

A photograph of two people riding bicycles on a gravel path through a forest. They are wearing helmets and smiling. The background is filled with autumn-colored trees.

2025 EVALUATION OF NGĀ HAERENGA GREAT RIDES OF NEW ZEALAND

SNAPSHOT FOR
WHAKAREWAREWA FOREST LOOP

INTRODUCTION

This **snapshot** provides a summary of key data collected for the 2025 Evaluation of Ngā Haerenga Great Rides of New Zealand and compares results for Whakarewarewa Forest Loop (where available) with results for the Great Rides network as a whole. For example, the total number of trips taken on Whakarewarewa Forest Loop in the year ending June 2025 was 133% higher than in the year to June 2021; the total number of trips taken across the Great Rides network increased by 18%.

Data is presented in relation to **trail usage**, and then each of three impact domains: economic, social and environmental. For further information on the 2025 Evaluation, please refer to the full report [here](#). Data for the 2025 evaluation was drawn from four primary sources: -

TRAIL COUNTER DATA

Trail counters are installed on each of the 23 Great Rides that make up Ngā Haerenga (including some counters managed by DOC and private land owners). Data used for the 2025 evaluation encompasses the full year ending 30 June 2025.

In late July 2025, trail counter data was extracted from the Be Counted system and otherwise sourced from DOC and private landowners via Trail Managers. After being checked and cleaned, the counter data was analysed using a new set of algorithms developed by Jonathan Kennett for the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment.¹ These algorithms are used to calculate **unique users** (accounting for any double-counting of users across multiple counters on a trail).

The resulting calculations of individual trail users were checked for consistency with 2021 outputs, reviewed with Jonathan Kennett or the relevant trail manager where needed, and then confirmed for use in the Evaluation analysis.

SURVEY OF TRAIL USERS

An ongoing survey of Trail Users is undertaken using a survey developed for Ngā Haerenga and the 23 Great Rides that make up the network. The data used for the 2025 evaluation is based on a total sample of n=7475 trail users in the year ending June 2025.

Data relating specifically to Whakarewarewa Forest Loop is based on a YE June 2025 sample of n=256 trail users.

SURVEY OF TRAIL MANAGERS

A survey of Trail Managers was undertaken to capture the data required for the evaluation. This survey was undertaken in June/July 2025.

22 Trail Managers completed the survey.

SURVEY OF TRAIL STAKEHOLDERS

A survey of Trail Stakeholders was also undertaken to capture data needed for the evaluation. This survey was undertaken in April/May 2025.

Initial databases were compiled by Trail Managers, with contacts requested across a range of stakeholder groups, including Iwi, hapū and marae groups; local government agencies; Regional Tourism Organisations/Economic Development Agencies; businesses providing products/services for people using the trails; local government entities; local schools, sporting and recreation groups; and other community groups.

All contacts were emailed with a personal invitation to complete the online survey. One follow-up reminder was sent to non-responders.

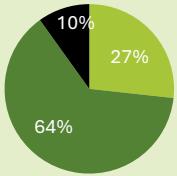
Data for the YE 2025 evaluation was based on a final sample of n=434 stakeholders across the 23 Great Rides. This included a sample of n=7 stakeholders for Whakarewarewa Forest Loop. Note that stakeholder survey results have not been included in this Snapshot due to the very small sample size.

Whakarewarewa Forest Loop – YE June 2025



TRAIL USAGE

 **231,532**
Total trips
+133% vs 2021
(+18% vs 2021 all Great Rides)



(All Great Rides: 31% local residents, 57% domestic visitors, 12% international visitors)

Pedestrians
114,857
+209% vs 2021
(+21% vs 2021 all Great Rides)



Cyclists
116,675
+88% vs 2021
(+14% vs 2021 all Great Rides)



■ Local residents
■ Domestic visitors
■ International visitors

82%
rated their trail experience
9 or 10 (out of 10)
(73% all Great Rides)



+91
Net Promoter Score
(+79 All Great Rides)

ECONOMIC IMPACTS



112,148
estimate of **visitors** attributable to the Trail
(1.3 million all Great Rides)



142,899
estimate of **visitor nights** attributable to the Trail
(4.5 million all Great Rides)



\$258.53
average **expenditure** per visitor
(\$964.10 all Great Rides)

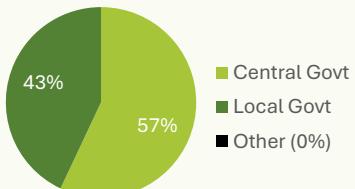
SOCIAL IMPACTS



\$35 million

value of health benefit from trail use by New Zealanders (\$696m all Great Rides)

Trail Income



(All Great Rides: 43% Central Govt, 33% Local Govt, 24% other)

	Forest Loop	All Great Rides
My sense of wellbeing or mental health has improved	61%	57%
My physical fitness has improved	66%	57%
I have developed a closer relationship with the people I was with	30%	33%
I have developed or improved my skills	50%	30%

AGREE THAT GREAT RIDE...

Provides a high-quality experience for trail users	91%
Has increased the profile of the area	90%
Is valued by the local community	87%
Is a source of pride for the local community	85%
Has become part of the community's identity	85%
Is making the area a more vibrant or appealing place to live	82%
Is creating greater understanding of area's natural environment	81%
Is improving overall quality of life in the area	79%
Is accessible to a wide range of people	77%
Has been a catalyst for community development	71%
Has been a catalyst for investment in the area	70%
Is creating greater understanding of the area's cultural heritage	63%

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS



As a result of their Whakarewarewa Forest Loop experience...

- 17%** understand more about the natural environment (21% all Great Rides)
- 13%** understand more about the local culture and heritage (29% all Great Rides)
- 50%** appreciate the natural environment more (48% all Great Rides)
- 19%** appreciate the local culture and heritage more (30% all Great Rides)
- 16%** are more conscious of their impact on the environment (18% all Great Rides)

NOTES

METRIC	
Trail Usage	Based on counter data extracted from the Be Counted Eco-Visio system and adjusted using the algorithms in the report 'NZCT Counter Data Analysis 2024-2025', Jonathan Kennett, for Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment.
Proportions of local residents, domestic visitors, and international visitors	Calculated using trail user survey data for the year ending June 2025
Trail user satisfaction rating and Net Promoter Score (NPS)	Calculated using trail user survey data for the year ending June 2025
Estimate of visitors attributable to the trail	Based on trail user survey data for the year ending June 2025, scaled by trail counts: number of trail users visiting the area only or mainly because of the trail
Estimate of visitor nights attributable to the trail	Based on trail user survey data for the year ending June 2025, scaled by trail counts: number of nights stayed in area by trail users visiting the area only or mainly because of the trail
Average expenditure per visitor	Based on trail user survey data for the year ending June 2025: average expenditure by each trail user visiting the area only or mainly because of the trail
Value of health benefit from trail use by New Zealanders	Calculated using reported experience of individual trail sections (from trail user survey for the year ending June 2025) and length of individual sections in kms (publicly available or sourced from trail managers). Scaled by trail counts and using per-km values documented in Waka Kotahi's Monetised Benefits and Costs Manual 2024.
Trail income	Calculated using trail manager survey data for the year ending June 2025
Health impact statements	Based on trail user survey data for the year ending June 2025
Social impact statements	Based on trail stakeholder survey data for the year ending June 2025
Environmental impact statements	Based on trail user survey data for the year ending June 2025