

Wednesday 11 March, 2026

Tēnā koutou,

I write as Chair of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Trust to assist the Fast-track panel on the significance and importance of this proposal. Because Eastcliffe sits on our whenua at Takaparawhau, within our papakāinga, this is not simply a commercial matter. It is about our obligations as kaitiaki to remedy long-running issues, protect residents, and ensure this nationally significant site is cared for in a way that reflects its importance.

The Significance of Takaparawhau

Eastcliffe is within our papakāinga and forms part of our living community, directly across from our marae and close to our kaumātua and community facilities. The condition and future of this site are therefore lived and experienced by our whānau. Its visibility and proximity to Takaparawhau means that how it is remediated and redeveloped carries significance not only for Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, but also for Tāmaki Makaurau.

Takaparawhau (Bastion Point) sits at the heart of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei identity. It is our ancestral whenua. It is a site of significant Crown acquisition, and of significant resulting loss to Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. It is also the site of the 1977–78 occupation, a defining moment in the modern history of Aotearoa that ultimately led to the return of whenua and which reshaped the national conversation about Treaty justice.

For Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, that significance creates an obligation to ensure this site is responsibly restored and fit for the future.

History of the Eastcliffe Site

Eastcliffe was acquired in 2000 as part of our aspirations to build sustainable economic activity on our whenua while contributing positively to the wider community.

Following acquisition, serious deficiencies were discovered in the buildings. These issues were material and structural in nature. Several buildings were ultimately demolished in 2017, and litigation with retirement village residents followed (which was later settled at a high cost to Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei). Many residents who had called Eastcliffe home were displaced during this time. That was deeply distressing for them and difficult for us as kaitiaki of the residents, the buildings and the whenua. Construction began on new apartment blocks as part of a rebuild. The onset of COVID-19 and the national lockdown halted that redevelopment, leaving partially constructed works on site. More recently, further investigation confirmed that the remaining buildings require substantial weathertightness remediation, and the main building requires seismic performance improvements, all of which is both worrying and unsatisfactory to residents and to us.

Our Current Position

The cumulative result of these events is unsatisfactory.

Parts of the site remain undeveloped following the 2017 demolitions and the disrupted rebuild, with concrete pads and incomplete works still visible. In its current condition, the site is vulnerable to graffiti and deterioration, and does not reflect the cultural and historical significance of Takaparawhau for Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, Tāmaki Makaurau and Aotearoa.

This situation is worrying for the village's elderly residents and is also unsatisfactory for us as kaitiaki. Financially, the current position is materially adverse. Since the 2017 demolition, the village has operated below scale and continued to incur operating losses. In total, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei has invested approximately \$70 million into Eastcliffe over time, without financial return.

Proposed Partnership with Generus

The proposed partnership with Generus Living Group is the practical mechanism to address remediation, deliver redevelopment and stabilise long-term operations at Eastcliffe, enabling the cultural, resident and community outcomes described, while Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei retains ownership of the whenua.

Restoring mana to the whenua

Under this arrangement, Generus will acquire the village business and assume responsibility for remediation, redevelopment and ongoing operations.

Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei will retain ownership of the Eastcliffe site, with Generus operating under a long-term ground lease. The redevelopment will replace incomplete and ageing buildings with a fully integrated, high-quality retirement village that reflects the cultural and historical significance of Takaparawhau and restores mana to the whenua.

This approach is underpinned by enduring legal commitments between Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and Generus that apply to the initial redevelopment, any future redevelopment, and ongoing operations for the term of the 125-year ground lease. These commitments require each redevelopment and village operations to reasonably reflect agreed Cultural Acknowledgement Principles, including:

- An approved narrative (whakaaro matua) reflected in design and visual expression.
- Operational practices that support knowledge of and connection with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.
- Recognition of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei as tangata whenua, including through signage and cultural protocols before, during, and after development.

Any redevelopment must also comply with Essential Design Requirements, including alignment with the Trust Board masterplan and integration with planned kaumātua housing.

Enhancing the position of residents

Given the current condition of the village buildings, the redevelopment by Generus is expected to materially improve safety, quality and certainty for residents, and residents are supportive of the proposal. Manaakitanga (care for others) is one of our matapono, and we see this partnership and planned redevelopment as an expression of that responsibility.

Strengthening the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei position

Eastcliffe's ongoing costs and remediation requirements have diverted resources that could otherwise support other priorities for our people. The partnership with Generus shifts responsibility for remediation and operations away from Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, while providing purchase proceeds and long-term ground lease rental income, helping stabilise our position so we can continue investing in initiatives that support whānau wellbeing.

Other benefits

Jobs and contracting opportunities: Our partnership with Generus includes a framework for Generus to give whānau early notice of employment opportunities and opportunities to provide goods or services, both before and after redevelopment of the village. A scholarship for studies in health and wellbeing will also be offered each year for at least the first five years, with Generus to provide mentoring and job experience to scholarship recipients. These opportunities contribute to workforce participation and create pathways for Māori employment, skills development, and economic advancement.

Walkways: The project also includes relocating and upgrading publicly accessible walkways that provide physical connection to Takaparawhau. These walkways are not simply circulation routes; they intentionally reinforce the relationship between the site and this place of acknowledged importance. In doing so, they facilitate ongoing connection for both hapū members and the wider public to a location of deep cultural meaning.

Conclusion

For Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, restoring mana to this whenua is fundamental. It means addressing the condition of Eastcliffe and ensuring the site reflects the cultural and historical significance of Takaparawhau within our papakāinga. The redevelopment will improve the village for residents and is an expression of our manaakitanga.

The partnership embeds recognition of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei as tangata whenua through the design and operation of the redeveloped village, and supports access for our kaumātua to village facilities and services.

The partnership reduces exposure to ongoing losses and major remediation costs at Eastcliffe and provides long-term ground lease rental income, strengthening our ability to invest in initiatives that improve whānau wellbeing.

It also creates scholarship, employment and contracting opportunities for whānau, and strengthens connection to Takaparawhau through improved public walkways.

Takaparawhau is whenua tūpuna. It carries our history, and it calls us to act with care for those who come after us.

As kaitiaki, we must ensure this whenua reflects its significance and is cared for sustainably. This partnership enables us to retain ownership, restore dignity to a highly visible site, and deliver enduring benefits for Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, residents and the wider community.

This is a careful and considered decision, guided by our responsibilities to the whenua and to future generations.

Ngā mihi nui,



Marama Royal
Chairperson
Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Trust