ROTORUA TRAILS TRUST

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Chairperson

A voluntary governance role leading the Board of Rotorua Trails Trust

Position	Chairperson, Board of Trustees
Organisation	Rotorua Trails Trust, registered charity CC52100
Accountable to	The Board of Trustees
Location	Rotorua
Time commitment	Board meetings every two months in Rotorua, with preparation beforehand and time with trustees and partners between meetings
Term	Agreed with the preferred candidate in line with the Trust Deed
Remuneration	Voluntary

Rotorua Trails Trust

Whakarewarewa Forest is a much-loved part of Rotorua. Its 5,600 hectares hold more than 300 kilometres of biking, walking, running and horse-riding trails, from easy family rides and walks to advanced technical mountain bike trails, all free to access. The trails connect people with nature and adventure, give locals a free place to get outside, and bring visitors to Rotorua from around New Zealand and the world, supporting local businesses and the wider economy. Rotorua Trails Trust is the community charity that maintains those trails, works with trail builders and volunteers on new ones, and looks after the network for everyone who uses it.

The Trust was established by the Rotorua Mountain Bike Club to manage the growing demands of trail maintenance, and has been a registered charity since June 2015. Its mission is "to make Rotorua the world leaders in recreational trails that champion cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, equitable access, while positively impacting the economy." Two strategic objectives guide the work: being a **Champion of Trails**, leading maintenance and supporting the development of trails across the network, and **Intergenerational Prosperity**, caring for the trails in a way that lasts for future generations.

5,600 ha
of forest, free to access for all

300+ km
of trails for mountain bikers, walkers, runners and horse riders

Since 2015
a registered charity, established by the Rotorua Mountain Bike Club

Day to day, the work is done by a small paid team, including the Trust's professional trail crew, alongside contractors on larger builds, trail adopters who look after individual trails, and volunteers who turn up to monthly working bees. Because the forest is free to access, the Trust relies on grants, support from Rotorua Lakes Council for maintenance, trail sponsorship, donations and membership, and has recently introduced crowdfunding for trail rebuilds.

The whenua and the people the Trust works with

The Trust works alongside mana whenua, the landowners, the forest managers and Rotorua Lakes Council, and trail development takes place in agreement with the landowners and forest managers.

The Board includes trustees appointed by iwi and hapū organisations, Rotorua Lakes Council and the Rotorua Mountain Bike Club. The Chair plays an important part in maintaining respectful working relationships with these organisations, and with everyone involved in caring for the forest and its trails.

The Board's next stage

The Trust has grown steadily, and since September 2025 the Board has welcomed several new trustees, bringing a wide mix of skills and perspectives to the table. The Board is now looking for a Chairperson to lead it through its next stage.

We are looking for someone who can bring trustees together around clear priorities and chair a board whose members also bring the perspectives of the organisations that appointed them. The Chair will help the Board set direction, oversee performance and risk, and agree how the Trust's paid team and contractors are supported and held accountable, and will hold the Trust's relationships with care over the long term. It will suit someone who enjoys helping a capable board do its best work.

Why join the Board

Whakarewarewa Forest and its trails are part of everyday life in Rotorua, enjoyed by locals and visitors alike, and the Trust brings together people who care about the forest and the future of its trails. As Chair, you would help the Board make sound decisions about priorities, funding, risk and relationships, so the Trust can keep caring for the trails for the community over the long term. It is an opportunity to bring your governance experience to something Rotorua values, and to see the results out in the forest.

Purpose of the role

The Chair leads the Board in its governance of the Trust and is responsible for the Board working effectively as a team. The Chair makes sure the Board sets direction, oversees performance and risk, and holds itself accountable, and speaks for the Board publicly where that has been agreed. Between meetings the Chair acts within the authority the Board has delegated and keeps trustees informed.

Key responsibilities

Area	What the Chair does
Leading the Board	Plans the Board's agenda and annual work programme with trustees, chairs meetings so every voice is heard and decisions are clear, and keeps discussion focused on strategy, risk and accountability.

Area	What the Chair does
Strategy and direction	Leads the Board in setting and reviewing the Trust's strategic direction and priorities, and in checking progress against them.
Governance and delivery	Helps the Board agree how the Trust's paid team and contractors are supported and held accountable, with clear delegations and reporting, and keeps those arrangements under review as the Trust grows.
Relationships and representation	Builds and holds relationships with mana whenua, the landowners, the forest managers, Rotorua Lakes Council, the organisations that appoint trustees, funders, sponsors, members and the trail community. Represents the Trust as agreed with the Board.
Financial stewardship and risk	Works with the Treasurer and Board to oversee financial performance, funding sustainability, compliance and risk, including health and safety across trail work.
Board performance and culture	Supports trustees individually, leads regular review of the Board's own performance, and plans for induction, skills and succession.
Integrity and conduct	Models good conflict of interest practice and the Trust's values, and makes sure the Board meets its duties under the Trust Deed, the Charities Act 2005 and the Trusts Act 2019 as it applies to charitable trusts.

What to expect in the first six months

The new Chair will work with trustees to agree the Board's priorities. In the first six months, you can expect to:

- get to know the Board, the team and the trail network
- meet the organisations that appoint trustees and the Trust's key partners, starting the relationships the role depends on
- get to know the Trust's finances, its funding and the risks the Board oversees
- chair your first Board meetings, and work with trustees to agree the Board's priorities and how progress will be reported

About you

We are looking for someone with sound governance judgement who is comfortable leading a board through change and building trust with partners. The criteria below are what the selection panel will assess applications against.

Essential	Desirable
• Experience chairing a board or governance committee, with the ability to lead constructive discussion and help a group reach sound decisions • An understanding of how charitable trusts are funded and stay financially sustainable, including when the service they provide is free to use • A strong track record of building trust and maintaining long-term working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including iwi and mana whenua, landowners, local government, funders, sponsors and community groups, and of representing an organisation with care • The ability to read financial statements and ask informed questions about performance, risk and sustainability • A leadership style that brings people with different views to a shared decision • Independent judgement in the interests of the Trust, the ability to disclose and manage conflicts of interest, and the ability to attend Board meetings in Rotorua	• Experience chairing a board that includes appointed or representative members • Experience guiding an organisation through growth, change or a leadership transition • Familiarity with te reo Māori and tikanga • A connection to Rotorua and an interest in the forest and the trail community • Formal governance training, such as an Institute of Directors course

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and communities.

Time, term and support

- **Meetings.** The Board meets every two months in Rotorua, with preparation required beforehand. Between meetings the Chair keeps in regular contact with the Deputy Chair, the Treasurer and the team, and spends time with the Trust's partners, particularly in the first few months.
- **Term.** The term will be agreed with the preferred candidate in line with the Trust Deed.
- **Remuneration.** This is a voluntary role.
- **Induction.** The new Chair will receive a full induction over the first few months, covering the Trust's key documents, finances and strategy, its people and its key partners.

Conflicts of interest and eligibility

In your application, please tell us about any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, including any current or prospective relationship with the Trust, its partners, funders, contractors or suppliers, or through family or close associates, so the panel can consider it early. A local connection does not count against you in itself. What matters is that conflicts are disclosed and can be managed.

Every trustee of a registered charity must be qualified to act as an officer under section 36B of the Charities Act 2005. The preferred candidate will be asked to sign an officer certification and consent to reference, criminal record and insolvency checks before appointment.

How to apply

Please apply as set out in the advert, with the following:

- your CV, including your governance experience
- a cover letter outlining what draws you to the role, what you would bring to the Board, and any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest

The closing date is in the advert. Shortlisted candidates will be asked for the names of two referees, and referees will not be contacted without your agreement.

What happens next

1. The selection panel assesses applications against the criteria in this position description.
2. Shortlisted candidates are invited to interview with the panel, in Rotorua or online.
3. The preferred candidate has the opportunity to meet other trustees, and references and checks are completed with their agreement.
4. The Board considers the panel's recommendation and confirms the appointment in line with the Trust Deed.

Applications are received by Kaycie O'Connor of Define NZ, who is supporting the Board with this appointment, through the site where the role is advertised. Apart from that site, your application will be seen only by the selection panel and, if you are shortlisted, by the Board, and will be used only for this appointment. Applications from unsuccessful candidates are kept for up to six months after the appointment and then deleted, unless you agree to us keeping them longer. If you need any adjustments to take part in an interview, please let us know.

A conversation before you apply

If you would like to talk about the role before applying, please contact Kaycie O'Connor on 027 529 2430 or at kaycie@definenz.co.nz. Conversations are confidential.