Museum Strategy

Final version

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CONTENTS

KARAKIA **1**
WELCOME FROM THE TRUST CHAIR **2**
WE'RE GOING PLACES. WANT TO COME WITH US? **3**
WHO WE ARE **5**
HOW WE'LL GET THERE **7**
Strategic goal 1 Collaborate and respond 9
Strategic goal 2 Be a hive of learning, discovering, and creating 10
Strategic goal 3 Sustain ourselves financially (and become resilient) ... 11
Strategic goal 4 Enrich our collections 12
Strategic goal 5 Go digital – both in the building and online 13
Strategic goal 6 Make our physical spaces bigger and better 14
OUR HISTORY **15**

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He honore, he kororia
He maungarongo ki te whenua
He whakaaro pai ki nga tangata
Tena koutou katoa

Ka nui te mihi ki a koutou
ki te tautoko i te rautaki
o te Whare Pupuri Taonga
o Te Ahu.

He mahere wawata ki te hononga
tangata ki nga taonga o te rohe
o Te Taitokerau ki Te Raki.

Kei te haere mai koutou nga kaihoe
I te waka ki te ara rere atu
ki te tai anga mua.

Welcome from the Trust Chair

Nau mai, haere mai!

Welcome to the future of our amazing museum.

First, some facts. The Museum operates under the guidance of the Far North Regional Museum Trust, with support from Far North District Council as a trusted partner.

Operationally, the museum is staffed by a full time Curator and part-time Museum assistant, with help from an enthusiastic team of volunteers.

As a Trust, we have worked tirelessly over past decades to ensure the integrity of the museum, the collection and the history and culture of the Far North.

Most recently, this has led to the integration of the museum into the Te Ahu centre in Kaitaia, a treasure within a treasure.

But now we're looking forwards. The Trust views this strategy as a roadmap to the future of the museum. With commitment and passion, we will achieve the goals laid out – let's be a digital leader, let's be the home of a truly significant taonga Maori collection, let's bring the collection to life for the next generation of tamariki in the Far North, let's tell our story to the world.

We welcome you aboard as we start this next phase of our journey – as we aim to make the treasures of our collection accessible to all of you, no matter where you are, Kaitaia or Kawakawa, Krakow or Karachi.

It's your museum. We hope you grow to love it as much as we do.

Kia mau kia manawa,
tihei wā mauri ora

We're going places.

Want to come with us?

An introduction to this strategy

It's so easy for a strategy document to feel bland, dry, lifeless – even with the best intentions. And so we present this strategy to you, personally, from us, personally. Because while the museum has four walls, it is people who imbue it with mauri – people today, people from the past whose lives are represented through the taonga we hold, and people who aren't here yet, but one day will be.

If we want to be different than we've been before (and we do), we have to behave differently.

So this strategy is the first statement of our bold new voice – a museum with a distinct, recognisable identity – a museum you can feel truly connected to.

You told us your experiences with museums are profound and deeply personal. They're emotional, eye-opening, sentimental, and sometimes confronting. There's no reason for us to present a strategy that doesn't acknowledge that.

So, to our people, to our rohe, and to the world, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Who we are.

Who we're becoming.

Who we are

About us and our mission

We are a regional museum with a treasured responsibility to house and keep alive the history of our region. But why? Why is this so important, and therefore how should we keep making sure we're getting better at doing it, every day?

Te Ahu has existed for 51 years, and our collective understanding about the role of museums has changed dramatically over that time. Like the rest of the world, Covid-19 has made us think about how important it is that we become and stay more connected.

We have a responsibility to become more resilient so that the precious history of Te Hiku o Te Ika – The Far North – and the learnings woven through that history are accessible to our community and to the world.

Who we're becoming

Our vision is:

To connect the world with the history and culture of the Far North, Aotearoa/New Zealand

What we believe in

Our values

We work hard to exemplify the key values of the District, especially those that highlight community, partnership, culture and guardianship.

1. **Kaitiakitanga** – Environmental stewardship and sustainability
2. **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** – Partnership
3. **Tū tangata** – Strong cultural identities
4. **Whanaungatanga** – Family, community, connecting, and sharing

How we'll get there.

Our strategic goals

Both our research and our consultation confirmed loud and clear. Te Ahu Museum needs to:

1. **Collaborate and respond**
2. **Be a hive of learning, discovering, and creating**
3. **Sustain ourselves financially and become resilient**
4. **Enrich our collections**
5. **Go digital – both in the building and online**
6. **Make our physical spaces bigger and better**

The following pages dive deeper into how we'll achieve each of these goals (our strategic objectives). Each year, we will develop an action plan to deliver on the objectives.

Opening of Kaitaia Co-operative Dairy Company at Awanui in 1926. Northwood Collection, Museum at Te Ahu.

Strategic goal 1:

Collaborate and respond

We will be more connected with our community. Only through partnership and relationship can we be a valued community hub, a trusted district museum, and a leader in our sector.

1. **Apply the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in our relationships with iwi, hapū, and whanau, making sure they are mutually beneficial, especially when it comes to caring for and presenting taonga Māori**
    a. Set up an iwi reference group
    b. Embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi into museum policy
    c. Work with the iwi of Te Hiku o Te Ika to tell unique iwi stories through physical and digital exhibitions

2. **Purposefully, strategically, and in an informed way, identify key partnerships with community, iwi, funders, local, and central government, industry and sector**
    a. Create a partnership framework and marketing strategy advancing strategic alliances
    b. Position Te Ahu as a regional hub to support other Far North museums
    c. Develop greater understanding of other Far North museums collections and the services they offer

3. **Keep ourselves relevant to our communities – local and international – by knowing what they want so we can meet their expectations**
    a. Actively seeking customer and audience feedback so we can keep improving our services
    b. Implement the recommendations from the August 2020 Audience report by clearly defining who our communities are and what they expect from us

4. **Have a stronger, clearer relationship between the Museum Trust Board and Far North District Council , so we are more connected, more representative, and more engaged and immersed in our roles and responsibilities.**
    a. Review Trust Deed, MOU, and Collections Policy to ensure they are future focussed and aligned
    b. Develop a governance plan with the Trust Board
    c. Review and define the catchment area of the museum with stakeholders

Strategic goal 2:

Be a hive of learning, discovering, and creating

We will offer fun and engaging experiences for all ages, satisfying many different areas of interest.

1. **Provide inspiring experiences – plan our learning sessions and resources for kura, schools, and adult learning with teachers, making sure we cover the needs of the national curriculum**
    a. Partner with local schools and learning institutions to co-create lessons and sessions to illuminate local Far North history
    b. Work with Te Papa, other museums nearby, community groups, and organised tours to share planning and delivery of events across the district
    c. Provide increased opportunities for interaction with the collection
    d. Explore opportunities for the development of a learning space and the addition of an education specialist to the museum workforce
    e. Provide opportunities for better understanding of preservation techniques

2. **Eliminate any barriers to enable access to learning programmes**
    a. Develop flexible learning programmes and tailor our sessions to the needs of different groups
    b. Build a relationship with MOE to help eliminate barriers to school children, and support literacy-based programming
    c. Outreach – take collections and programmes out to remote rural schools
    d. Build relationships with the MOE and work with them on implementing the new NZ History curriculum

3. **Create unforgettable experiences that make a genuine difference to visitors' lives**
    a. Develop a public programming schedule that provides the opportunity for discovery, creativity and learning
    b. Host events that showcase the unique cultural character of the Far North
    c. Present an increased range of public events that captivates the imagination
    d. Ensure the history of all cultures in the Far North are represented in the museum

4. **Increase the profile of the Museum as a destination on the tourism map**
    a. Promote the museum more effectively to the tourism sector
    b. Provide experiences that engage and delight tourists to the Far North
    c. Actively work with others to create a localised infrastructure of events, tours, and groups with existing activities and innovate for new opportunities

Strategic goal 3:

Sustain ourselves financially and become resilient

We need a plan to build a secure financial future that will ensure we are able to deliver on the vision of this strategy.

1. **Increase staffing to achieve strategic outcomes**
    a. Design a workforce plan so that we have enough of the right staff and volunteer support
    b. Build a sustainable volunteer workforce
    c. Identify opportunities for local employment
2. **Increase revenue by developing a 5 year financial plan**
3. **Maximise commercial opportunities and fundraising activities**
    a. Museum Trust plays an active role in fundraising activities
4. **Increase retail opportunities**
    a. Become a more attractive collaborator with, and space for, retailers
5. **Investigate digital and research revenue stream opportunities**
    a. Develop the museum's digital presence and explore potential revenue streams from this offer
6. **Explore opportunities for partnerships with corporate and funding agencies**

Strategic goal 4:

Enrich our collections

We will build on our already impressive, well-cared-for collections for greater access and transparency. We'll make sure they're more readily available for research, display, and interpretation.

1. **Become recognised as the leading museum collection of Far North history and culture in the country**
    a. Improve our collection development policies, and make sure our collection goals are well defined and known in the sector
    b. Develop and implement a deselection plan that is informed by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 and the Museum @ Te Ahu Collection Policy Management 2018
    c. Ensure the stories of all the peoples of the Far North are captured and accessible for future generations

2. **Establish strong collaborative relationships with museums and iwi for the**
    a. Repatriation of taonga Māori to the Far North region
    b. Work with other museums to facilitate the return of taonga
    c. Develop an exceptional collection of Māori taonga

3. **Grow the museum's role as a regional archive**
    a. Improve the access to the Museum's research space

Strategic goal 5:

Go digital – both in the building and online

To better connect and stay connected with our communities, by innovating through digital and emerging technologies. This will keep us visible and relevant in a connected digital world. We will be informed, and capable in telling our stories, experiencing our heritage and cultures, and creating opportunities for communities to engage with the museum.

1. **Enhanced museum online presence – access from anywhere, anytime, and through multiple channels**
    a. Develop a digital framework
    b. Take advantage of expanding online marketing opportunities
    c. Improve our online and onsite digital customer experience for better collection engagement
    d. Leverage new and emerging skills and technologies with potential digital partners

2. **Increase opportunities for visitors to interact with the collection through a digital showcase**
    a. Work with a technology provider to enhance the onsite digital experience

3. **Provide digitized collections available to anyone, anytime**
    a. Complete a project leading to the digitization of taonga and our documentary heritage

Strategic goal 6:
Make our physical spaces bigger and better

We will future-proof the physical museum for the growth of collections and audience engagement activities. This will mean we can continue to deliver our stories and narratives, increasing the joy of visiting the museum, and making the museum experience unforgettable.

1. Conduct a feasibility study for growing and extending the museum

a. Develop a long-term facility and business plan that considers opportunities for expansion and rationalization

b. Investigate the viability of an art workshop and display space, increased archives and research space as well as an educational space

c. Explore opportunities for displaying more of the collection, more often, including an enhanced Taonga Maori and mana whenua display.

History of the Museum

Te Ahu Museum (formerly known as the Far North Regional Museum) holds a remarkable collection. Its purposeis to illuminate the stories and histories of the Far North (Te Hiku o te Ika) of New Zealand. Treasures among the pre-European Māori collection include pounamu, early carvings and the 500 year-old skeletal remains of the extinct kuri (Polynesian dog).

Other major themes are gum digging and the Dalmatians, kauri gum and timber, early shipwrecks and missionary pioneers.

The museum has a large archives collection — documents, journals, newspapers, maps and photographs from the extensive Northwood Collection. It is the proud home of the first European item left in New Zealand, the mighty de Surville anchor.

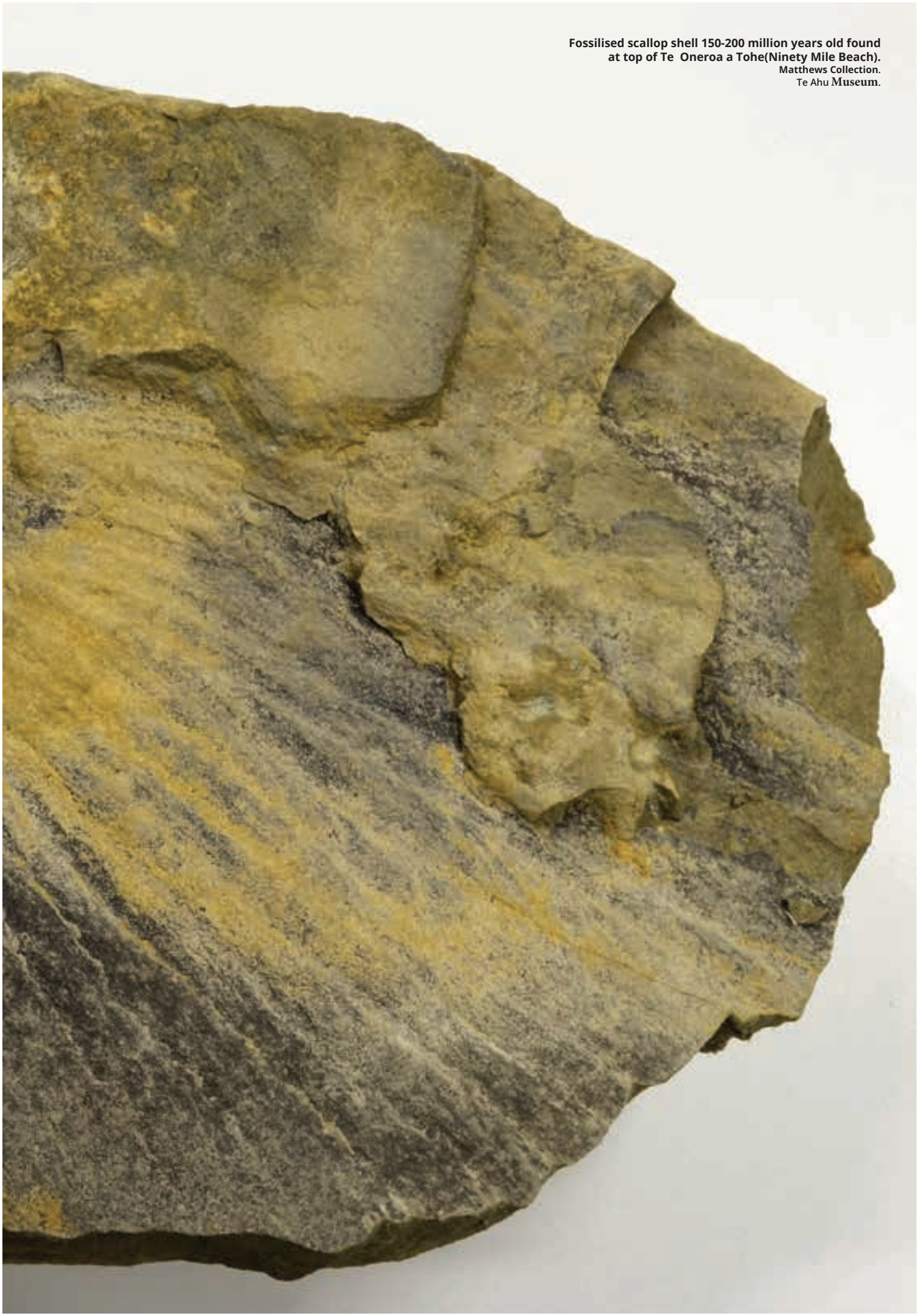
On Friday 18 October 1940, the Centennial Memorial Library and Rest Room was officially opened by the Hon. W.E. Parry, Minister of Internal Affairs. Funded by public subscription andgovernment subsidy, the building was the district's New Zealand Centennial Memorial.

By 1967, the library had outgrown the premises and as interest in establishing a museum grew, a suggestion was put to the council that the old library building would be suitable as a repository to house artefacts and documents relating to our Far North people and district. The council agreed, providing funds were raised by the public to relocate the library and establish a museum.

Fundraising commenced in 1968 when Ivan Berghan, County Chairman, and Des Bell, Mayor, formally made donations. Foundation Memberships were available to the public for $100, and Life Membership for $20. Generous financial support came from the regional councils, private donations and public fund-raising events.

Gum digging at Waipapakauri, circa 1910.
Northwood Collection.
Te Ahu Museum

Full skeleton of a Kurehe (kuri) dog circa 1480, discovered at Tohoraha (Mt Camel). Te Ahu Museum.



Fossilised scallop shell 150-200 million years old found at top of Te Oneroa a Tohe(Ninety Mile Beach).
Matthews Collection.
Te Ahu **Museum**.

As part of the Queen Carnival, a 'mini museum' was set up on the top floor of Vegar's Drapery Store where Arthur Northwood's Collection of over 400 photographs were displayed for the first time. As interest grew to establish a museum, the committee received numerous donations of display items for the exhibits.

The Far North Regional Museum opened in December 1969.

Our Far North history, in New Zealand terms, begins very early with the arrival of the French explorer Jean-François-Marie de Surville in Doubtless Bay in 1769. Thirty years later, whaling ships were dropping anchor in Mangonui Harbour. The settlement of an Anglican Mission Station in 1834 and a thriving industry of kauri timber spars, flax and kauri gum all contributed to a robust community.

The discovery of the de Surville anchor in 1974 provided a major boost of publicity for the museum and a new space was added to the old building to house the anchor, discovered by Mike Bearsley, and the growing collection.

From 1976 to 1985, Judy Evans was custodian and ran the Tourist Information Centre operating from the museum, assisted by an enthusiastic team of volunteers. During the 1980s, Olwyn Ramsey, recognising the need to collect historical documents about the district and its people, established the archives within the museum.

In 1985, archives became an important part of the museum and over the past 25 years have become a comprehensive asset.

In 2006, the concept of bringing all Far North District Council amenities under one roof was envisaged.
The new community centre, named Te Ahu, was completed in 2011 — incorporating the i-Site Visitor Centre, Library, Cinema, Café, Auditorium, Council Service Centre and Far North Regional Museum (Te Ahu Heritage).

In 2012, the museum and archives relocated to the new Te Ahu Centre and Te Ahu Museum was born.

Pupu Rangi or Pupu Harakeke, the flax snail.
Natural history collection.
Te Ahu Museum

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