

# Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

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|   | Unit name – <b>GREAT EXHIBITION BAY INCLUDING PARENGARENGA SPIT</b>   |
| <b>DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION</b>   |   |
| <b>Component</b>  | <b>Comment</b>  |
| <b>Land Types</b><br><small>(refer to list overleaf)</small><br>Beach<br>Dune complex<br>Wetlands<br>Lakes and waterbodies  | An extensive exposed ocean beach and dunefield. The northern part of the unit is a substantial barrier spit of significant breadth and length, containing the Parengarenga Harbour.   |
| <b>Geology</b><br><small>(including geopreservation sites)</small>  | Kokota Spit is recognised as a Geopreservation site, the largest unvegetated spit in NZ. It has the most extensive and highest grade silica sand deposit in the country.<br>Holocene coastal dunes, some overlaying Pleistocene consolidated dunes.   |
| <b>Soil Types</b>   | Predominantly deep deposits of silica sand, but with organic horizons developed around wetlands and lake margins.   |
| <b>Ecology</b><br><small>(including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)</small>  | Great Exhibition Bay marram <i>Spinifex</i> recorded as a good example of a nationally uncommon habitat type with limited modification.<br>Wairahi Swamp and Lake Taeore contains soils of national importance and habitat for a diversity of spp incl threatened and regionally significant species. Kokota Spit an outstanding site for international wader species. Areas of notably luxuriant pingao. |
| <b>Archaeological sites</b>   | Unknown, but likely to contain many sites due to proximity to estuarine harbour, wetlands and fresh water bodies, and open coast. Some signs of shell deposits and fire cracked rock noted during site inspection.<br><br>Dramatic loss of sand following offshore mining and general movement of dunes may influence ability to find archaeological sites in an intact form.                             |
| <b>Heritage Landscapes</b>  | Not known.  |
| <b>Landscape characterisation</b><br><small>(including the identification of any specific characteristics)</small><br><br>An expansive, subtly sweeping beach backed by broad dunefields, extending from Rawara Beach to the mouth of the Parengarenga Harbour. Incorporates a number of wetlands and small backdune lakes captured by the accumulated sands of the dunefield. Extends north through Kokota (The Sandspit) which is a substantial barrier spit that has essentially entrapped the Parengarenga Harbour. This end of the beach is particularly notable for its pure white silica sand. The spit was until recently marked by a very substantial and elevated dune, but the scale and height of that coastal form has considerably diminished.<br>The clarity and colour of the water in the harbour mouth and ocean beach contribute to the identity of this landscape.<br><br>Vegetation on the spit is limited, but includes pockets of vigorous pingao, whilst the wider dunefield hosts a wider range of species.<br><br>This unit has a very isolated atmosphere and is expansively open and exposed. |   |

| EVALUATION  |      |   |
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| Criteria  | Rank | Comment   |
| <b>Natural Science Factors</b>  |      |   |
| <b>Representativeness</b><br>Natural landscapes are clearly characteristic of the area, district or region. The key components of the landscape will be present in a way that defines the character of the place and distills its character and essence. Endemic associations.  | 5    | A powerful representation of a barrier spit which has a strong identity which is unique to Parengarenga, due in part to the scale of the coastal landform and its distinctive white silica sands.   |
| <b>Rarity</b><br>Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.  | 5    | Barrier spits of this scale and intactness are very rare. The sand type makes Parengarenga unique.  |
| <b>Aesthetic Values</b>   |      |   |
| <b>Coherence</b><br>The patterns of land cover and land use are largely in harmony with the underlying natural pattern of the landform of the area and there are no significant discordant elements of land cover or land use.  | 5    | A very graphic, cohesive landscape that is a direct reflection of local tidal and aeolian conditions. Some adverse influence from adjoining areas of plantation forest, but the strong identity of the northern part of the spit prevails.  |
| <b>Diversity &amp; Complexity</b><br>The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.   | 5    | Whilst a large and powerful landform, that appears relatively simple at first glance, the unit has a high level of diversity in its terrain, drainage patterns, and vegetation patterns and sequences. It is also very clearly responsive to a range of dynamic natural forces.   |
| <b>Vividness</b><br>Natural features and landscape are widely recognized across the community and beyond the local area and remain clearly in the memory; striking landscapes are symbolic of an area due to their recognisable and memorable qualities.  | 5    | Extremely graphic and vivid. A key part of the Parengarenga area's identity and a highly memorable element in the wider upper Northland landscape that is well seen from the state highway corridor.  |
| <b>Naturalness</b><br>How affected by human activity is the landscape? Does human activity intrude on the landscape? Eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of buildings and associated built development.</li> <li>• Presence of infrastructure services.</li> <li>• Extent of indigenous forest cover.</li> <li>• Homogeneity of exotic vegetation.</li> <li>• Presence / extent of modified agricultural land use.</li> <li>• Strength of natural processes / ecological patterns.</li> <li>• Unmodified and legible physical relief and landform.</li> <li>• Presence of water.</li> </ul> | 4    | <p>Highly natural, with a complete absence of buildings, structures and human elements, other than some informal vehicle access tracks down to the beach in the southern and central parts of the unit. Highly responsive to natural forces and processes.</p> <p>Pine plantation areas that abut the southern section of the unit detract from naturalness, particularly during the harvesting phase. Native shrubland and scattered pohutukawa on the seaward edge of the plantations assist to buffer some of the impact of the forest area.</p> <p>A long history of offshore sand extraction near the northern end of the spit is reputed to have led to the rapid loss of what was until quite recently a towering dune form in the midst of the spit. Whilst the physical connection between those processes is not legible in the landscape as it exists, the influence of sand mining (if indeed proven) has impacted upon the natural form of this landscape.</p> |
| <b>Intactness</b><br>Natural systems are intact and aesthetically coherent and do not display significant visual signs of human modification, intervention or manipulation, visually intact and highly aesthetic natural landscapes.  | 5    | Highly intact, with the exception of the possible dredging impact outlined above. Some sign of impact by browsing pests upon dunefield vegetation which may, over time, impact upon vegetation cover and extent.  |
| <b>Experiential Values</b>  |      |   |
| <b>Expressiveness</b><br>The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.  | 5    | Extremely expressive and very evidently linked to the shaping forces of wind and sea.   |

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| <b>Sensory qualities</b><br>(These are landscape phenomena as directly perceived and experienced by humans, such as the view of a scenic landscape, or the distinctive smell and sound of the foreshore).  | <b>5</b> | A very distinctive place where the vividness and contrast of the blazing white sands, retained in a generally intact state, makes for strong sensory experiences.                        |
| <b>Transient Values</b><br>The consistent and repeated occurrence of transient features that contributes to the character, qualities and values of the landscape; landscapes are widely recognised for their transient features and the contribution that these make to the landscape. | <b>5</b> | Highly dynamic and changing with weather conditions and influence of natural forces. Day by day shifts in light conditions and tidal relationships lead to short term, transient shifts. |

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| <b>Remoteness / Wildness</b><br>Does the landscape display a wilderness character, remote from and untouched by human presence?<br>Eg.<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of remoteness</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Distance from built development</li> </ul>   | <b>5</b> | Largely inaccessible and cut off to most by the intervening harbour. Typically seen across that water body which brings a role of a wide “moat” that keeps the spit and ocean beach beyond reach.<br><br>Well separated from developed areas, although influenced by plantation areas as outlined previously.   |
| <b>Shared and recognised values</b><br>Natural features and landscape are widely known and valued by the immediate and wider community for their contribution to a sense of place leading to a strong community association with, or high public esteem for the place.  | <b>4</b> | A well-known landmark in upper Northland that has a wider identity, being often used in marketing material and imagery.   |
| <b>Spiritual, cultural and historical associations</b><br>Natural features and landscapes can be clearly and widely known and influenced by their connection to the spiritual, cultural and historical valued in the place and includes associative meanings and associative activities valued by the community.<br>These can include both activities and meanings associative meanings are spiritual, cultural or social associations with particular landscape elements, features, or areas, whilst associative activities are patterns of social activity that occur in particular parts of a landscape, for example, popular walking routes or fishing spots. |          | Unknown, but almost certain to have some deep cultural relevance.<br><br>Historical harvesting of sand is part of Kokota’s “story” and a likely reason for the looming dune’s decline. Also thought to have some importance as influencing the mouth of the harbour that would once have been used for coastal trading and transport.<br><br>Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period. |

Rank scale between 1 (low) and 5 (high)

| <b>Land Types</b>                    |
|--------------------------------------|
| Coastal cliffs / escarpment          |
| Low escarpment                       |
| Bays and headlands                   |
| Beach                                |
| Dune complex                         |
| Reefs and islands                    |
| Estuarine / inlet                    |
| Open harbour                         |
| Coastal plain                        |
| Rolling hills                        |
| Steep hills; moderate to high relief |
| Ranges; high relief                  |
| Strongly rolling land                |
| Low rolling land                     |
| Valley floors and flats              |
| Plains                               |
| Volcanic cones                       |
| River mouth                          |
| Wetland                              |
| Watercourses                         |
| Lakes and water bodies               |

Photographs of unit









