

## 2.1 REQUEST FOR FUNDING - MERCURY BAY MUSEUM



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<b>TO:</b>	Mercury Bay Community Board
<b>FROM:</b>	Heather Bruce, Area Manager - Mercury Bay
<b>REPORT DATE:</b>	15/02/2024
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	28/02/2024
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:</b>	Decision

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### 1 PURPOSE | TE TAKE MŌ TE PŪRONGO

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The purpose of this report is for the Mercury Bay Community Board to consider a request from the Mercury Bay Museum for funding assistance of \$2,900 excl GST for a Virtual Reality (VR) Education Application **Attachment A**.

### 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA

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As part of the Mercury Bay Museum's community outreach and engagement, a new VR programme was developed to provide the opportunity for local schools to experience new technology and to learn and have access to local and national history.

Some initial issues have been experienced in the implementation of this programme, which can be resolved at a cost to the Museum of \$2,900 excl GST.

The Mercury Bay Community Board has a Discretionary Fund of \$22,000 for the 2023/2024 financial year, which provides virtually full discretion to the Community Board on what to fund (it cannot be used to top up a Council funded capital project).

The Community Board also has \$11,505 of the Council's Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund available for this same financial year. There is currently no specific criteria for this fund, however historically the Community Board has considered application to this fund based on the benefits of a project to the natural and cultural heritage of the Mercury Bay Ward and wider Thames-Coromandel district. Council recently informally discussed this fund and setting future criteria that aligns to the listed heritage and significant trees in [Appendix 1 and 3 in the Proposed District Plan - Appeals Version](#). Any proposed changes have not been confirmed at this time.

No funding has been allocated from either of these funds in the current financial year and neither fund can be held over past the financial year. All unspent funds at 30 June 2024 will be held in the respective Local or District retained earnings.

### 3 RECOMMENDATIONS | TE WHAIKUPU

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That the Mercury Bay Community Board:

1. Receives the Request for Funding report dated 15 February 2024.
2. Approves/Declines a grant of \$2,900 excl GST from either the Mercury Bay Community Board Discretionary Fund or the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund for the Mercury Bay Museum for a Virtual Reality (VR) Education Application.

### 4 BACKGROUND | TUARONGO

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The Mercury Bay Museum, under the auspices of the Mercury Bay Museum Trust Board Incorporated, has a vision to protect, share and preserve Te Whanganui ō Hei | Mercury Bay's culture and heritage. The reach of the Museum encompasses the Mercury Bay Ward boundaries. It is a repository for historical and cultural taonga/treasure, archives and photographs which reflect the community and the rich and long history.

The Museum's Strategic Plan notes the educational role the museum has in the community, which they provide through public programmes and interactive information exhibitions. A curriculum based education programme is delivered onsite or offsite in locations within the wider community by Museum staff.

Council and the Mercury Bay Museum Trust Board have a Management Agreement which sets out the requirements of each party to enable the provision of a museum for the Mercury Bay community. In line with the agreement, Council currently pays the Museum Trust Board \$27,000 for the day to day operational management of the Mercury Bay Museum. Under the agreement the Mercury Bay Community Board can consider and approve applications from the Mercury Bay Museum Trust Board to enable it to undertake individual museum projects.

The request for funding will allow the Mercury Bay Museum to extend its community outreach and engagement in a way that allows the Museum to use a VR education application in perpetuity, with no ongoing costs. This technology could allow for future 3D scanning of items in the Museum collection which are deemed to be precious or fragile to be displayed within the museum building.

### 5 OPTIONS AND ASSESSMENT | KŌWHIRINGA ME NGĀ AROMATAWAI

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Staff have identified the following reasonably practicable options for the Mercury Bay Community Board to consider.

#### Option 1 - Approve the request for funding from the Mercury Bay Community Board Discretionary Fund

##### Summary of option:

The Mercury Bay Community Board has \$22,000 currently available in the Discretionary Fund for the 2023/2024 financial year. The Board could consider funding the request from this budget.

Advantages:	Disadvantages:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board have virtually full discretion on what to fund from this budget.</li> <li>• Funding this initiative would have a positive impact on the social and cultural well-being of the Mercury Bay community.</li> <li>• Youth will be the first to benefit through the Museum's ongoing education outreach programmes.</li> <li>• Supports the community aspirations noted in the three 2020-2030 Mercury Bay Community Plans, of the importance of "Local history and a sense of place".</li> <li>• Heritage items of Te Whanganui ō Hei   Mercury Bay will be accessible to a wider audience through the use of the VR technology.</li> <li>• Benefits would be long term as the application has the ability to be extended both locally and internationally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding this request from the Discretionary Fund may impact any other initiatives that the Community Board are considering supporting.</li> </ul>

**Option 2 - Approve the request for funding from the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund**

**Summary of option:**  
The Mercury Bay Community Board has available funds of \$11,505 from Council's 2023/2024 Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Advantages:	Disadvantages:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst this fund has no specific criteria at this time, the Mercury Bay Community Board can make decisions on how to allocate funds from this budget. It is anticipated that the Board would make decisions on allocating this fund based on how any outcomes would benefit natural and cultural heritage outcomes.</li> <li>• Funding this initiative would have a positive impact on the social and cultural well-being of the Mercury Bay community.</li> <li>• Youth will be the first to benefit through the Museums ongoing education outreach programmes.</li> <li>• Supports the community aspirations noted in the three 2020-2030 Mercury Bay Community Plans, of the importance of "Local history and a sense of place".</li> <li>• Heritage items of Te Whanganui ō Hei   Mercury Bay will be accessible to a wider audience through the use of the VR technology.</li> <li>• Benefits would be long term as the application has the ability to be extended both locally and internationally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding this request from the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund may impact any other initiatives that the Community Board are considering supporting.</li> </ul>

### Option 3 - Do nothing/Decline the request for funding

**Summary of option:** The Mercury Bay Community Board could make a decision to decline this request for funding.

Advantages:	Disadvantages:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Budget will be retained for other initiatives the Community Board may consider supporting or returned to retained earnings at the end of the 2023/2024 financial year.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Social and cultural well-beings will not be met through support for this initiative.</li><li>Youth will not receive any benefits.</li><li>The communities aspirations around the importance of "Local history and sense of place" will not be supported.</li><li>The heritage of Te Whanganui ō Hei   Mercury Bay, as it relates to the Mercury Bay Museum collection, will only be accessible if there is room to include it in the physical displays within the Museum building or by specific request to the Museum.</li><li>No long term benefits will be gained.</li></ul>

## 6 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS | HE PŪTEA WHAIWHAKĀRO

The application from the Mercury Bay Museum meets the criteria for the Mercury Bay Community Board Discretionary Fund and the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund. The requested amount of \$2,900 excl GST could be funded from either the Mercury Bay Community Board Discretionary Fund or the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund.

## 7 SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT | TE HIRANGA ME TE WHAKAPĀPĀ

The decision being considered has been assessed against the criteria in the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. A summary of the assessment is as follows:

Criteria	Assessment of degree of importance
<b>Well-being of the District</b>	
Will the proposal affect any aspect of the social, economic, environmental or cultural well-being of a specific community, or the District as a whole? If so: Can the impact of the decision be easily reversed? Will the impact be major and long term?	There would be a medium impact from this proposal which would be a positive impact on the social and cultural well-being of the Mercury Bay community. A decision to approve funding would be unable to be easily reversed. The positive impact would be long term.
<b>Community interest and effect</b>	
Is the community already, or is it likely to become, interested in the proposal?	There is no negative impact on the community. Some groups will have an interest.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment of degree of importance</b>
Is the proposal likely to be controversial?	The proposal is unlikely to be controversial.
Will a large portion of the community be affected or have interest in it?	There is no negative impact on the wider community.
Will the impact on communities will be major and long-term?	Any impact on the community from funding this proposal would be long term given the VR application will be available to the Museum and by extension to the community, with no future costs. The application allows for future expansion of the service.
Will it impact a specific demographic?	Initially the project would positively impact on the youth of Mercury Bay by use of the application through the curriculum based education programmes delivered by the Mercury Bay Museum.
Will it impact Māori, Māori culture and traditions?	The proposal will not impact māori or māori culture and traditions in any other way that is different from other demographics.
<b>Financial and operational consequences for the Council</b>	
Will the proposal or decision impact the capacity of the Council to carry out its role and functions? If so, can the impact of the decision be easily reversed?	There will be no impact on the capacity of Council to carry out its roles and functions.
Will a level of service (as set out in the Council's Long-term Plan) be affected? If so, can the impact of the decision be easily reversed?	There will be no impact on level of service.
Will a strategic asset be affected? If so, can the impact of the decision be easily reversed?	There will be no impact on a strategic asset.
To what extent will the financial costs of making and implementing the proposal or decision impact rates? If so, can the impact of the decision be easily reversed?	As funding is already budgeted within the Annual Plan, there will be no impact on rates from a decision on this proposal.
Other relevant criteria	There is no other relevant criteria.

For most of the criteria there is no impact from this decision. Where there is impact, the degree of impact is positive rather than negative. Where there is an impact it has been assessed as a medium degree of importance and therefore is of medium significance.

Given the degree of positive significance and the fact both the Mercury Bay Community Board Discretionary Fund and Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund have been consulted on via the Annual Plan and budgets have subsequently been approved, the staff assessment is that no further consultation is required in making a decision.

## **8 CONSISTENCY WITH EXISTING POLICIES AND PLANS | TE ŌRITENGA KI NGĀ KAUPAPA HERE ME NGĀ WHAKARITERITENGA**

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This decision is not significantly inconsistent with any policy adopted by the Council, or any plan the Council is required to have under the Local Government Act 2002 or any other enactment.

## **9 PREFERRED OPTION | TE KŌWHIRINGA MATUA**

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As the decision to provide funding is primarily at the Community Board's discretion, staff have not put forward a preferred option.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Request for Funding - Virtual Reality (VR) Education Application - Mercury Bay Museum