

SIGNIFICANT COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS FUND 2006

Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust: Establishment of an ecological island reserve on Maungatautari Mountain in the Waikato

This project will receive a grant of up to \$5.504 million.

The Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust has been established to lead a community project to restore the ecology of Maungatautari, a forested volcanic cone rising above the Waikato basin near Cambridge, New Zealand.

The project is for the establishment of an ecological mainland island on Maungatautari Mountain, with the aim of restoring its ecology to a condition as close as feasible to its natural state. It is also to maintain it for the purposes of public enjoyment, recreation, scientific research and education.

This is a total ecosystem recovery project aimed at the protection of New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity rather than individual species management, and will involve the restoration of over 3,000 ha of lowland podocarp/hardwood forest into a fully functioning forest ecosystem.

Key components of the application are the construction of a 47km predator-proof fence around the forest margin and the eradication of introduced mammals from inside the fence. It is planned to reintroduce species once the fence and pest eradication programme have been completed.

The Trust intends to provide educational and recreational facilities, such as interpretative information, walking tracks, and a visitor centre, for visitors to the site.