven years on hut maintenance, pest control, signs, tracks, visitor operations, human resources and workforce development, financial systems, asset management, equipment and vehicles.

It claimed DoC had “not been keen to shift responsibility and authority to Tūhoe for Te Urewera” and Tūhoe had been lumbered with a “75-year-old DoC-Crown legacy that was not intended by the 2013 Treaty settlement”.

Te Uru Taumatua also stated DoC had rejected collaboration to establish the systems, capability and infrastructure needed to operationalise the Te Urewera Act, according to the pānui.

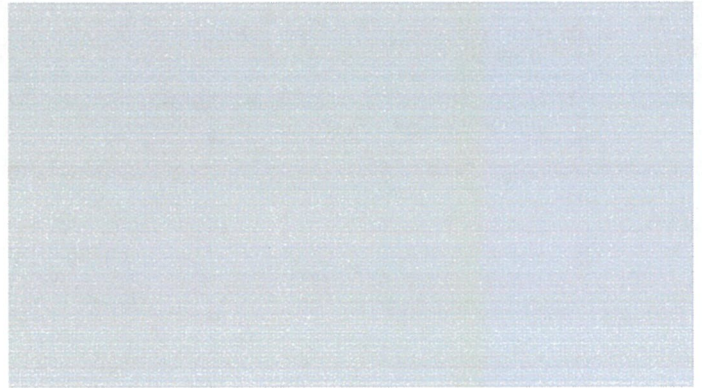
DoC has been approached for a response to the claims made by Te Uru Taumatua.

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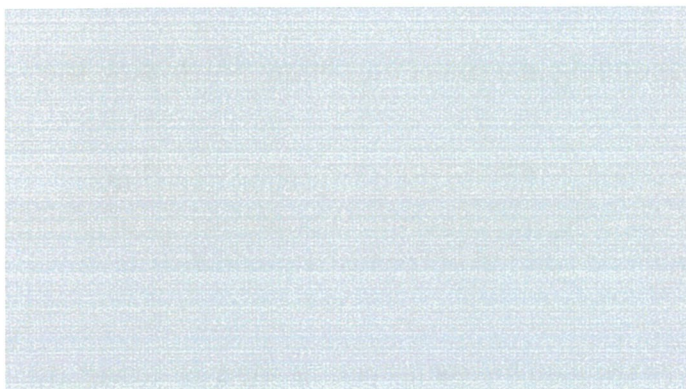
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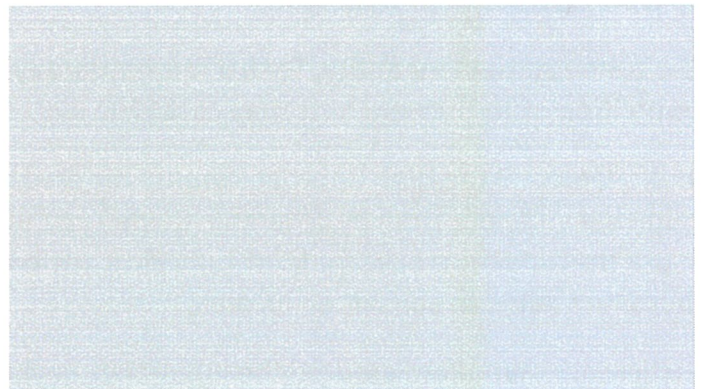
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