

### Sought-after tourist accommodation opens on the Timber Trail cycle way

Five years ago, a group of King Country locals decided it would be a good idea to have accommodation halfway along a new cycleway being built in the Pureora Forest Park.

That cycleway is the popular Timber Trail, which opened in 2013 and is now widely regarded as being the best two-day mountain bike ride in New Zealand. The group of locals went on to form a project team which has planned and overseen the development of the Timber Trail Lodge at Piropiro. The lodge will be officially opened by Barbara Kuriger, MP for Taranaki-King Country, on April 7th.

Bookings are being taken now for the first wing of the lodge which provides for 25 guests from April 12th, with a second wing and further 25 beds due to open in October. A selection of room choices, group facilities, and all-inclusive packages are available.

An estimated 6000 people cycled the trail in 2016 and, with no on-trail accommodation available at that time, cyclists' only options were to camp or leave the trail to travel to accommodation providers in the surrounding areas.

Jonathan Kennett, cycling advocate and co-author of Classic New Zealand Mountain Bike Rides is an enthusiastic supporter, "This lodge is just what the Timber Trail needs to take it from good to great amongst New Zealand's best cycle ways."

The \$3.2m lodge project received a huge vote of confidence in early-2016 with a grant of \$1.2m from the Tourism Growth Partnership, aimed at increasing international visitor business. Other funding has come from private investors, including the original core group, and around 20 other Kiwis, both locals and from further afield.

Bruce Maunsell, director and operations manager, said, "Securing the TGP grant was a significant achievement and one which signalled confidence in our vision and plans for the business. It underlines the Government's commitment to cycling tourism and its determination to enable the Timber Trail to reach its potential."

The much sought-after visitor accommodation is situated at the halfway point of the 84km trail, at Piropiro. The area is rich in history and runs mostly through remote and scenic Department of Conservation managed native forests.

With a strong commitment to sustainability and environmental integrity, the lodge has been built to an environmentally sensitive design, including an off-grid power system which is planned to be running from 95% solar within the first three years.

Guests will be able to experience sustainability in practice, with systems such as a biodynamic waste water treatments providing cleansed water to fertilise plants or process through toilet cisterns. Lodge staff, and willing visitors, will be involved in local initiatives to replant areas of forestry, control weeds and pests, and protect the native podocarp forest.

Maunsell said the lodge will provide an authentic, kiwi, welcome at the end of the day to visitors out enjoying the trail and other local activities, "We're adding comfort to their adventure."

"The lodge is a very special place and our multi-skilled staff will ensure visitors receive a high level of customer service and leave feeling connected to the area, its values, and others that they shared the experience with."

The lodge is open year-round and is already attracting interest and bookings from NZ and international recreationalists, and groups looking for corporate retreats, outdoor education locations, and venues for special interest weekends.

For more information about the Timber Trail Lodge please visit [www.timbertrailodge.co.nz](http://www.timbertrailodge.co.nz), call 0800 885 6343 or email [stay@timbertrailodge.co.nz](mailto:stay@timbertrailodge.co.nz)

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