WORLD HERITAGE | TENTATIVE LIST 2025

Kaikouta

Why World Heritage:

WORLD HERITAGE LEVERAGES FUNDING

World Heritage leverages philanthropic funding, research investment and education

SELF-MANAGEMENT VISION AND VOICE

World Heritage provides greater leverage for self-management, political voice and secures a strong vision and platform for managing, Kaikōura into the future

WORLD HERITAGE

BRAND VALUE

Enhances our value brand in food and beverage, food and fibre exports, medicinal cannabis, tourism and new industry development

World Heritage is about ensuring natural and cultural protection, preserving our cultural landscape.

Executive Summary

Te Korowai o Te Tai ō Marokura ((Te Korowai), on behalf of the Kaikōura community are applying for Kaikoura to be included on Aotearoa New Zealand World Heritage Tentative List. The application is being led by Tā Mark Solomon (Ngāi Tahu; Ngāti Kuri) Chair of Te Korowai.

The Tentative List is an inventory of places in New Zealand that are of Outstanding Universal Value to humanity and have potential to meet the criteria for World Heritage status. Only sites on the tentative can nominate for World Heritage.

The Department of Conservation are currently doing a review of the Tentative List, for the first time in 18 years. World Heritage is not a new concept for Kaikōura and has been discussed for over 20 years. Between 2004-2006, Kaikōura was reviewed, alongside 303 other sites, by the Department of Conservation Advisory Groups to be added to the World Heritage Tentative list. Kaikōura was recognised as having strong potential, but had limitations:

The key challenges from the 2006 advisory board report were:

- Issue 1: Lack of any marine and coastal protected areas.
- Issue 2: Lack of enough protected lowland of high natural character, linking any eventual marine/coastal protected areas with the extensive conservation lands on the Seaward Kaikōura Range
- Issue 3: The fragmented nature of marine planning and management, making it more difficult to ensure the sustainable management of Kaikōura's fisheries and marine mammals. A potential World Heritage site at Kaikōura would need to have a co-ordinated marine/coastal conservation plan in place before a listing could be contemplated.

Since 2005, Kaikōura community has undertaken an extensive amount of work to overcome these challenges to ensure that Kaikōura not only meets the tentative criteria but should be at the top of the list.

Timeline of Actions addressing Challenges

- 2005 Te Korowai was started by Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura.
- 2008 The Ka Whata Tu o Rakihouia Conservation Park is established (Issue 2) Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust formed
- 2009 Encounter Kaikoura Established
- 2010 Te Rae o Atiu site enclosed by predator proof fence
- 2012 Kaikōura Marine Strategy published.
- 2014 Kaikōura (Te Tai o Marokura) Marine Management Act passed (Issue 1)
 The Act established: Te Whata Kai o Rakihouia i Te Tai o Marokura Kaikōura Marine
 Area. Comprising of the 10,416 hectare Hikurangi marine reserve (prohibiting mining,
 fishing or harvesting), a 4,686-hectare whale sanctuary (with seismic restrictions), a fur
 seal sanctuary, Five mataitai reserves and Taiapure-local fisheries.
- 2016 Statutory Kaikōura Marine Guardians established (Issue 3)
- 2020 Te Tau Wairehu o Marokura predator control project established. Kaikōura Dark Sky Trust Established.
- 2021 Kaikōura WIldlife Centre Trust
- 2024 International Dark Sky Sanctuary Status

We are seeking support for the application. On the back page, you will also find a variety of ways that you can support this mahi.

What is World Heritage?

World Heritage refers to places on Earth that are of "outstanding universal value to humanity" and have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List to be protected for future generations. The World Heritage Convention, adopted by UNESCO in 1972, provides a framework for international cooperation in preserving and protecting these treasures.

World Heritage evolves, with major reforms from the early 2000's, recognising local communities and indigenous landscapes as core to achieving World Heritage.

World Heritage Status is only granted to sites and values that are not already indoctrinated in the World Heritage List anywhere in the world. The World Heritage list only includes one site of its type, and hence it is an extremely complex and challenging process.

UNESCO does not put in place any protection mechanism or legislation, nor does it take ownership of the site.

To be included, a site must:

- · Be included on New Zealand Aotearoa Tentative List Held by Department of Conservation
- · Be deemed to be of Outstanding Universal Value by meeting at least one of the 10 specified natural and cultural criteria
- · Meet the relevant conditions of integrity and (for cultural sites) authenticity
- · Meet the requirements for protection and management
- · Demonstrate global significance through a comparative analysis



Tentative List - First Step

To be nominated for World Heritage status, a site must be on Aotearoa New Zealand's Tentative List.

The Aotearoa New Zealand Tentative list is an inventory of places that have strong potential to meet the World Heritage Criteria



Strong Potential

For a site to be placed on the Tentative List, it needs to have strong potential to be listed as a World Heritage site by meeting the UNESCO World Heritage criteria.



No responsibilities or obligations come from being on the list.

Including a site on the Tentative List indicates an interest in obtaining World Heritage status at a later stage and a strong likelihood of meeting the UNESCO criteria but has no obligations



Global Importance

Sites are considered from a global perspective, which means a site of local or national importance will not necessarily be inscribed on the World Heritage List.



No Guarantee of World Heritage

While being included on the Tentative List is the first step in the nomination process, there is no guarantee of being granted World Heritage status.

Steps to World Heritage are complex and detailed process that take 8-10 years:

- 1. Tentative List (application due January 2026 and decision October 2026)
- 2. The Nomination File (can take 4-8 years to develop with intense consultation)
- 3. The Advisory Bodies (can take 1-3 years)
- 4. The World Heritage Committee



IMPORTANT MARINE
MAMMAL AREA (IMMA)
MARINE MAMMAL DIVERSITY

MOST PRODUCTIVE CANYON BELOW 500M XCEEDING BY 100 TIMES TH



Kaikōura's Outstanding Universal Value

Kaikōura is the world's most spectacular land-sea interface with the Seaward Kaikōura ranges rising abruptly from the Kaikōura canyon revealing earth's ongoing geological evolution through active uplift, subduction, and canyon formation. It sustains continuous ecological and biological processes linking mountain, river, and sea and harbours an extraordinary concentration of threatened marine and terrestrial species within a single, compact ecosystem. Ngāti Kuri's ancestral stewardship and Pākehā traditions together express humanity's enduring adaptation to a dynamic coastal environment.

(v) Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

Kaikōura distinctively unites Ngāti Kuri's millennia-old guardianship with modern sustainability, exemplifying humanity's finest adaptation to dynamic marine and alpine environments. Kaikōura embodies a living multicultural landscape where Ngāti Kuri's traditions of mahinga kai, whakapapa, and kaitiakitanga, and Pākehā fishing and farming traditions, together express humanity's enduring adaptation to a dynamic coastal environment. Their intertwined stewardship of ocean and land represents an exceptional continuum of cultural resilience, sustainability, and harmony with Earth's restless natural forces. Its enduring cultural landscape, shaped by tectonic upheaval and ocean abundance, represents the world's most complete living expression of people harmonising with an ever-changing Earth.

(vii) Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

Kaikōura, based on proximity, is world's most dramatic land-sea interface, with the Seaward Kaikōura ranges rising abruptly from the Kaikōura canyon, where dynamic geological and oceanographic features converge to create a landscape of exceptional beauty and ecological intensity. Its superlative beauty evokes profound aesthetic and spiritual responses found nowhere else on the planet.

Kaikōura's Outstanding Universal Value

(viii) Be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

Kaikōura is Earth's most vivid testament to active continental creation stands as a globally significant record of Earth's tectonic and oceanic history. The rapid uplift of the Seaward Kaikōura Ranges, active plate collision, and exposure of submarine geology reveal ongoing continental formation processes of exceptional clarity, offering a living textbook of planetary evolution unmatched in accessibility and dynamism. These restless forces continually reshape habitats, including the adaption of tītī colonies, demonstrating unparalleled interplay between geological transformation, ecological adaptation, and the planet's ongoing evolution in visible, living form. Kaikōura 2016 Earthquake, provided living experience of a continual evolutionary processes, whist being the earth's most complex earthquake ever studied.

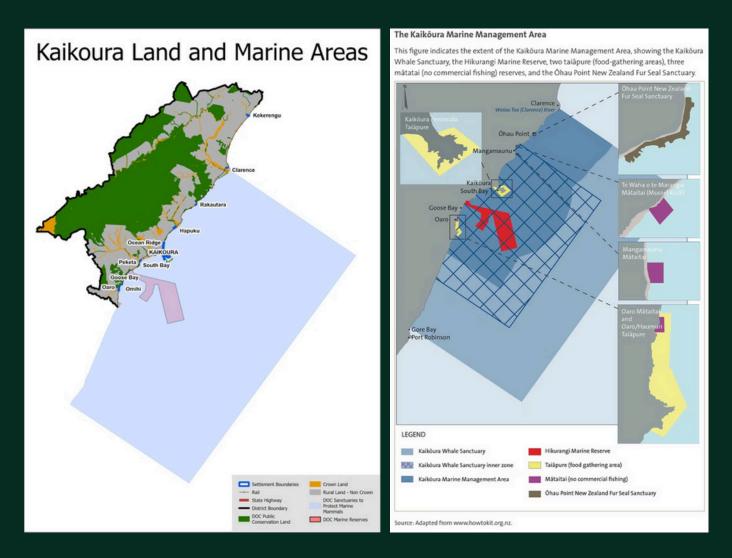
(ix) be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

Kaikōura exemplifies exceptional ongoing ecological and oceanographic processes, demonstrating how submarine canyon dynamics support high productivity and biodiversity in a coastal setting. The Kaikōura Canyon is one of the most productive benthic (ocean floor) deep-sea habitats yet described, with year-round presence of sperm whales, seasonal migrations of humpback and other whales, and large colonies of seals and seabirds — reflecting complex and ongoing trophic interactions. Kaikōura's rare convergence of oceanic currents, submarine canyon, and coastal ecosystems supports continuous ecological and biological evolution. From nutrient-rich upwellings sustaining whales to alpine rivers feeding coastal reefs, these interlinked systems exemplify dynamic, ongoing processes shaping biodiversity across land and sea with exceptional global scientific value. The 2016 earthquake and subsequent ecological regeneration offer a globally significant example of rapid ecological succession in a marine-terrestrial system.

(x) Contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science or conservation.

Kaikōura provides critical habitats for globally significant marine mammals, seabirds, and endemic species, illustrating exceptional biodiversity conservation value across interconnected land–sea ecosystems, sustaining threatened species through continuous adaptation to geological uplift and climatic change. Kaikōura contains irreplaceable habitats for globally threatened species including sperm whales, hector dolphins, dusky dolphins, seabirds, and endemic alpine flora. Its extraordinary concentration of marine and terrestrial biodiversity in a compact interconnected ecosystem of contrasting environments, represents one of Earth's most important natural sanctuaries for in-situ conservation, unrivalled scientific and ecological value.

What area would World Heritage cover?



For World Heritage Tentative List Application, we are looking at the Kaikōura District Council boundary and the Kaikōura Marine Area.

The reason for this is:

- All aspects of Kaikōura's Outstanding Universal Values fit within these boundaries.
- Management and protection is already in place through Kaikoura District Council plans, polices and regulations, Department of Conservation Legislation and Regulations, Fisheries NZ Legislation and Regulation, Kaikoura Marine Management Act 2014, Kaikoura Marine Guardians, International Dark Sky Sanctuary Status and Ngāti Kuri Management plans and processes

Why World Heritage for Kaikōura?

World Heritage is about conserving our environment and culture for future generations. World Heritage sites have such 'Outstanding Universal Value' for humanity that we want to ensure that they can be shared for the future. Kaikōura's natural environment is central to our community and the basis of our cultural, social and economic wellbeing. It is the reason that our community lives here, and we have a responsibility to ensure that it is conserved for future generations. As a small community, we cannot do that by ourselves and World Heritage provides a tool to leverage support, funding and research and helps protect against non-complementary industries.



Self-Management and Shared Vision

World Heritage provides greater leverage for self-management, political voice and secures a strong vision and platform for managing Kaikōura into the future



Research and Education

World Heritage can leverage philanthropic funding, research investment and education. Kaikōura aim is to grow the research and education industry, World Heritage is the key to achieving that.



Recognition

Enhances our value brand in food and beverage, commodity exports, medicinal cannabis, tourism and new industry development



Protection

Protection against noncomplementary, extractive industries

World Heritage is about ensuring natural and cultural protection, and preserving our cultural landscape.

Benefits of World Heritage

Social Benefits

- Social Recognition: Celebrates the mahi of numerous community organisations
- Shared Vision: Brings together diverse community groups for a common goal.
- Community Pride: Recognition that fosters a sense of pride and ownership among residents.
- Economies of Scale: Shared vision/platform for community funding
- Education: Increased awareness and educational opportunities about local ecology, history, and conservation.
- Community growth: Attraction and Retention of residents to ensure business, school, organisation and community volunteer sustainability
- Spiritual Wellbeing: Natural environment creates spiritual energy, calm and mindfulness
- Health & Wellbeing: Exploring nature through active adventure, fitness and recreation

Economic Benefits

- Increased values-based Tourism: Long-stays rather than large increase in people.
- Increased Tourism Spend: Managed-Growth Scenario 8-10% increased spend \$46.4 \$58 million over 5 years.
- Research Investment: International philanthropic funding for scientific research to ensure protection of Kaikōura and informed decision making
- Industry Diversification: Positioning Kaikōura as a hub for marine research and education.
- Brand Value: Local products (like seafood) can be marketed as coming from a World Heritage-listed area, adding value.
- Indirect Brand Value: Strengthens destination brand equity and premium positioning for place-branded food & beverage exports
- Tourism → export linkage: Visitors exposed to local goods (wine, honey, crayfish, pāua, gin, wool) may build demand in offshore markets ("export via the tourist's palate").
- New industry attraction: Conservation and Environmental services; Knowledge economy; climate change observatories; creative and digital industries (film/documentary, content/app creation); wellness; wellness real estate; green technology; events, international conferences and creative economies.

Environmental Benefits:

- Celebrates Mahi: Kaikōura community has a long history of working together to looking after the environment including Ngāti Kuri Kaitiakitanga, Kaikōura Marine Management Act 2014 and International Dark Sky Sanctuary Status.
- Conservation: Enhanced protection for marine and terrestrial ecosystems, including rare species and habitats through research and philanthropic funding
- Sustainable Management: Celebrates our best practices in tourism, fishing, and land use, ensuring long-term ecological health.
- Pursuit of Excellence: Adaptive management practices based on knowledge, technical advancement and an ever changing environment.
- Protection for extractive Industries: Provides an additional legal and moral shield against extractive threats.

Benefits of World Heritage

Cultural Māori Benefits of World Heritage - Led and guided by Ngāti Kuri

Strengthening Kaitiakitanga (Guardianship of the Environment)

- Recognition would affirm local mana whenua as guardians of the land, sea, and taonga species.
- Embeds Māori-led environmental practice and mātauranga Māori in management frameworks.
- Encourages intergenerational protection of natural resources, marine life, and ecosystems.

Upholding Rangatiratanga (Self-Determination & Leadership)

- Offers a formal platform for mana whenua leadership in governance and planning.
- Enhances the ability to assert tino rangatiratanga over cultural narratives, environmental policy, and resource use.
- Provides stronger seats at regional, national, and global tables.

Enhancing Kotahitanga (Unity & Collective Action)

- Encourages collaboration between iwi, community, government, conservation groups, and research institutions.
- Brings shared purpose in protecting cultural and natural heritage.
- Strengthens whan aungatanga (relationships) and community cohesion.

Promoting Mātauranga Māori (Traditional Knowledge)

- Celebrates and protects stories, whakapapa, and place-based knowledge.
- Ensures traditional ecological knowledge is valued alongside science.
- Provides educational platforms for cultural interpretation and research.

Cultural Identity & Pride

- Reinforces the mana of local iwi and hapū.
- Showcases Māori cultural practices waiata, karakia, weaving, carving, reo, waka traditions — as living culture.
- Helps future generations stand strong in identity and cultural confidence.

Economic & Social Benefits that Reflect Tikanga Māori

(without prioritising economy over environment)

- Promotes culturally-grounded sustainable economic development (eco-tourism, cultural tourism, Māori business).
- Job creation in kaitiaki roles, cultural education, research, guiding, arts.
- Reinforces manaakitanga by welcoming visitors through cultural values.

Benefits of World Heritage



Māori Value	Key Benefit		
Kaitiakitanga	Enhanced authority and tools to protect natural and spiritual taonga		
Rangatiratanga	Strengthened iwi leadership in governance and planning		
Kotahitanga	Unified partnerships across community and agencies		
Mātauranga Māori	Protected and celebrated knowledge systems		
Manaakitanga & Whanaungatanga	Community wellbeing and relationship-building		
Mana & Cultural Identity	Pride, visibility, and empowerment		



Kaikoura Star



MYTH #1: WORLD HERITAGE IS ABOUT TOURISM



World Heritage is not about tourism.

The heart of World Heritage is about conserving our environment and culture for future generations.. World Heritage sites have such 'Outstanding Universal Value' for humanity that we want to ensure that they can be shared for the Kaikoura's natural environment is central to our community and the basis of our cultural, social and economic wellbeing. It is the reason that our community lives here, and we have a responsibility to ensure that it is conserved for future generations.

MYTH #2: WORLD HERITAGE INCREASES BUREAUCRACY AND REGULATION

To achieve World Heritage status in Kaikōura, it is based upon current Zealand legislation regulations, regional council, local council and iwi plans and management as being the key mechanism for protection.

Industries will continue to be managed under current legislation and regulation, and this does not change due to World Heritage status.

Farming will still be managed by Ministry of Primary industries and associated agencies. Fishing will still be managed under Ministry of Primary Industries and Fisheries NZ.

World Heritage is about celebrating the way we already do things and is not about changing Kaikōura to be a square peg in a round hole.



MYTH #3: WORLD HERITAGE PREVENTS FISHING & HUNTING

No, World Heritage does not prevent nor restrict fishing or hunting.

This continues to be managed by Ministry of Primary Industries, Fisheries NZ and Department of Conservation and associated agencies and organisations. World Heritage is granted based upon the legislation and regulation that is in place.

It is important to note, that New Zealand Fisheries management plans and quota systems are viewed as some of the best in the world and hence we already operate at some of highest level of management.

MYTH #4: WORLD HERITAGE PLACES KAIKOURA UNDER THE CONTROL OF UNESCO

World Heritage areas continue to be managed at a local, regional and state level, based upon management protection plans submitted in the nomination process.

UNESCO does not manage World Heritage sites nor own the sites. This remains with the state.

UNESCO will monitor and review sites to ensure that they are being managed and protected accordingly and not falling into danger.

MYTH #5: WORLD **HERITAGE CAUSES** OVERTOURISM



World Heritage sites can gain the attention of media, agents, tourism operators

and travellers, due to the rigorous, multilayered process and criteria that must be met to obtain World Heritage Status. Some World Heritage sites have experienced zero tourism from gaining their status. Uncontrolled Tourism Growth can

occur on sites that:

Have previously not had Tourism. Ease of access or globally central location.

A disconnect between government, local government, tourism board, operators and community.

No barriers to entry of operations No consenting or building permitting required.

Sites that traverse international boundaries.

Based on the above, Kaikoura is rated at a low to medium risk of uncontrolled tourism growth. Over a 5-year period, managed-growth can be expected to show 8-10% uplift with seasonality management. This is an increased spend is due to longer stays and greater spend, of around \$46.4m - \$58.0m to Kaikōura and \$9.3m—\$17.4m spillover across Canterbury/Marlborough.



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Concerns of World Heritage

Uncontrolled Tourism:

Uncontrolled/Overtourism can be a concern for World Heritage Sites.

Key Factors in uncontrolled tourism occurring:

- Accessibility Ease of access to location (distance, transportation)
- Lack of Governance Lack of communication and management between central government, local government, tourism boards and tourism operators.
- Location of Site Traverse international borders into more than one country
- No Barriers to Entry
 No permit or licence requirements
- No planning or consenting requirements
 No resource or building consents required
- Existing Tourism Tourism already occurring

Kaikōura's Perspective:

- Accessibility Hard to access requires international flights, transportation
- Lack of Governance Close working relation between central and local governments with Tourism boards, tourism operators and community and iwi or Ngāti Kuri
- Location of Site within one country and one local government management area
- No Barriers to Entry Permits required for marine mammals viewing, use of DoC land; fishing catch limits
- No planning or consenting requirements District plans, Spatial Plans, Building consent requirements, Resource Management Act, Destination Management Plan
- Existing Tourism Tourism already occurring. Social Licence to operate

Overall overtourism for Kaikoura risk: low/controlled compared to global world heritage hotspots, due to:

- Governance tools (District Plan, RMA, Destination Management Plan, iwi plans),
- Geographical constraints (hard access, limited capacity),
- Eco-tourism model (licensed, regulated, culturally grounded).

Concerns of World Heritage

Tourism Risk Matrix

Risk Area	Likelihood	Consequences if unmanaged	Current Mitigation	Residual Risk (with WH status)
Visitor numbers exceeding town capacity (roads, parking, water, waste)	Low-Moderate	Seasonal congestion; pressure on local services	Hard-to-access geography; District Plan & RMA controls; Destination Management Plan caps	Moderate (summer peak strain)
Marine ecosystem stress (whales, dolphins, seabirds disturbed by vessels)	Moderate	Loss of biodiversity; reputational harm to eco- brand	Strict marine mammal regulations; licensed ecooperators with quotas; iwi kaitiakitanga oversight	Moderate-Low (needs constant monitoring)
Cultural integrity impacts (commodificatio n of Ngāti Kuri/Ngāi Tahu values)	Low	Erosion of rangatiratanga; conflict over representation	Iwi management plans; co- governance models; strong iwi tourism enterprises	Low
Housing & community pressure (short-term rentals, cost of living)	Low-Moderate	Resident displacement; community tensions	Small housing stock; Council zoning powers	Moderate (if visitor stays expand rapidly post-WH)
Economic overdependence on tourism	Low	Vulnerability to shocks (COVID- like events, disasters)	Diversified economy (fishing, farming, agriculture); eco- tourism resilience	Low
Reputation risk (global "overloved" site narrative)	Moderate	Negative press; reduced visitor satisfaction	Destination branding already eco-limited; existing quotas and licensing	Moderate-Low

Many of concerns/areas of risk already exist in Kaikoura and not World Heritage specific

Concerns of World Heritage

Rangatiratanga - Self-determination

- In the past, World Heritage listing often excluded Indigenous voices, displacing or restricting traditional land uses
- Recent reforms (since the 2000s) encourage co-management, free prior and informed consent (FPIC), and Indigenous-led nominations.
- For many iwi, First Nations, and tribal communities, UNESCO recognition is now seen as a way to assert and uplift international recognition of ancestral stewardship.

Murujuga Cultural Landscapes, inscribed into World Heritage in July 2025, has redefined World Heritage around self-determination.

Murujuga Cultural Landscape

Murujuga is a landscape of ancient rocks located in northwest Australia, which encompasses the Burrup Peninsula, the Dampier Archipelago's 42 islands, and nearby marine areas. It is shaped by the Lore—rules and narratives that were put in place to create the Country—and the enduring presence of the Ngarda-Ngarli, Traditional Owners and Custodians of the site. The property holds profound cultural and spiritual significance, reflecting over 50,000 years of continuous care and use.

https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1709

Quotes from Peter Hicks, Chair of Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC)

"This is an exceptionally proud moment for us. It is recognition of the hard work that MAC has put in to progressing this nomination, but it is also recognition of the way our ancestors have managed this extraordinary landscape for over 50,000 years.

We are proud to continue that legacy."

"World Heritage is the mechanism we will use to continue to do what we have always done – protect this Ngurra and our culture for all future generations".

Support Kaikōura being added to World Heritage Tentative List and help support our special place for future generations

I Support Kaikōura



Being Added to the World Heritage Tentative List

- 1. Pledge your support by scanning QR code
- 2. Write a letter of support from your organisation and forward to the below email address.
- 3. Like and follow World Heritage Concept Kaikōura on facebook

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