

IPIPIRI

NATURE CONSERVANCY TRUST

MEDIA RELEASE

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NORTHLAND'S ELLIOT BAY SAVED FROM DEVELOPMENT

Northland's iconic surf beach and surrounding native bush at Elliot Bay has been saved from development – and is set to become a conservation jewel in the Bay of Islands.

The Ipipiri Nature Conservancy Trust has gone unconditional on the property after raising more than \$6million for the purchase in a deal that it managed to get over the line despite the challenges of the Covid-19 crisis. It still has to raise another \$2million but has negotiated a 24 month extension for the extra payment.

“We are overjoyed with the outcome, and hugely appreciative of the support we have had from the Elliot family, philanthropists, local hapu, government, local body and the community to save this exceptional part of Northland, in the most challenging circumstances, in the middle of a pandemic,” says Ipipiri Nature Conservancy Trust Chair Geoff Ricketts.

“This iconic piece of Northland will now be a taonga, a treasure for everyone to experience. It is testimony to the generosity of New Zealanders and the Elliot family, and the importance we all place on protecting the environment in this unique part of Aotearoa New Zealand, for future generations.

“Hapu take comfort from the sale to keep the farm in safe hands. The area holds significant heritage and nature values for Māori, and bringing it all together is a testament of collaboration.”

The Ipipiri Trust's vision is to respect the historical and Māori heritage, protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area, maintain the public access to the beach and camping ground, and develop a walking track to link to other tracks in the area. The area is home to endangered bird species like the kiwi and dotterel, and the native forest has centuries old species like kauri, totara, and rimu.

“By linking the existing Cape Brett and Whangamumu tracks through the Elliot Bay property, to the Russell Forest tracks and Te Araroa, it could become one of New Zealand's great walks – to rival the Milford and Routeburn Tracks,” Ricketts says.

“As well as the obvious conservation benefits, it will create jobs and support walking and nature tourism. New Zealanders will be able to experience this unique part of their backyard and when the time is right and our borders are open we can welcome overseas visitors too,” he says.

The 710 hectare property has been in the Elliot Family for over 90 years. It comprises 500 hectares of native forest and 200 hectares of farmland.

“With the deal finalised we are now progressing on the next steps,” says Ricketts. “The journey has only just begun, and we can’t wait to start work on protecting this important cultural and environmental slice of the Bay of Islands.”

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Link to video by Jonathan Clark Save Elliot Bay

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwr7sYXL6hM#action=share>

Website(including photos, maps) www.ipipiritrust.org.nz

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