

# Revitalisation and Accessibility Programme for Rarotonga's CBD

**A program of enhancement works to revitalise Rarotonga's main business district, will spring to fruition in the New Year.**

The Cook Islands Investment Corporation (CIIC) recently received formal approval of \$7.6m funding arrangement for the rollout of Te Tau Papa o Avarua – Phase 1, by the Cook Islands Infrastructure Trust Fund (ITF) Steering Committee.

The Cook Islands Infrastructure Trust Fund established through grant funding from New Zealand, is a statutory trust for the purposes of, investing in physical infrastructure to deliver essential services to Cook Islanders; Facilitating implementation of the National Infrastructure Investment Pipeline or Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy; and Supporting capability development of Cook Islands' infrastructure sector (across government and the private sector). The allocation of ITF funding to infrastructure projects is mutually agreed between both the New Zealand and Cook Islands governments.

CIIC Chief Executive Officer Allan Jensen said CIIC, and the team was pleased to hear this great news from the ITF and says this first phase aims to improve public facilities, including a focus on pedestrian and wheelchair accessibility and recreational areas through Avarua Town, the Punanga Nui Market and Panama Reserve.

Project implementation will be managed by a great team at CIIC with key stakeholders and the public and is expected to take 18 months and will start early next year, after further engagement, consultation, and development.

"The project is a subset of the larger 20 to 30 year plan; the widely-consulted and internationally acclaimed Te Tau Papa o Avarua – Avarua Town Plan" Jensen says.

Project works intend to:

- Greatly improve walkways, lighting, pedestrian accessibility, and safety
- Enrich the landscape with a variety of local flora



The Rotary Club of Rarotonga, having sponsored the original playground, is working with CIIC on the design of a new playground it hopes to be able to build with the support of other Rotary Clubs and Rotary International.

- to create a colour-filled aesthetic charm
- Entice and promote greater use of public spaces and facilities by providing amenities such as fitness trails and park benches
- Redevelop existing public toilet facilities for a more comfortable end-user experience
- Revitalise and future-proof the Punanga Nui Market to open up greater potential for maintainable economic growth

Positive changes will be felt and seen at the Punanga Nui Market; one of the Cook Islands iconic landmarks. Consultations with key stakeholders have been carried out in recent months and meaningful one to one interviews have helped inform draft market design and policy development priorities. Key aspects of the plan that are being carefully considered include improvements to visitor flow, addressing areas that are prone to flooding and easing congestion. The aim is to relieve current issues and accommodate for future visitor growth. Wheelchair accessibility throughout the market, a new toilet block at Constitution Park, better carparking and upgrade to the toilet block at the western end of the Punanga Nui Market are some of the key features in the draft plan.

Toilet block facilities opposite the Police Station in Avarua and at the Panama Are Tapa'eanga will be upgraded. There will also be further



Sheltered waiting area, information center



Viewing platform near pavilion

provision of public amenities including new benches, picnic areas and fitness trails with new lighting and signage installed through Avarua and Panama Reserves.

CIIC is delivering this project with a number of key stakeholders and agencies. An important feature of this collaboration will be the establishment of a Project Advisory Group (Advisory) made up of representatives from New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, CIIC, other agencies including BTIB,

Tourism and Internal Affairs and NGOs.

Over the coming months, further engagement with the public and key stakeholders will be carried out. Public presentations will be advertised in local print and social media.

**More information and continued updates will be provided via the CIIC website in the near future.**

