



If calling, please ask for Democratic Services

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## Environment Committee

Thursday 12 October 2023, 09.30am

Taumata Kōrero, Council Chamber, Greater Wellington Regional Council,  
100 Cuba St, Te Aro, Wellington

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*Quorum: Seven Members*

### Members

#### Councillors

Penny Gaylor (Chair)

David Bassett

Chris Kirk-Burnnand

David Lee

Daran Ponter

Yadana Saw

Simon Woolf

Quentin Duthie (Deputy Chair)

Ros Connelly

Ken Laban

Thomas Nash

Hikitia Ropata

Adrienne Staples

#### Appointee

Barbie Barton

**Recommendations in reports are not to be construed as Council policy until adopted by Council**

## **Environment Committee** (A Committee of the Whole)

### **1 Purpose**

Oversee the development, implementation and review of Council's:

- a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators to improve environmental outcomes for the Wellington Region's land, water, air, biodiversity, natural resources, parks and reserves, and coastal marine area
- b Regional resilience priorities in the delivery of plans, programmes, initiatives and activities for flood protection, erosion control, and regional parks and forests
- c Regulatory systems, processes and tools to meet Council's related legislative responsibilities
- d Plans, programmes, and efforts to increase volunteer uptake, community involvement and mahi tahi with others seeking to improve environmental outcomes in the Wellington Region.

### **2 Specific responsibilities**

The Committee's environmental responsibilities include the areas of land use management, air quality, water health and quality, regional natural resources, river control, flood protection, regional parks and reserves, coastal marine environment, maritime navigation and safety, biosecurity and biodiversity.

- 2.1 Apply Council's Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles when conducting the Committee's business and making decisions.
- 2.2 Oversee the development and review of Council's:
  - a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators
  - b Regional resilience prioritiesand recommend these matters (and variations) to Council for adoption.
- 2.3 Review periodically the effectiveness of implementing and delivering Council's:
  - a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators
  - b Regional resilience priorities.
- 2.4 Consider regional, national and international developments; emerging issues and impacts; and changes in the legislative frameworks for their implications for Council's:
  - a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators
  - b Regulatory systems, processes and tools.

- 2.5 Recommend to Council changes to improve the effectiveness of Council's:
  - a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators
  - b Regional resilience priorities
  - c Regulatory systems, processes and tools.
- 2.6 Review Greater Wellington's compliance with Council's related legislative responsibilities<sup>1</sup>, and the monitoring and enforcement of compliance.
- 2.7 Ensure that the Committee's decision making:
  - a Considers climate change-related risks (mitigation and adaptation)
  - b Is consistent with Council's plans and initiatives to give effect to Council's declaration of a climate emergency on 21 August 2019, including agreed emissions reduction targets.
- 2.8 Review, after each Farming Reference Group meeting, a written report of the business conducted at that meeting.

### **3 Delegations**

- 3.1 Subject to sections 3.3 to 3.7, Council delegates to the Committee all the powers, functions and duties necessary to perform the Committee's responsibilities (except those that must not be delegated, have been retained by Council, have been delegated to another committee, or have been delegated to the Chief Executive).
- 3.2 The Committee has the authority to approve submissions to external organisations for matters pertaining directly to the Committee's purpose.
- 3.3 The Committee may make decisions on matters with a financial impact only where the related costs are:
  - a Budgeted for in the relevant business group's budget
  - b Not budgeted for in the relevant business group's budget, but can be met from savings within that budget.
- 3.4 Where the Committee considers a decision with a material financial impact is needed<sup>2</sup>, the Committee must refer the matter to Council for its decision.
- 3.5 The Committee may not make a decision that is materially inconsistent with Council's Annual Plan or Long Term Plan.
- 3.6 Where a matter proposed for consideration by the Committee (including during the development of proposed Greater Wellington plans and policies) is of strategic

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<sup>1</sup> These responsibilities include those under the Resource Management Act 1991 and for the granting of resource consents, the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1967, the Biosecurity Act 1993, the Reserves Act 1977, and the Maritime Transport Act 1994.

<sup>2</sup> That is, where savings are identified from other business groups' budgets to meet the related costs; or no savings are identified across Greater Wellington's overall budget to meet the related costs.

importance to the Wairarapa Constituency, that matter shall first be referred to the Wairarapa Committee or its members for their consideration.

- 3.7 The Committee shall ensure that it acts under the guidance of the Memorandum of Partnership in working with Greater Wellington's mana whenua partners of the Wellington Region to ensure effective Māori participation in the Committee's deliberations and decision-making processes.

#### **4 Members**

- 4.1 All thirteen Councillors.
- 4.2 The Chair of the Farming Reference Group.

#### **5 Voting entitlement**

The Chair of the Farming Reference Group sits at the table and has full speaking rights, but has no voting rights at any Committee meeting.

#### **6 Quorum**

Seven Committee members.

#### **7 Meeting frequency**

The Committee shall meet six times each year, with additional meetings as required.

## Environment Committee

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Thursday 12 October 2023, 9:30am

Taumata Kōrero, Council Chamber, Greater Wellington Regional Council  
100 Cuba St, Te Aro, Wellington

### Public Business

No.	Item	Report	Page
1.	Apologies		
2.	Conflict of interest declarations		
3.	Public participation		
4.	<a href="#">Confirmation of the Public minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on 10 August 2023</a>	23.382	6
5.	<a href="#">National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity</a>	23.484	9
6.	<a href="#">Resource Mangement Reform – Day 1 Implications.</a>	23.498	52
7.	<a href="#">Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-30 Implementation Update</a>	23.456	60
8.	<a href="#">Pest Management Report</a>	23.467	78
9.	<a href="#">Farming Reference Group Chair Update Report</a>	23.522	89
10.	<a href="#">Whaitua Development Update</a>	23.505	93
11.	<a href="#">Environment Update</a>	23.7	97



Please note these minutes remain unconfirmed until the Environment Committee meeting on 12 October 2023.

Report 23.382

## Public minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on Thursday 10 August 2023

Taumata Kōrero – Council Chamber, Greater Wellington Regional Council  
100 Cuba Street, Te Aro, Wellington at 9.31 am.

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### Members Present

Councillor Gaylor (Chair)  
Councillor Duthie (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Bassett  
Councillor Connelly  
Councillor Kirk-Burnnand  
Councillor Laban  
Councillor Lee  
Councillor Nash  
Councillor Ponter (from 9.33am)  
Councillor Ropata  
Councillor Saw  
Councillor Staples  
Councillor Woolf

### Appointees

Barbie Barton

Councillors Duthie and Ropata participated at this meeting remotely via MS Teams, in accordance with clause 25B of Schedule 7 to the Local Government Act 2002.

### Karakia timatanga

The Committee Chair opened the meeting with a karakia timatanga.

### Public Business

#### 1 Apologies

Moved: Cr Staples / Cr Nash

That the Committee accepts the apology for lateness from Councillor Ponter.

The motion was **carried**.

**2 Declarations of conflicts of interest**

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

Councillor Ponter arrived at the meeting at 9.33am, during the above item.

**3 Public participation**

There was no public participation.

**4 Confirmation of the Public minutes of the Environment Committee meeting of 15 June 2023 - Report 23.205**

Moved: Cr Saw / Cr Connelly

That the Committee confirms the Public minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on 15 June 2023 - Report 23.205.

The motion was **carried**.

**5 Developing a Marine Biosecurity Programme for the Wellington Region – Report 23.347**  
[For Information]

David Hipkins, Director, Knowledge and Insights and Megan Melidonis, Senior Environmental Scientist, spoke to the report.

Moved: Cr Connelly / Cr Staples

That the Committee:

1. Accepts the membership of the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership.

The motion was **carried**.

**Noted:** The Committee requested:

- a. a report to a future Environment Committee meeting outlining what powers Greater Wellington has currently in managing marine incursions and the options for including marine pests into the Regional Pest Management Plan.
- b. that officers liaise with the three other councils in the Partnership and arrange a joint workshop.

**6 Whaitua Development update – Report 23.353** [For Information]

Nicola Patrick, Director Catchment, spoke to the report.

**7 Farming Reference Group Chair Update Report – Report 23.348** [For Information]

Barbie Barton, Chair of the Farming Reference Group, spoke to the report.

**8 Environment update – Report 23.6 [For Information]**

Lian Butcher, Group Manager, Environment, spoke to the report.

**Karakia whakamutunga**

The Committee Chair closed the meeting with a karakia whakamutunga.

The meeting closed at 10.28am.

Councillor P Gaylor

**Chair**

Date:

Environment Committee  
12 October 2023  
Report 23.484



For Information

## NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY

### Te take mō te pūrongo

#### Purpose

1. To update the Environment Committee (the Committee) on the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB) and outline its implications for Greater Wellington.

### Te tāhū kōrero

#### Background

2. Refer to [Attachment 1](#) – The NPS-IB Background and implications’ paper for more information regarding the development of the NPS-IB.
3. The NPS-IB is the most significant statutory direction on the conservation of indigenous biodiversity since the enactment of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). It was gazetted on 7 July 2023 and came into effect on 4 August 2023.
4. The NPS-IB provides increased clarity and direction to councils on their roles and responsibilities for identifying, protecting, and maintaining indigenous biodiversity. It applies to all public and private land (terrestrial) ecosystems, specified highly mobile fauna and some aspects of wetlands, and aims to maintain indigenous biodiversity so that there is at least no overall loss.
5. Protection of indigenous biodiversity in the coastal marine area is directed by the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement while protection of indigenous biodiversity in freshwater ecosystems is directed by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM and National Environmental Standards for Freshwater).
6. The Government is also currently exploring whether a biodiversity credit system could help to incentivise the protection and restoration of biodiversity in Aotearoa. This consultation closes on 3 November 2023, and a submission summary will be shared at the October 12 Environment Committee meeting.

## **Te tātaritanga**

### **Analysis**

#### ***Overarching requirements***

7. A range of decision-making principles are required to be given effect to in all aspects of implementation of the NPS-IB. These are:
  - a prioritise the mauri, intrinsic value and wellbeing of indigenous biodiversity;
  - b take into account the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi recognise the bond between tangata whenua and indigenous biodiversity based on whakapapa relationships;
  - c recognise the obligation and responsibility of care that tangata whenua have as kaitiaki of indigenous biodiversity;
  - d recognise the role of people and communities (including landowners) as stewards of indigenous biodiversity;
  - e enable the application of te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori; and
  - f form strong and effective partnerships with tangata whenua.
8. Greater Wellington will need to work together in partnership with mana whenua/tangata whenua<sup>1</sup> throughout all aspects of implementing the NPS-IB, to the extent they wish to be involved. This is further detailed in the next section.
9. The NPS-IB provides a staged approach for implementation. Councils are required to deliver a number of milestones between 2023 and August 2031, as outlined in the table in [Attachment 2](#).

#### ***Partnership with mana whenua/tangata whenua***

10. The NPS-IB enables mātauranga Māori to be applied at all stages of management of indigenous biodiversity and mana whenua/tangata whenua to exercise kaitiakitanga by actively participating as partners in decisions about indigenous biodiversity, to the extent they wish to be involved. It requires local authorities to have regard to whānau, hapū and iwi decision making structures, so Greater Wellington will need to consider how we provide for this within our partnership framework.
11. Local authorities must work with mana whenua/tangata whenua to investigate the use of mechanisms available under the RMA such as transfers or delegations of power, joint management agreements and Mana Whakahono ā Rohe arrangements.
12. How the NPS-IB is implemented in partnership requires further discussion and consideration between Greater Wellington, mana whenua/tangata whenua, and territorial authorities (TAs). However, there are actions which Greater Wellington can progress in the interim to ensure we ‘have our house in order’ to support a more meaningful partnership. This includes, but is not limited to:

<sup>1</sup> The NPS-IB states that when local authorities involve tangata whenua as part of NPS-IB implementation, that we have regard to the different levels of whānau, hapū, and iwi decision-making structures. We have used the terms “mana whenua / tangata whenua” in this report to encompass these different levels.

- a continue the focus on integration between Te Hunga Whiriwhiri and within Ropū Taiao, as both groups embed structural changes.
  - b ensure our NPS-IB implementation is well coordinated with our other mahi across Rōpū Taiao to allow for meaningful, strategic conversations with our partners.
  - c consider providing dedicated funding to mana whenua/tangata whenua for the NPS-IB within kaupapa funding, for activities such as cultural monitoring, partnership capacity and the biodiversity strategy, to ensure Greater Wellington's responsibilities under the NPS are met.
  - d continuing to build the capability of Greater Wellington staff to understand te ao Māori and the way in which mātauranga Māori informs the world view of mana whenua.
  - e Advocate for funding from Ministry for the Environment (MfE) to mana whenua that ensures they can inform planning, direction and implementation of NPS-IB requirements.
13. The NPS-IB provides a staged approach to implementation of its requirements. This provides an opportunity to ensure there is sufficient time to enable early, meaningful, participation on activities for all parties.
14. Additionally, MfE is developing an NPS-IB iwi/Māori implementation plan to provide further guidance, expected by late 2023.

*Using the model of Mauri Tūhono to apply a holistic lens to implementation*

15. Since 2018, Greater Wellington, mana whenua partners, Department of Conservation (DOC), and community members have been working together to support and join up efforts to enhance te taiao. The proposed Kaipupuri Taonga ki te Ao Whānui framework<sup>2</sup> provides us with shared values, vision, and principles for our mahi together with mana whenua/tangata whenua, communities, and other agencies. This holistic approach, set of values and network of relationships provides the foundation for our work together for te taiao, including NPS-IB implementation and the development of a regional strategy. Greater Wellington will need to talk with mana whenua particularly about how the Kaipupuri Taonga ki te Ao Whānui framework might inform the development of a regional strategy, and what involvement a future Mauri Tūhono implementation entity (yet to be determined) has in the process.
16. Mauri Tūhono has been placed as a korowai aroha around Council's development of its 2024-34 Long Term Plan. It is a framework that promotes transformation in how we work together to care for te taiao. One of the ways it can support is with the shift Rōpū Taiao is making towards integration. Applying a more holistic lens to the implementation of the NPS-IB by integrating it with our other mahi for te taiao, such as the implementing the NPS-FM, NRP etc. (as opposed to them all being addressed in silos) presents efficiency opportunities as well as enabling us to better organise ourselves to be having strategic, holistic, coordinated kōrero with our partners in accordance with tikanga Māori. This reflects the value of 'Hononga' from the framework

<sup>2</sup> Developed by Mauri Tūhono ki Te Upoko o Te Ika a Māui; the working group established by Council, mana whenua and DOC to develop a regional biodiversity framework..

– prioritising our connection with each other in this work. It is also in line with two of the cross- organisational focus areas in the LTP Strategic Framework: “Active mana whenua partnerships and improved outcomes for Māori” and “Holistic approaches to deliver improved outcomes for te taiao.”

**Risks and mitigations**

17. The following high-level risks and proposed mitigations have been identified through implementation of the NPS-IB both for Greater Wellington and the region:

<b>Potential Risks</b>	<b>Proposed Mitigations</b>
Lack of clarity on ownership & expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Greater Wellington work programme to ensure clear roles and responsibilities, including sufficient budget and resourcing to deliver.</li> </ul>
Poor partnership outcomes & increased burden on mana whenua/tangata whenua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the NPS-IB requirements is delivered using a holistic approach, in line with Mauri Tūhono.</li> <li>• Greater Wellington to consider the expectations of the NPS-IB and capacity of partners when considering the shape of support packages.</li> </ul>
Poor regional outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the NPS-IB requirements is delivered using a holistic approach, in line with Mauri Tūhono.</li> <li>• Facilitation of increased knowledge sharing and collaboration regionally.</li> <li>• Greater Wellington to continue advocacy to DOC/MFE, alongside regional colleagues.</li> </ul>
National RM reform timeframes/changes affect NPS-IB implementation timings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Wellington to consider timing and implementation of the NPS-IB, in combination with the RM reform and planning framework, to ensure the most strategic and efficient alignment</li> <li>• Greater Wellington to assess whether to defer policy updates on the RPS and NRP to instead incorporate the NPS-IB within the new RSS and NBEP.</li> </ul>

**Ngā hua ahumoni**

**Financial implications**

18. Implementation of the NPS-IB will have resourcing and funding implications for Greater Wellington. A work programme that is integrated within existing work will need to be developed to determine these implications and their consideration in annual budget cycles and future Long-Term Plans.

19. Resourcing and funding implications will be informed by further discussions with TAs, mana whenua/tangata whenua partners, MfE and DOC to assess the scope of activities and regional needs. Some initial areas where funding increases are anticipated include the following:

- a Assisting territorial authorities with SNA identification and mapping, if requested.
- b Resourcing mana whenua / tangata whenua to contribute to implementation, to the level which they wish to be involved.
- c A significantly expanded monitoring program, which ensures that both western science and matauranga Māori are applied equally.
- d Development of the biodiversity strategy in partnership with mana whenua/tangata whenua. Budget for resourcing and implementation of this was sought in the current LTP process.
- e Expansion or alteration of current funding programmes for landholder restoration in line with NPS-IB priorities.

### **Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori Implications for Māori**

- 20. The NPS-IB strengthens the responsibility of councils to partner with mana whenua/tangata whenua in the management of indigenous biodiversity, recognising their role as kaitiaki.
- 21. The decision-making principles of the NPS-IB (outlined in Point 7) and the required integrated approach to delivering them<sup>3</sup>, reiterate the aspirations that Greater Wellington’s mana whenua/tangata whenua partners have shared with us, such as, *“Value and respect our mātauranga as much as science”*<sup>4</sup> and *“the mana and mauri of all of our waterways and associated ecosystems ... must be returned to a state of health...”*<sup>5</sup>.
- 22. The NPS-IB addresses te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) principles by providing more flexible and locally developed approaches for Māori land. The NPS-IB recognises the historical barriers mana whenua/tangata whenua have faced in occupying, using, and developing their land and the greater extent of indigenous biodiversity on that land compared to general land.
- 23. Specified whenua Māori under the NPS-IB, aims to maintain and restore indigenous biodiversity, protect Significant Natural Area’s and identified taonga, as well as enable new occupation use and development to support community social, cultural and economic wellbeing. This includes recognition of circumstances where development will prevail over indigenous biodiversity and enabling provision of new papakāinga, marae and ancillary community facilities, dwellings, and associated infrastructure. This flexibility aims to acknowledge the implications of these historic differences and provide greater control by mana whenua/tangata whenua partners.
- 24. Where desirable to mana whenua/tangata whenua partners, TAs must identify acknowledged taonga in their district plans and work in partnership to protect and manage taonga as far as practicable and enable sustainable customary use where

<sup>3</sup> [Rangitāne o Wairarapa Inc](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Rangitāne o Wairarapa Inc](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Ngāti Toa Rangatira](#)

applicable. This acknowledges the mauri and values of the taonga, and the historical, cultural, and spiritual relationship of mana whenua/tangata whenua with the taonga.

25. The NPS-IB requirements may result in significant resourcing implications for mana whenua/tangata whenua partners.. The outcomes for Māori from the NPS-IB will be, in part, affected by the quality of the partnership with Greater Wellington. Greater Wellington needs to ensure that it actively listens and acts in a true partnership approach throughout the implementation journey in order to build on the partnerships which currently exist.

### Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei

#### Next steps

26. Officers will continue to work in an integrated way across all relevant internal functions and business units, TAs, MfE, DOC, and mana whenua partners, to:
- Progress the holistic partnership approach to implementing NPS-IB requirements;
  - Ensure the expectations of the NPS-IB are understood internally and action immediate requirements to ensure compliance within the consenting space;
  - Identify funding and resourcing needs to achieve bare minimum requirements and best practice implementation, and
  - Respond to Hutt City Council and South Wairarapa District Council’s request for support to undertake its district-wide assessment of SNA’s.

### Ngā āpitihanga

#### Attachments

Number	Title
1	The NPS-Background and implications for information paper
2	NPS-IB requirements, current status, and next steps.
3	<a href="#">NPS-IB implications for Greater Wellington presentation</a>

### Ngā kaiwaitohu

#### Signatories

Writers	Ainslee Brown – Advisor, Environmental Policy Tessa O’Brien – Senior Advisor, Environmental Policy Christina Underhill – Senior Advisor, Environmental Policy Micheline Evans – Kaitohutohu Matua   Senior Advisor Mauri Tūhono
Approvers	Fathima Iftikar – Director Strategy, Policy and Regulation Scott Summerfield – Director Maturanga Taiao Lian Butcher – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Rōpū Taiao   Group Manager, Environment Monica Fraser – Te Pou Whakarae, Te Hunga Whiriwhiri

<b>He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations</b>
<p><b><i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i></b></p> <p>The Committee has responsibility for considering regional, national and international developments; emerging issues and impacts, and changes in the legislative frameworks for their implications for Council's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators</li><li>b Regulatory systems, processes and tools.</li></ul>
<p><b><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></b></p> <p>The NPS-IB contributes to the outcomes sought in the proposed LTP Strategic Framework 2024-34 and its overarching theme – to uphold te taiao first – and it will have financial and resourcing implications for implementation.</p> <p>The NPS-IB requires the development of a new regional biodiversity strategy and updates to the RPS, NRP and their associated implementation plans.</p>
<p><b><i>Internal consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation to better gauge current state, next steps, resourcing, and budget implications occurred with THW, Catchment, Strategy, Knowledge and Insights, Regulation, Restoration, and the Environment Group Chief Advisor.</p>
<p><b><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></b></p> <p>A section outlining high-level risks and mitigations is covered within the report at paragraph 17.</p>

TO Environment Committee  
FROM Jamie Steer, Biodiversity department  
DATE 5 February 2020  
FILE NUMBER EXTR-12-2250

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

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## **Proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity – background and implications**

### **Purpose**

This memo provides a short introduction to the proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (the NPSIB) and information on where to find out more. It also summarises the potential implications for Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington). A final section provides information on the Greater Wellington submission on it.

Our draft high-level comments on the submission are attached to this memo (Appendix 1) and we would like the Environment Committee’s feedback on this draft. The final, detailed submission will be submitted for approval at the full Council meeting on 27 February.

### **Background**

On 26 November 2019 the Government released the NPSIB for public consultation.<sup>1</sup> Consultation closes in early March with gazettal scheduled for mid-2020.

The NPSIB sets out objectives, policies and implementation requirements to manage natural and physical resources to maintain indigenous biodiversity under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

- For a high-level overview of the NPSIB refer to the Government’s 6-page summary document<sup>2</sup>
- Or for a more detailed analysis refer to the full discussion document.<sup>3</sup>

Government first began discussing the prospect of this NPS in 1999 (i.e., 20 years ago!). However, a first draft of the NPSIB wasn’t released for public consultation until January 2011. This draft was not progressed due to a perceived lack of stakeholder agreement on its content.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Biodiversity/draft-npsib.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Biodiversity/he-kura-koiora-i-hokia-summary.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Biodiversity/he-kura-koiora-i-hokia-discussion-document.pdf>

In 2016 the Government announced that it would form a collaborative group to re-draft the NPSIB. This Biodiversity Collaborative Group was established in March 2017. It developed a new draft NPSIB and provided recommendations for complementary and supporting measures to maintain New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Collaborative Group included representatives from Forest & Bird, Federated Farmers, iwi leaders, the Forest Owners Association, the Environmental Defence Society, and extractive/infrastructure industries. In October 2018 the Group delivered its report (including a draft NPSIB) to the Government.<sup>4</sup> Over the following year the draft NPSIB was further refined by Government before public release.

At the same time Government asked the public for feedback on the development of a revised New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.<sup>5</sup> This strategy is due to be released in mid-2020. The New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy will provide a national framework to guide how New Zealand will protect and enhance biodiversity. It is a statement of New Zealand's national goals on biodiversity management, outcomes and priorities to drive action by central and local government, iwi/hapū and the wider public.

To clarify, the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy is an overarching national strategy for indigenous and non-indigenous biodiversity management across all domains – terrestrial, aquatic and marine. The NPSIB is a regulatory tool under the RMA, primarily to protect indigenous biodiversity on land. The two documents have been developed together with the aim of achieving consistency between them.

### Implications

The NPSIB is the most significant statutory direction on the conservation of indigenous biodiversity since the RMA, and before that the Conservation Act 1987. It directs the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity on land (the terrestrial environment), principally through the identification and protection of Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) by territorial authorities. These SNAs must be identified and protected in district plans by 2026.

Protection of indigenous biodiversity in the coastal marine area is directed by the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement while protection of indigenous biodiversity in freshwater ecosystems is directed by the NPS for Freshwater Management (and proposed National Environmental Standards for Freshwater). Therefore, the NPSIB does not affect, or necessitate amendments to, the proposed Natural Resources Plan which contains the SNAs under the jurisdiction of Greater Wellington (i.e., those associated with wetlands, lakes, rivers and the coastal marine area).

Nevertheless, a range of other actions are to be implemented by local authorities more broadly. These actions represent a considerable resourcing challenge for regional councils. The full list of implementation requirements for regional councils are detailed in Appendix 2 and summarised below. Except where specified, these must all be implemented in full by 2028.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.biodiversitynz.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/have-your-say/all-consultations/2019/proposal-for-new-zealands-next-biodiversity-strategy/>

1. Change regional policy statements<sup>6</sup> to:
  - give effect to Hutia Te Rito (being the concept that the health of people, indigenous biodiversity, and the wider environment are interlinked),
  - promote the resilience of indigenous biodiversity to climate change,
  - align SNA identification criteria with the NPSIB (our identification criteria are broadly consistent with the NPSIB),
  - specify where, how and when plans must provide for existing activities that may adversely affect indigenous biodiversity,
  - specify where, how and when controls on subdivision, use and development in areas outside SNAs are necessary to maintain indigenous biodiversity,
  - include objectives, policies or methods for managing the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development in highly mobile fauna areas,
  - record the location of areas (identified by territorial authorities) that contain degraded SNAs and areas that provide important connectivity or buffering functions,
  - include objectives, policies or methods that identify opportunities for restoration and enhancement of those areas,
  - include targets in urban and rural areas in its region for increasing indigenous vegetation cover (if under 10% indigenous vegetation cover),
  - include objectives, policies and methods for increasing indigenous vegetation cover in its region,
  - include new requirements on what must be considered in an assessment of environment effects when a proposed activity may adversely affect significant indigenous biodiversity
2. Work with territorial authorities and tangata whenua to agree a process for:
  - identifying and describing indigenous species and ecosystems that are taonga,
  - mapping or describing the location of taonga (where appropriate)
  - describing the values of identified taonga
3. Work with territorial authorities to:
  - survey and record areas outside SNAs where highly mobile fauna have been, or are likely to be, sometimes present,
  - provide information to communities about highly mobile fauna and their habitats,
  - provide best practice techniques for managing adverse effects on highly mobile fauna and their habitats
4. Consider providing further incentives to landowners for restoration and enhancement in areas that contain wetlands, former wetlands, degraded SNAs, and areas that provide important connectivity or buffering functions
5. Prepare a regional biodiversity strategy in collaboration with territorial authorities, tangata whenua, communities and other identified stakeholders. Regional councils without regional biodiversity strategies (including Greater Wellington) must initiate production of one by 2023. The strategy must be completed by 2026

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<sup>6</sup> In the Wellington region, changes may be folded into the full review of our regional policy statement which is required to be initiated by 2023.

6. Work with territorial authorities, relevant agencies and tangata whenua to develop a monitoring plan for indigenous biodiversity in their region and each of their districts.

#### **The process for our submission**

Greater Wellington's submission on the NPSIB will respond to all 62 questions<sup>7</sup> posed in the Government discussion document. A high-level summary at the start of the submission will present our key points. We would like Environment Committee's feedback on a draft of this section of the submission at the workshop on 13 February (see Appendix 1). The full submission will be circulated to Council on February 19 for review ahead of the February 27 Council meeting.

When reviewing the draft high-level submission attached to this memo, Environment Committee members may wish to compare the draft points of our submission with those tabled by LGNZ last month (see Appendix 3).

A separate 'road testing' submission will respond to 12 questions Government has posed to a selection of 16 councils, including Greater Wellington. Road testing questions are designed to help determine the implementation requirements of the NPSIB for councils. Government has instructed that input into this submission come from officers only as it is intended to survey requirements at that level. Nevertheless, this submission will be shared with Councillors as well. It will be consistent with the main submission.

Submission timeframe:

- **February 13:** Workshop draft high-level submission points on the NPSIB with Environment Committee
- **February 19:** A full draft submission will be circulated to Councillors. This will include responses to all 62 questions raised in the discussion document. A further draft submission will respond to 12 'road testing' questions (see above)
- **February 27:** Approve final submission at Council meeting
- **March 13:** Submission due to Government

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Biodiversity/he-kura-koiora-i-hokia-discussion-document.pdf>, pp. 95-99.

## Appendix 1: Greater Wellington draft high-level submission points on NPSIB



13 March 2020

Biodiversity Team  
Ministry for the Environment  
PO Box 10 362  
Wellington 6143

Submitted to: [indigenousbiodiversity@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:indigenousbiodiversity@mfe.govt.nz)

### Submission on proposed NPS for Indigenous Biodiversity

Please find enclosed Greater Wellington Regional Council's submission on the proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity

Feel free to contact me on **phone** or **email** if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely

XXX  
Title, department  
Greater Wellington Regional Council



**Greater Wellington Regional Council: Submission**

To:	Ministry for the Environment
Submission on:	Proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity

**1. Reason for submission**

- 1.1 The Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) wishes to make a submission on the proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS).
- 1.2 Greater Wellington supports the direction of the proposed NPS. Statutory direction on the protection of indigenous biodiversity under the RMA is long overdue. We see this NPS as a critical step forward for biodiversity conservation in New Zealand.
- 1.3 The maintenance of indigenous biodiversity – alongside freshwater – is one of our council’s top priorities. We invest over \$40 million each year into initiatives that support biodiversity.<sup>1</sup> This work includes our Key Native Ecosystem programme which works with local landowners to protect and restore high value sites for biodiversity across over 48,000 hectares of our region.
- 1.4 Collectively, the regional sector is the second largest investor in biodiversity conservation in New Zealand behind central government.<sup>2</sup> This emphasises both the commitment of councils and the need to ensure that investments are well coordinated.
- 1.5 All levels of government must work together to ensure this coordination, with clear direction from central government. This NPS, alongside the developing New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy, is an important step towards a clearer and more effective strategic and policy context for our work.

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1 Estimated from our 2018/19 spend. Includes initiatives that directly or indirectly support indigenous biodiversity conservation.

2 Government figures estimate that regional councils and unitary authorities collectively spent over \$1 billion on biodiversity conservation in 2017/18. Central government spent over \$1.2 billion during the same period. See <https://www.cbd.int/doc/nr/nr-06/nz-nr-06-en.pdf>, p. 123.

## 2. Key points of our submission

2.1 This submission responds to all 62 questions posed in the NPS discussion document with detailed track changes provided in an appendix. The key points of our submission are identified below. In summary these are:

1. We need effective guidance to accompany the NPS and a lot of direct support from central government to implement it. Both of these appear inadequate or non-existent at present.
2. One of the most significant challenges for councils today is responding to the raft of new, and sometimes conflicting, national direction. Government must partner with councils wherever possible to prioritise, plan and execute this work.
3. We strongly support the requirement to identify and protect Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) but are wary of new identification requirements potentially souring relationships with landowners in districts that already have SNAs.
4. Similarly, we believe that the direction to manage effects on SNAs may be too restrictive, making almost any application to develop or use this land impossible. We are concerned that the direction may *nominally* protect SNAs while sacrificing the relationships we rely on to *actually* protect and restore them, and surrounding areas, in future.
5. We support the intention of Hutia Te Rito but suggest that it does not provide enough real world direction to councils or facilitate a genuine leadership role for mana whenua.
6. We do not support the direction to require councils to survey for and protect highly mobile fauna. This is well beyond our capacity. Like some other aspects of the NPS, it may be more effectively implemented by central government under the direction of the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.
7. We support the direction for councils to maintain indigenous biodiversity. However, 'restoration' as an overarching objective is beyond the scope of this NPS or the capacity of councils. We need to prioritise our core role of 'maintain' in the first instance – this will be an enormous challenge on its own.

### **Councils will need effective guidance and support**

The effective implementation of this NPS will require enormous levels of guidance and support from Government. It cannot be a 'dump and run' exercise. We are concerned therefore to find very little indication that support will be forthcoming. The main responsibility delegated to Government though the NPS is the monitoring of its effectiveness 10 years after gazettal (part 4.1) while total guidance and support costs from Government are estimated at only \$1.77-2.65 million.<sup>3</sup> We think this will be completely inadequate.

While the NPS provides important direction on many aspects of indigenous biodiversity protection under the RMA its direction does not extend to the level of rules. Councils will be in the familiar position therefore of justifying their interpretation of the NPS direction through hearings and Environment Court proceedings. The most effective way of preventing this (or at least minimising it) would be to provide detailed non-statutory guidance at the time of gazettal. If this is not possible then guidance should appear as soon as possible after this.

The writing and production of such guidance would not be easy, requiring clarifications of a raft of complex terms and potentially contentious subtleties introduced through the NPS. To avoid lengthy delays in its production Government might consider partitioning and then staging the release of such guidance (e.g., through a series of guidance notes). This could allow for the most contentious areas to be addressed as a matter of priority with those of lower urgency addressed later in the schedule.

Guidance on its own will not be sufficient however. Government must also be prepared to get involved with the messy business of implementation. We would advise allocating a support team of RMA specialists to this through a dedicated work programme – ideally using staff that have been involved in supporting the NPS's development to date. Those specialists could work closely with councils to ensure the effective implementation of the NPS. In some cases it may also be necessary to second staff into individual councils for a period of time to assist directly.

### **Government will need to directly resource implementation**

Greater Wellington supports the general direction for regional councils to monitor the state and trends of indigenous biodiversity in their jurisdictions through the use of regional monitoring plans (part 3.20). Nevertheless, it must be recognised that councils have vastly disparate rating bases, making all requirements of this nature both manageable for some and wildly optimistic for others.

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<sup>3</sup> See NPSIB Section 32 evaluation and cost benefit analysis: [https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Biodiversity/npsib-section-32-evaluation\\_0.pdf](https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Biodiversity/npsib-section-32-evaluation_0.pdf), pp. 7-8.

Regional councils have worked for years at a national-level to harmonise their research processes in this area but translating this into consistent processes ‘on the ground’ remains difficult, with Government support and assistance critical. National direction, in other words, will not succeed in achieving consistency without corresponding levels of direct involvement. This may necessitate dedicated staff and funding support.

Whether the requirements of this NPS are realistic or not within the given timeframes is an open question. It is a question defined not only by the resourcing of individual councils but by the requirements to implement so much other related recent direction, including the proposed Freshwater Package and NPS for Urban Development. Timeframes may be further stretched by increasing requirements to update and improve on aging infrastructure.

Rather than waiting for individual councils to figure this out, we suggest that Government should instead take the lead on directing the timeframes for how this and other national direction is to be implemented. This will require detailed analysis – work that will likely reveal conflicts across the range of direction but that may be resolved through effective planning and resourcing. More consideration may need to be given to staging the implementation of this work across work streams.

#### **Identifying Significant Natural Areas alone will be a big step forward**

Greater Wellington supports the requirement for territorial authorities to identify Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) within their jurisdictions as soon as reasonably practicable (part 3.8). Most councils have either already achieved this or should be able to do so within the six year period anticipated. A minority of councils may struggle to do so due to financial constraints. Government should be proactive in identifying these councils and offering the necessary support.

We note that the identification of SNAs – and the regulations generally associated with them – have often proven contentious with landowners, placing a heavy resourcing burden on councils. A recent dispute in Hutt City centred on landowners’ perceptions that SNA identification was optional.<sup>4</sup> We see statutory direction to make this process compulsory as one of the key directions of this NPS. It removes the need for councils to demonstrate that SNA identification and protection is the most effective mechanism for maintaining indigenous biodiversity.

We suggest that the Government should avoid labouring over the consistency of existing SNAs, focusing instead on simply getting them established in the first instance. This will be a significant achievement in and of itself – one that will have taken over 20 years to realise.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/108986095/hutt-city-abandons-controversial-sna-plan-to-protect-biodiversity>

Refinement can come later and is anticipated in the direction to update them within 10 years in any case (as per part 3.8(7)).

Greater Wellington generally supports the proposed principles and criteria for identifying SNAs. These are mostly consistent with those identified in the Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region<sup>5</sup> and the approach councils have taken to identifying SNAs in our region to date. However, we do not support the ranking of SNAs into 'High' and 'Medium' areas. We believe that too much further resourcing will be required to undertake this exercise by councils that have already begun or concluded their SNA identification process. For these councils, re-assessment may negatively affect existing relationships with landowners. This inefficiency is compounded by the fact that the vast majority of development or use will be impossible within SNAs regardless of their ranking (see further below), making the exercise redundant for most landowners anyway.

We also suggest that part 3.14 (identified taonga) should be incorporated into part 3.8 (identifying significant natural areas). The existing approach rightly treats tangata whenua values for indigenous biodiversity as separate and distinct from the values identified by ecologists. Nevertheless, our experience is that treating this as a separate exercise is inefficient and not consistent with Hutia Te Rito.

Our regional policy statement includes a tangata whenua criterion for identifying significant indigenous biodiversity. This replicates the intention of parts 3.8, 3.14 and Appendix 1 (criteria for identifying SNAs). An advantage of this approach is that it avoids compartmentalising Māori values, placing the emphasis on commonalities rather than differences. In particular, it recognises the value-based dimensions inherent in the identification of significant indigenous biodiversity, whether assessed through a western scientific lens or a mātauranga Māori one.

### **The balance between protection and use needs refinement**

Greater Wellington supports the general direction to manage effects both on SNAs (part 3.9) and outside of them (part 3.13) to ensure the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity. That said, we are not convinced on the way that effects are proposed to be managed under the NPS. The existing direction, in particular, may be too restrictive, likely requiring a non-complying status for most activities within SNAs. This may be difficult to accept for many landowners given the extent of land that is likely to meet the criteria for significance under part 3.8.

While we support the protection of the values of SNAs, regulators need to be careful that in protecting those values they do not alienate the landowners on which that protection

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Plans--Publications/Regional-Policy-Statement/Regional-Policy-Statement-full-document.pdf>, pp. 104-105.

## Attachment 1 to Report 23.484

relies. Much of the indigenous biodiversity on this land exists, after all, only because landowners have worked to protect or restore it, or because the land has been 'neglected' – sometimes due to financial hardship. This may be especially so on Māori land. The contributions of people to maintaining and restoring indigenous biodiversity recognised under part 3.7(c-f) (social, cultural and economic wellbeing) thus appear forgotten here. Put simply, we must keep landowners on side with us.

Our reading of the proposed NPS is that development or use in 'high' value SNAs would be close to impossible, meaning that these areas would essentially become de facto legal covenants. Even in 'medium' value SNAs the inclusion of 'ands' at the end of each clause (3.9(2)a-c) would restrict most development to consent applications relating to nationally significant infrastructure, or for mineral or aggregate extraction.

Both rankings involuntarily impart most of the restrictions of a QEII National Trust conservation covenant on landowners, while offering none of the support that organisation provides. Again, the absence of any explicit recognition of the essential contributions of landowners to the maintenance and restoration of these areas is notable. Support relies on local authorities providing optional incentives (part 3.16(5)) – something they already do, but are often hard pressed to adequately fund. Government might consider providing funds to complement or supplement those provided by local authorities.

Greater Wellington supports the direction to apply an effects management hierarchy approach to the management of effects on significant indigenous biodiversity. We also support the direction to use a principled approach to the use of biodiversity offsets and biodiversity compensation. Below we make detailed suggestions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of these while allowing, in some circumstances, for the consideration of a greater range of effects within SNAs. These suggestions are directed at ensuring that an appropriate balance is struck between use and protection, noting that an approach aligning with either end of this spectrum would result in undesirable outcomes for indigenous biodiversity.

In short, our suggestions emphasise an adherence, in all circumstances, to the internationally-accepted effects management hierarchy, something the current hierarchy is not technically in alignment with. If a two-tier approach for SNAs is retained, we suggest refining this to a more pragmatic distinction between 'outstanding' and 'significant' rather than 'high' and 'medium' – and with outstanding limited to the best-of-the-best as per the direction of the NPS for Freshwater Management. We ask that a broader range of effects on SNAs be able to be anticipated, but that applications to offset effects on significant values require 'net gain' rather than 'no net loss' outcomes. This would help to reconcile the 'appropriate' subdivision, use and development anticipated under part 3.7(b) with the intention of objective 1 (maintain indigenous biodiversity).

**More direction is required on how to incorporate the values of iwi/Māori**

We support the recognition of tangata whenua as kaitiaki in the proposed NPS (part 3.3) but suggest that the direction does little to strengthen the existing RMA requirement to recognise and provide for the relationship of Māori with their culture and traditions. The general direction provided may be useful to councils that do not have established relationships with local iwi but otherwise offers nothing new, especially to those with longstanding partnerships as we do with our six mana whenua in the Wellington region.

The central concept introduced in the NPS – Hutia Te Rito (part 3.2) – encompasses the idea that the health of people, indigenous biodiversity (including taonga species), and the wider environment are interlinked. Greater Wellington supports this but notes again that, on its own, the notion of interconnectivity is fairly time-worn. It is not clear how such a truism necessarily helps with the protection of indigenous biodiversity.

Compounding this issue is the sense that this NPS does not promote a genuine leadership role for mana whenua, or provide a mechanism to enable this. It instead relies on existing relationships with councils, even while these are identified in the discussion document as inadequate. Without amendment to, or guidance on, Hutia Te Rito it is doubtful that the NPS will improve these relational matters even for the one issue it seeks to address.

The discussion document description of Hutia Te Rito emphasises the role of iwi/Māori as kaitiaki in council activities that protect and manage indigenous biodiversity. We think that the concept should be re-framed and strengthened to give clearer direction on how local authorities must give effect to this aspect (e.g., through te ao Māori, mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori). This would provide the sort of pragmatic direction for councils that is currently missing.

**We do not support a council responsibility for highly mobile fauna**

We do not support the proposed council roles for surveying and recording the presence of 'highly mobile fauna' (part 3.15). While well-intentioned, this direction is well beyond most councils' resourcing or expertise. The identification and protection of the habitats of threatened and at risk species (i.e., the only ones meeting the definition of 'highly mobile' under this NPS) is, in any case, already provided for under parts 3.8-3.9.

Outside these areas, the provision of national-level guidance would be helpful for directing the types of habitats where highly mobile fauna may also be found, how their presence in these areas might be encouraged, and how effects on them should be considered through Assessments of Environmental Effects (AEEs). This guidance would best be provided by

Government, with support from the regional sector and others. Such an initiative might sit well under the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.<sup>6</sup>

### **The focus should be on maintenance rather than restoration**

Greater Wellington recognises the importance of restoration to the protection and maintenance of indigenous biodiversity. Protecting what is left will not in itself stem the decline. This reality is reinforced through parts 3.16 (restoration and enhancement), 3.17 (increasing indigenous vegetation cover), and 3.18 (regional biodiversity strategies) in this NPS. In saying that, we reiterate earlier local government sector feedback on this NPS<sup>7</sup> that maintenance should be the focus. This aligns with the role of regional councils under RMA section 30(1).

We believe that the best role for this NPS is in the regulatory arena – especially in the control of ongoing human impacts. The challenge there is enormous and the NPS will be, frankly, hard pressed to succeed in achieving the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity in that arena alone. Adding restoration, particularly beyond SNAs, to that mix is almost certainly beyond the resourcing of local authorities.

At worst, restoration may draw scarce funds away from the areas where they are most needed for maintenance. This is inefficient as restoration is an enormously more risky, resource intensive and drawn out process than maintenance. It is much easier to maintain the values of an existing forest, for example, than it is to grow a new one from scratch. Although there is a role for restoration in this NPS, especially within SNAs, we'd suggest that the main thrust of restoration work is best directed through the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.

We are generally supportive of the requirement for regional councils to prepare a regional biodiversity strategy (part 3.18). However, this is primarily because we feel that the likely alternative – direction under the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy – is unlikely to produce results. We are also concerned that the requirements of Appendix 5 may be too prescriptive. The substantial list of pre-determined requirements may make it difficult to bring the community along with the process. We would suggest providing more flexibility in the makeup of regional strategies to ensure that they complement and build on the existing biodiversity protection work already occurring in each region.

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<sup>6</sup> On a related note, the NPS seems to attempt to take on everything substantive that the Strategy is otherwise likely to direct. It should be the other way around with the Strategy providing the general framework and impetus and the NPS directed to achieving the most relevant parts of the puzzle under the RMA.

<sup>7</sup> LGNZ letter to Minister Mahuta, May 2019.

## Final statement

We reiterate our support for the intent of this NPS and look forward to working with central government agencies on its implementation. While almost all of the requirements of this NPS are directed at councils, we will not be able to do this alone. As noted above, we will need a huge amount of guidance and support from central government to achieve this, and we will rely enormously on the effort and goodwill of our communities. We think some further refinement to the NPS is needed to ensure that this community support is maintained throughout its implementation.

In several places we have noted the lack of clarity around the role of the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy in relation to this NPS. We understand that this is the result of the two being developed in parallel. However, it is critical that this relationship is made plain prior to gazettal. The NPS naturally sits under the Strategy but with the latter's suspected 'lack of teeth' it presently seems it's the other way around. We need the two to work in concert, with the Strategy directing a whole of government approach that positions the NPS and the role of councils as one part of that whole.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed policy statement. Please do not hesitate to contact Greater Wellington to discuss any of the points raised.

[Signature]

**XXX XXX**

XXX, Greater Wellington Regional Council

**Date: 13 March 2020**

### Address for service:

**Dr Jamie Steer**  
PO Box 11646  
Manners Street  
Wellington 6142

## Appendix 2: Implementation requirements of the NPSIB

The following detail what Greater Wellington (i.e. [regional councils/local authorities](#)) must do to implement or give effect to the objectives and policies of the NPSIB if gazetted in its current form:<sup>1</sup>

### 3.2 Hutia Te Rito

(1) [Local authorities](#) must recognise and provide for Hutia Te Rito in implementing this National Policy Statement.

(2) This requires, at a minimum, that [local authorities](#) must –

a) recognise and provide for the interrelationships between te hauora o te tangata (the health of the people) and –

i. te hauora o te koiora (the health of indigenous biodiversity); and

ii. te hauora o te taonga (the health of species and ecosystems that are taonga); and

iii. te hauora o te taiao (the health of the wider environment); and

b) recognise the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity requires kaitiakitanga and stewardship; and

c) take steps to ensure indigenous biodiversity is maintained and enhanced for the health, enjoyment and use by all New Zealanders, now and in the future.

### 3.3 Tangata whenua as kaitiaki

(1) When making or changing policy statements and plans to give effect to this National Policy Statement, every [local authority](#) must –

a) involve tangata whenua by undertaking consultation that is early, meaningful and (as far as practicable) in accordance with tikanga Māori; and

b) collaborate with tangata whenua to –

i. identify taonga, as required by clause 3.14, recognising tangata whenua have the right to choose not to identify taonga; and

ii. develop objectives, policies and methods that recognise and provide for Hutia Te Rito.

(2) [Local authorities](#) must, with the consent of tangata whenua and as far as practicable in accordance with tikanga Māori, take all reasonable steps to incorporate mātauranga Māori relating to indigenous biodiversity in implementing this National Policy Statement.

(3) [Local authorities](#) must take all reasonable steps to provide opportunities for tangata whenua to exercise kaitiakitanga over indigenous biodiversity, including through measures such as –

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<sup>1</sup> Parts 3.8-3.10 apply only to territorial authorities. Party 3.11 applies only to geothermal ecosystems, none of which are represented in the Wellington region.

- a) bringing cultural understanding to monitoring;
- b) providing appropriate methods for managing and protecting identified taonga; and
- c) allowing for sustainable customary use of indigenous vegetation.

(4) **Local authorities** must take all reasonable steps to provide opportunities for tangata whenua to be involved in decision-making relating to indigenous biodiversity in implementing this National Policy Statement.

### 3.4 Integrated approach

**Local authorities** must manage indigenous biodiversity and the effects on it of subdivision, use and development, in an integrated way, which means –

- a) recognising the interactions ki uta ki tai (from the mountains to the sea) between the terrestrial environment, freshwater and the coastal marine area; and
- b) providing for the coordinated management and control of subdivision, use and development, as it affects indigenous biodiversity across administrative boundaries; and
- c) considering the requirements of strategies and other planning tools required or provided for in legislation and relevant to indigenous biodiversity.

### 3.5 Resilience to climate change

When making or changing policy statements or plans or regional biodiversity strategies, **local authorities** must promote the resilience of indigenous biodiversity to climate change, including at least by –

- a) providing for the maintenance of ecological integrity through natural adjustments of habitats and ecosystems; and
- b) considering the effects of climate change when making decisions on –
  - i. restoration and enhancement proposals; and
  - ii. managing and reducing new and existing biosecurity risks; and
- c) maintaining and promoting the enhancement of, the connectivity between ecosystems and between existing and potential habitats, to enable migrations so that species continue to find viable niches as the climate changes.

### 3.6 Precautionary approach

**Local authorities** must adopt a precautionary approach toward proposed activities where –

- a) the effects on indigenous biodiversity are uncertain, unknown or little understood; but
- b) those effects are potentially significantly adverse.

### 3.7 Social, economic and cultural wellbeing

In implementing this National Policy Statement, **local authorities** must recognise –

- a) that the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity contributes to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of people and communities; and
- b) that the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity does not preclude subdivision, use and development in appropriate places and forms, within appropriate limits; and
- c) that people are critical to maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity; and
- d) the importance of forming partnerships between [local authorities](#), tangata whenua, landowners, people and communities in maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity; and
- e) the importance of respecting and fostering the contribution of landowners as stewards and kaitiaki; and
- f) the value of supporting people and communities in understanding, connecting to and enjoying indigenous biodiversity.

### 3.12 Existing activities in SNAs

- (1) This clause applies to the management of the effects of existing activities on SNAs.
- (2) [Regional councils](#) must make or change their policy statements to specify where, how and when plans must provide for existing activities that may adversely affect indigenous biodiversity.
- (3) In providing for existing activities in their policy statements and plans, [local authorities](#) must –
  - a) ensure the continuation of an existing activity will not lead to the loss, including through cumulative loss, of extent or degradation of the ecological integrity of any SNA; and
  - b) ensure the adverse effects of an existing activity are of no greater character, intensity or scale than they were before the National Policy Statement commencement date.
- (4) In regions and districts where pastoral farming is an existing activity, [local authorities](#) must ensure their policy statements and plans recognise that –
  - a) indigenous vegetation may regenerate in areas that have previously been cleared of indigenous vegetation and converted to improved pasture; and
  - b) as long as the regenerating indigenous vegetation has not itself become an SNA in the time since the last clearance event, the periodic clearance of indigenous vegetation as part of a regular cycle to maintain improved pasture is unlikely to compromise the protection of SNAs or the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity; and
  - c) consideration of effects (under Schedule 1 of the Act or through a resource consent application) may be required in the following circumstances, to ensure the outcomes in subclause (2) are met:
    - i) a proposed clearance is likely to have adverse effects that are greater in character, intensity or scale than the adverse effects of clearance that has previously been undertaken as part of a regular cycle to maintain improved pasture on the farm:
    - ii) there is inadequate information to demonstrate that a proposed clearance of regenerating indigenous vegetation is part of a regular cycle of clearances to maintain improved pasture:
    - iii) a clearance is proposed in an area that supports any threatened or at-risk species:

iv) a clearance is proposed in an area that supports alluvial landforms that have not been cultivated (ie, the land as not been disturbed for the purpose of sowing, growing or harvesting pasture or crops).

(5) In this clause –

**clearance** refers to the removal of indigenous vegetation by cutting, crushing, application of chemicals, drainage, burning, cultivation, over-planting, application of seed of exotic pasture species, mobstocking and/or changes to soils, hydrology or landforms

**improved pasture** means an area of land where exotic pasture species have been deliberately sown or maintained for the purpose of pasture production, and species composition and growth has been modified and is being managed, for livestock grazing

**regular cycle** means the periodic clearance of regenerating indigenous vegetation that is demonstrated to be part of a consistent management regime in place for the purpose of maintaining improved pasture.

### 3.13 General rules applying outside SNAs

(1) **Local authorities** must take steps to maintain indigenous biodiversity outside SNAs, including by making or changing their policy statements and plans to do all the following:

a) specify where, how and when controls on subdivision, use and development in areas outside SNAs are necessary to maintain indigenous biodiversity:

b) apply the effects management hierarchy to adverse effects, except that biodiversity compensation may be considered as an alternative to biodiversity offsetting (and not only when biodiversity offsetting is not demonstrably achievable):

c) specify where, how and when, for any area outside an SNA, the assessment and classification required by clause 3.8(1) is required.

(2) If an area outside an SNA is assessed as significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitat of indigenous fauna following an assessment in accordance with Appendix 1, a **local authority** must manage the adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity in the area as if the area were an SNA.

(3) In preparing policy statements and plans giving effect to subclause (1), **local authorities** must have particular regard to the potential of Māori land to provide for the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of Māori.

### 3.14 Identified taonga

(1) Every **regional council** must work together with all the territorial authorities in its region and with tangata whenua (in the manner required by clause 3.3) to agree a process for –

a) identifying indigenous species and ecosystems that are taonga; and

b) describing the taonga; and

c) mapping or describing the location of the taonga; and

d) describing the values of each taonga.

(2) **Local authorities** must recognise tangata whenua have the right to choose not to identify taonga and to choose the level of detail at which identified taonga or their location or values, are described.

(3) Territorial authorities must make or change their district plans to include (to the extent agreed to by tangata whenua) the description of identified taonga and their values and a description or map of their location.

(4) **Local authorities** must manage identified taonga located in an SNA in accordance with clause 3.9.

(5) In relation to identified taonga located outside SNAs, **local authorities** must –

- a) manage them as necessary to protect the taonga and their values; and
- b) provide opportunities to restore and enhance them and their values.

### 3.15 Highly mobile fauna

(1) Every **regional council** must work together with the territorial authorities in its region to survey and record areas outside SNAs where highly mobile fauna have been, or are likely to be, sometimes present (in this clause referred to as highly mobile fauna areas).

(2) If it will help manage highly mobile fauna, a territorial authority must (where possible) include in its district plan a map or description of the location of highly mobile fauna areas.

(3) **Local authorities** must provide information to their communities about –

- a) highly mobile fauna and their habitats; and
- b) best practice techniques for managing adverse effects on any highly mobile species in their regions and districts, and their habitats.

(4) **Local authorities** must include objectives, policies or methods in their policy statements and plans for managing the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development in highly mobile fauna areas, as necessary to maintain viable populations of highly mobile fauna across their natural range.

### 3.16 Restoration and enhancement

(1) This clause applies to the following areas:

- a) wetlands:
- b) SNAs whose ecological integrity is degraded:
- c) areas that provide important connectivity or buffering functions:
- d) former wetlands.

(2) Territorial authorities must identify the location of areas referred to in subclause (1)(b) and (c) and **regional councils** must record those locations (with appropriate descriptions) in their regional policy statements.

(3) **Local authorities** must promote, through objectives, policies and methods in policy statements and plans, the restoration and enhancement (including through reconstruction) of areas to which this clause applies.

(4) The objectives, policies or methods must identify opportunities for restoration and enhancement of those areas, prioritising all of the following over other indigenous biodiversity restoration projects:

- a) wetlands whose ecological integrity is degraded or where the presence of indigenous species is reduced:
- b) SNAs whose ecological integrity is degraded:
- c) areas that provide important connectivity or buffering functions:
- d) former wetlands that no longer retain their indigenous vegetation or habitat for indigenous fauna, but where reconstruction is likely to result in that vegetation or habitat being regained:
- e) any national priorities for indigenous biodiversity protection.

(5) In areas to which this clause applies, **local authorities** may provide incentives for restoration and enhancement and in particular on Māori land, in recognition of the opportunity cost of maintaining indigenous biodiversity on that land.

(6) **Local authorities** may impose or review restoration or enhancement conditions on resource consents and designations relating to activities in areas prioritised for restoration and enhancement.

### 3.17 Increasing indigenous vegetation cover

(1) Every **regional council** must assess the percentage of the urban and rural areas in its region that have indigenous vegetation cover.

(2) The **regional council** must specify which areas it will treat as urban for the purposes of this clause (which must be predominantly urban in character) and which it will treat as rural (which must be predominantly non-urban in character).

(3) The assessment of the percentage of indigenous vegetation cover may be done by a desktop analysis, by ground truthing or both.

(4) For urban areas, if the assessment indicates an area has less than 10 per cent indigenous vegetation cover, the **regional council** must include in its regional policy statement a target (expressed as a percentage figure within a specified time) for increasing indigenous vegetation cover in that area to at least 10 per cent of the area.

(5) For rural areas, if the assessment indicates an area has less than 10 per cent indigenous vegetation cover, the **regional council** must include in its regional policy statement a target (expressed as a percentage figure within a specified time) for increasing indigenous vegetation cover in the area.

(6) For any urban or rural area where the assessment indicates the area already has 10 per cent or more indigenous vegetation cover, the **regional council** may include in its regional policy statement targets (expressed as a percentage figure within a specified time) for increasing indigenous vegetation cover in the area.

(7) Every **regional council** must include objectives, policies or methods for increasing indigenous vegetation cover in its region and for achieving the targets set under this clause, giving priority to all of the following:

- a) areas to which clause 3.16 applies:

- b) areas representative of ecosystems naturally and formerly present:
- c) ensuring species richness:
- d) restoration and enhancement at a landscape scale across the region.

### 3.18 Regional biodiversity strategies

- (1) Every **regional council** must prepare a regional biodiversity strategy in collaboration with territorial authorities, tangata whenua, communities and other identified stakeholders.
- (2) **Local authorities** must have regard to the relevant regional biodiversity strategy when developing restoration and enhancement objectives, policies and methods for inclusion in regional policy statements and plans.
- (3) Every regional biodiversity strategy must be prepared in accordance with Appendix 5 and any regional council that, at the commencement date –
  - a) has a regional biodiversity strategy, must update the strategy to comply with Appendix 5 within six years after the commencement date; or
  - b) is in the process of preparing a regional biodiversity strategy, must complete the strategy in a way that complies with Appendix 5 within six years after the commencement date.
- (4) **Regional councils** that, at the commencement date, do not have a regional biodiversity strategy must initiate preparation of a strategy within three years after the commencement date and must complete it within six years after the commencement date.

### 3.19 Assessment of environmental effects

- (1) **Local authorities** must change their plans to include a requirement that the following information be included in any assessment of environmental effects whether all or any part of the site covered by the application is in or affects –
  - a) an SNA; or
  - b) an area of indigenous vegetation; or
  - c) a habitat of indigenous fauna; or
  - d) an area identified as highly mobile fauna area (as described in clause 3.15), in which case it must include information about the use of the area by highly mobile fauna; or
  - e) an area providing connectivity or buffering; or
  - f) an area identified as or containing, identified taonga.
- (2) **Local authorities** must make or change their policy statements and plans to include a requirement that the assessment of environmental effects required by clause 7(1) of Schedule 4 the Act –
  - a) for the purposes of clause 7(1)(c) of Schedule 4 of the Act –
    - i. addresses effects of the proposal (if relevant) on the areas referred to in subclause (1)(a)(i) to (vi); and

**Attachment 1 to Report 23.484**

- ii. includes sufficient information to demonstrate the effective management of adverse effects as required by this National Policy Statement; and
- b) for the purposes of clause 7(1)(d) of Schedule 4 of the Act, addresses –
  - i. the effects on identified taonga; and
  - ii. ecosystem services associated with indigenous biodiversity at the site; and
  - iii. the site’s role in maintaining the ecological integrity of and connections between it and the wider ecosystem; and
- c) uses biodiversity methodologies consistent with best practice for the ecosystem types present at the site; and
- d) considers including mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori assessment methodology where relevant.

(3) **Local authorities** must directly insert the following policy into their plans in accordance with section 55(2A) of the RMA within one year of commencement date:

*“If the regional policy statement or this plan requires a site to be assessed to determine whether it is an area of significant indigenous vegetation or significant habitat of indigenous fauna:*

*(a) the assessment must be done in accordance with Appendix 1 of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2020.; and*

*(b) any site confirmed as an SNA through that assessment must be classified as High or Medium in accordance with Appendix 2 of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2020.”; and*

(4) **Local authorities** may amend their plans to remove the policy in (3) when replacing with like-for-like content as part of a plan change to give effect to this National Policy Statement.

**3.20 Monitoring by regional councils**

- (1) **Regional councils** must, by working with territorial authorities, relevant agencies and tangata whenua, develop a monitoring plan for indigenous biodiversity in their regions and each of their districts.
- (2) Every monitoring plan must –
  - a) establish methods and timeframes for monitoring the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity in, and the ecological integrity and physical extent of, SNAs, taonga outside SNAs, and other areas outside SNAs; and
  - b) include methods and timeframes for monitoring progress towards, and achievement of, restoration and enhancement objectives established under clauses 3.16 and 3.17; and
  - c) use best practice methods, or nationally agreed standards or methods, for monitoring areas that allow for comparability; and
  - d) to the extent possible, where tangata whenua agree, use scientific monitoring methods and mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori monitoring methods equally; and

**Attachment 1 to Report 23.484**

- e) recognise the importance of long-term trends in monitoring results, and the relationship between results and the overall state of indigenous biodiversity; and
  - f) establish methods, such as action plans, for responding to monitoring that indicates the objectives of this National Policy Statement will not be met.
- (3) Methods and timeframes may include different methods and timeframes relating to SNAs, taonga outside SNAs, and other areas outside SNAs.

**Appendix 3: LGNZ draft key messages for submission on NPSIB on behalf of local government, January 2020**

Key message	Context
We support the governments focus on improving biodiversity outcomes	Greater central government focus on biodiversity is positive and we support its overarching outcomes. Local government is one of the biggest investors in biodiversity management in New Zealand. Many councils are already doing good work for indigenous biodiversity – much of it in collaboration with other players, including mana whenua, central government, landowners and communities. The need to do more is clear, but it is important to make sure that the responsibility to respond is shared across the whole system, not just put on councils through the NPSIB. To achieve this, roles and responsibilities need to be made clearer, which could be a key outcome of the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy review.
We support a more explicit role for Māori	Local government absolutely supports a more explicit role for Māori. It is important that requirements of the NPSIB don't cut across already-established good regional and local relationships with iwi.
Relationships with landowners will be important if we want to succeed	Effective biodiversity protection is underpinned by building relationships and supporting landowners to get the job done – this is critical for success. The protection and maintenance of indigenous biodiversity on private land is a public good and our interventions should enable and support landowners to look after it on our behalf. We encourage government to build and maintain a strong dialogue with landowners, not just industry associations.
We would like to see a package of interventions, both regulatory and non-regulatory, that addresses the challenge – we reemphasise that the NPSIB is only a singular tool affecting one part of the system	A package of interventions is required to address the biodiversity challenge, both regulatory and non-regulatory, as is a better value proposition for biodiversity supported by economic drivers. The NPSIB is only a singular tool affecting one part of the system and cannot address the challenge alone. Non-regulatory interventions for landowners and communities, such as partnership, proactive projects, funding, positive acknowledgement, community support and facilitation are proven to be effective when used in a wider programme. Central Government could play more of a role in this space.
Protection should be our first priority before restoration. We support a priority-based staged implementation approach to the NPSIB that first focusses on where protection is needed most	While restoration is an important part of indigenous biodiversity management, we believe that our priority and the priority of the NPSIB should be protection of remaining indigenous biodiversity. Efforts should not be watered down by trying to achieve everything all at once. The NPSIB proposes a 'one size fits all' approach to protect, maintain and restore biodiversity – the core of which is identification and protection of significant natural areas. We are concerned about the urgency to respond in this way across the whole of New Zealand. Some areas with high proportions of indigenous vegetation and habitat do not warrant such a response and priority should be elsewhere in areas where biodiversity is depleted. Better prioritisation is likely to yield better results and a more sensible approach to implementation.
Integration between national instruments will be important to enable effective implementation	The NPSIB must work alongside wider government policy – we support an all-of-government approach. It's important that there is coherency between instruments, and they do not confuse, distract or provide contrary direction for councils and landowners. Central government has a role in ensuring these tools have been developed to be implemented in an integrated way, not just at policy level.
The classification of Significant Natural Areas coupled with the proposed effects management policies could be unduly restrictive	The criteria and thresholds for identifying what is 'significant' could potentially include a substantial area of land, which when combined with the policy directions on avoiding effects and the effects hierarchy, could be unduly restrictive on land use.
We do not support the inclusion of highly mobile fauna, regional strategies and restoration policies	<p>We acknowledge that resource management plans have a role in managing impacts on highly mobile fauna, through habitat protection. However, we do not agree with councils being given the role of protection and sourcing and dissemination of data for highly mobile fauna. This would present a significant shift in roles between DOC and councils (species conservation and habitat protection, respectively) and places species conservation in an RMA framework. Also noting that councils do not necessarily have the information and expertise to undertake this role.</p> <p>We acknowledge that regional strategies can be an effective tool to achieve cross-organisational direction, alignment and coordination, but we don't support the inclusion of mandatory regional strategies in the NPSIB. This places the requirement for a broad non-statutory strategy within a narrow statutory framework. We need a whole-of-system strategy for biodiversity – not just RMA – the NPSIB isn't the right tool to deliver this.</p> <p>We acknowledge that restoration can be as appropriate as protection, but we should prioritise protection first and foremost. We should use the right tool for the job – the NPSIB should focus on bottom lines for biodiversity protection. The NPSIB should then leave councils the ability to either be more stringent in RM plans or provide for restoration using other tools.</p>
Monitoring will require central government leadership and support	Monitoring and reporting are an important part of 'telling the story'. Without specified methods, there is a risk that data obtained through monitoring will be incompatible from one area to the next and fail to provide a complete picture across NZ. The development and implementation of a monitoring programme in each region is likely to be extremely expensive for councils. The monitoring system will need some central government funding and support.
NPSIB implementation will be difficult and costly for councils, especially in the wider context of other national direction that will need to be implemented over the next five years	<p>We are concerned about implementation costs associated with the NPSIB. This includes both the social and economic costs to our communities and the costs on our sector in implementing the NPSIB. When looking at the bigger picture across all the national direction that needs to be implemented in the near future, the task looks near impossible. Implementing policies such as identification and mapping of significant natural areas will be particularly costly and time-consuming for most councils and landowners.</p> <p>We are particularly concerned about the burden this will place on ratepayers in areas with smaller rating-bases, which also tend to have more areas of indigenous biodiversity to protect. This creates a situation that is untenable for these councils, where cost-effective services simply cannot be provided.</p> <p>Additional points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We must focus on policy that can be turned into practical action that works and doesn't cut across the good work already going on</li> <li>• The requirements the proposed NPSIB are likely to lead to a national skills shortage of planners and ecologists</li> <li>• It is unclear for some policies what successful implementation looks like</li> <li>• Timeframes for implementation must be realistic, otherwise it won't happen</li> </ul>
Central government implementation support will be critical	Supporting measures, such as clear guidance, funding, monitoring and ecological and planning expertise will be required. Central government need to ensure sufficient budget is made available to provide this support to local government, iwi/hapū and landowners.

**NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY**

Table 1. Attachment 1 - NPS-IB requirements and implications for GW and TA's, current status of implementation, and next steps.

Timeframe	National Policy Statement milestone	Current status	What is needed?
<b>Resource Consents</b>			
<b>Effective immediately</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GW must give effect to the NPS-IB where new activities or developments requiring consent may have adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity.</li> <li>Significant Natural Area's (SNA's)<sup>1</sup> identified in a policy statement or plan have immediate effect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Status: Underway; some immediate action required</b></li> <li>There are existing gaps in the consenting process and information available to consent applicants and officers to address the immediate requirements of the NPS-IB – action required.</li> <li>Existing guidance on the Effects Management Hierarchy will assist in implementation of the NPS-IB through the consenting process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritisation of immediate information, data, and training requirements to support relevant consent decisions, e.g., creation of a new threatened species map layer and new training for consent officers.</li> <li>Current resourcing capacity to deliver this is being determined.</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity Strategy</b>			
<b>Start by August 2026, Completed by 2033</b>	<p>Develop a regional biodiversity strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in collaboration with TA's, tangata whenua, and communities, and that</li> <li>demonstrates a coordinated approach and reflects community aspirations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Status: To initiate</b></li> <li>The 2016 GW Biodiversity Strategy (internal guidance) can provide an initial point of reference.</li> <li>The proposed Mauri Tūhono framework outlines a shared set of values to underpin a holistic approach, and provides an existing network of relationships (see point 14 below).</li> <li>Neither meet the criteria outlined in the NPS-IB.</li> <li>Change 1 to the RPS introduces new objectives and policies that align with the requirements of the NPS-IB. This includes requiring the development of a Regional Biodiversity Strategy (Method IE.3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further scoping to determine how best to deliver a holistic approach with our partners.</li> <li>Dedicated funding and resourcing required for this has been requested through the LTP.</li> </ul>
<b>Significant Natural Area's</b>			
<b>By August 2028</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TA's to have identified, mapped, and notified all SNA's and taonga in their districts.</li> <li>Where requested, GW must assist TA's to identify and map SNA's.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status: Partially complete</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SNA identification has been required under the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) since 2013.</li> <li>Five TAs in the Wellington Region have identified SNA's in their operative District Plans: Kāpiti Coast District Council, Porirua District Council, South Wairarapa District Council, Carterton District Council and Masterton Council (in the combined Wairarapa District Plan).</li> <li>Wellington City Council have identified SNAs in their proposed District Plan.</li> <li>Hutt City Council and Upper Hutt City Council paused their process after initiating, awaiting release of the NPS-IB.</li> <li>A formal request for GW to assist Hutt City Council with this has been received. South Wairarapa District Council has also requested assistance from GW to identify SNAs, as part of their RPS submission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GW needs to determine the scope of 'assistance' provided to TA's including funding and resourcing implications. Assistance could include ecological expertise and ground truthing, a shared GIS platform, and/or a dedicated officer position to support regional implementation.</li> <li>GW to consider the request from Hutt City Council and South Wairarapa District Council to identify what is required to be able to respond to them.</li> <li>Undertake a review to compare SNA criteria between the RPS and NPS-IB and that previously mapped SNA's are aligned.</li> </ul>
<b>Update Policy Statements and Plans</b>			
	<p>GW must have notified changes to their policy statement and plans to give effect to the NPS-IB, including developing objectives, policies, and methods to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Status: Underway</b></li> <li>The operative Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and Natural Resources Plan (NRP) contain existing policy direction to identify indigenous ecosystems and habitats with significant indigenous biodiversity values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of existing provisions relating to indigenous biodiversity in the RPS and NRP.</li> <li>Assessment required as to which elements of the NPS-IB can be provided for through the RPS Change 1</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> SNA's = significant indigenous vegetation or significant habitat of indigenous fauna that qualify as SNAs

<p><b>By August 2031 (or earlier)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote the restoration of indigenous biodiversity based on NPS-IB priorities,</li> <li>• avoid adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity,</li> <li>• maintain, restore, and protect indigenous biodiversity on specified Māori land,</li> <li>• record areas outside SNA's used by highly mobile fauna and</li> <li>• assess the percentage of indigenous vegetation cover in urban and non-urban environments in the region and set targets to achieve at least 10 percent coverage.</li> </ul>	<p>across the region and protect these from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RPS allocates responsibility for land use controls to maintain indigenous biodiversity, with GW being responsible for ecosystems in the coastal marine area, wetlands and the beds of lakes and rivers and TA's having primary responsibility for terrestrial ecosystems.</li> <li>• Change 1 to the RPS introduces new objectives and policies that align with the requirements of the NPS-IB. These are to:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ maintain indigenous biodiversity generally, not just significant indigenous biodiversity;</li> <li>○ promote the resilience of indigenous biodiversity to climate change and recognise the role of indigenous biodiversity in mitigating the effects of climate change;</li> <li>○ recognise the values and roles of mana whenua/tangata whenua as kaitiaki and landowners and the community as stewards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The release of the national Resource Management Reforms will impact policy timeframes. Development of Wellington's new Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Natural and Built Environment Plan (NBEP) are expected to commence within the next 6-8 years, replacing the RPS and NRP.</li> <li>• Initial assessment by K&amp;I indicate that achieving the 10% target coverage of indigenous vegetation cover will not be easily achievable nor even possible for some towns.</li> </ul>	<p>hearings process and what will require a separate Policy Statement or Plan Change process. Submissions to RPS Change 1 allow for amendments to be made as part of the hearings process to the Indigenous Ecosystems provisions to further align with the NPS-IB (noting Change 1 was notified prior to the gazetted version of the NPS-IB).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment on whether to defer policy changes to incorporate within the new RSS and NBEP (RM reform).</li> <li>• Giving effect to the NPS-IB within the RPS and NRP will have resourcing and funding implications for GW business units (and partners).</li> <li>• Review of existing funding programmes (i.e., Wetland, Riparian and Farm Environment) to determine their alignment to the NPS-IB restoration priorities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop a Monitoring Plan</b></p>			
<p><b>As soon as practicable</b></p>	<p>GW must begin developing a monitoring plan that covers methods and timeframes which assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ecological integrity and physical extent of SNA's;</li> <li>○ restoration activities;</li> <li>○ the percentage of urban and non-urban indigenous vegetation cover; and</li> <li>○ include mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori monitoring methods equally to the extent possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Status: To initiate</b></li> <li>• Existing programs will be insufficient to meet the monitoring requirements of the NPS-IB, given the expansion of expectations.</li> <li>• Mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori monitoring methods are not used equally.</li> <li>• RPS Change 1, Method IE.4 "<i>Kaitiaki indigenous biodiversity monitoring programme</i>" requires GW to work in partnership with mana whenua to establish and resource kaitiaki programmes to:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) monitor and evaluate the ecosystem health and trends of the region's indigenous biodiversity and the extent to which Te Mana o te Wai and Te Rito o te Harakeke is being given effect to, and</li> <li>(b) develop action plans to respond to the monitoring results, including informing the regional biodiversity strategy in Method IE.3.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further engagement with partners is needed to identify how mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori monitoring methods can be applied equally, including how GW might support resourcing mana whenua partners with this.</li> <li>• GW will continue to advocate to the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and the Department of Conservation (DOC) for practical and cost-effective approach standards for monitoring by regional councils.</li> <li>• Further work is required to determine the scope of resourcing requirements for this expansion of responsibilities.</li> </ul>



# National Policy Statement – Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB) Implications for Greater Wellington

## About the NPS-IB



Most significant national direction on the conservation of indigenous biodiversity (IB) since the RMA



Gazetted on 07 July 2023, and came into effect on 04 August 2023



Provides increased clarity and direction to councils on their roles and responsibilities for identifying, protecting, and maintaining indigenous biodiversity



Applies to all public and private land (terrestrial) ecosystems, specified highly mobile fauna and some aspects of wetlands



Aims to maintain IB, with at least no overall loss



Requires GW and mana whenua/tangata whenua to work in partnership to implement

## NPS-IB implementation timeline

Date	National Policy Statement milestone
<b>Effective immediately</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GW must give effect to the NPS-IB where <b>new activities or developments requiring consent</b> may have adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity</li> <li>• <b>Significant Natural Area's (SNA's) identified in a policy statement or district plan</b> have immediate effect</li> </ul>
<b>Started by August 2026, completed by 2033</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GW must develop a <b>regional biodiversity strategy</b></li> </ul>
<b>By August 2028</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Territorial authorities (TA's) to have <b>identified, mapped, and notified all SNA's</b> in their districts</li> <li>• Where requested, GW must <b>'assist' territorial authorities</b> to identify and map SNA's</li> </ul>
<b>By August 2031 (or earlier)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GW must have <b>notified changes to their policy statement and plans</b> to give effect to the NPS-IB</li> </ul>
<b>As soon as practicable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GW must begin developing a significantly expanded <b>monitoring plan</b> for indigenous biodiversity in the region</li> </ul>

# Current Status

## Regulatory

### SNAs - *Underway*

- Varying levels of SNA implementation in region
  - Five TA's have SNAs in their District Plan
  - WCC in their proposed District Plan
- Hutt City Council and SWDC have already indicated they would like assistance from GW

## Non-Regulatory

### Biodiversity Strategy – *To be confirmed*

- GW Biodiversity Strategy (2016) initial point of reference
- Mauri Tūhono framework outlines a shared set of values for a holistic approach to partnership & implementation, and provides a network of existing relationships

### Regional Plan and Consents – *Underway, immediate action required*      Monitoring Plan – *To Initiate*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate impacts for some consent decisions: Priority need for training/data to assist in consent decisions (e.g. threatened species map layer)</li> <li>• Operative RPS and NRP contain existing policy direction to identify significant indigenous ecosystems and habitats</li> <li>• New objectives and policies introduced in NRP Change 1 and RPS Change 1 are aligned with NPSIB (potential for minor tweaking through hearings process)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded monitoring plan to cover ecological integrity, extent of SNA's, restoration activities, % indigenous vegetation cover in urban &amp; non-urban, &amp; Māori monitoring methods equally to the extent possible</li> <li>• Some existing monitoring for terrestrial biodiversity (bird surveys)</li> <li>• K&amp;I working with regional sector &amp; MFE on developing monitoring methods</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

# What is needed?

## Regulatory

### SNAs

- Now: GW needs to determine the scope of ‘assistance’ provided to TA’s including funding and resourcing implications.
- Undertake a review to compare SNA criteria between the RPS & NPS-IB

### Regional Plan and Consents

- Prioritisation of immediate data and training needs to support relevant consent decisions & if resourcing required.
- Review of existing provisions relating to IB in the RPS and NRP.
- Submissions to RPS Change 1 allow for amendments through the hearings process
- Assessment on whether to defer policy changes to incorporate within the new RSS and NBEA Plans (RM reform).
- Determine resourcing and funding implications for GW business units (and partners).

## Non-Regulatory

### Biodiversity Strategy

- Further scoping to determine how best to deliver a holistic approach with our partners, particularly in relationship to implementing Mauri Tūhono
- Dedicated funding and resourcing required for this (has been requested through recent LTP).

### Monitoring Plan

- Review of existing funding programmes to assess alignment to restoration priorities.
- Determine GW and mana whenua/tangata resourcing implications, and potential support package.
- Continue advocacy to MfE & DOC for practical and cost-effective approach standards

## Holistic approach to implementation & partnership

### Mauri Tūhono

- provides us with **shared values and vision** for our mahi together with mana whenua, other councils, communities, and government agencies
  - It has been embedded as a **korowai aroha** around GW's Long Term planning process, and
  - this holistic approach could be used to **guide the partnership** between GW, tangata whenua and TA's and implementation of the NPS-IB.
- 
- This holistic and coordinated view and approach should extend across all policy and programs – including NPS-FM, RPS, NRP, etc.
  - MFE guidance on NPS-IB tangata whenua implementation is expected late 2023.

## Next Steps

Staff will continue to work with THW and other relevant internal functions and business units, TA's, MfE, DOC, and tangata whenua, to:

- Progress the holistic partnership approach to implementing NPS-IB requirements;
- Ensure the expectations of the NPS-IB are understood internally and action immediate requirements to ensure compliance within the consenting space;
- Identify funding, ownership and resourcing needs to meet minimum requirements and best practise implementation; and
- Consider and respond to Hutt City Council and SWDC requests for SNA assistance



# Patai/Questions?



# And there's more ... National direction submissions

## Active central government submission processes (up to Dec 2023)

Government proposal	Our approach
Proposed NPS on Natural Hazard Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due 20 November</li> <li>• Sector submission led by Te Ura Kahika (TUK); GW staff involved</li> <li>• Aligns with our own policy approach in RPS Change 1</li> </ul>
Limited amendments to the NPS-HPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small amendments</li> <li>• No need to GW to submit</li> </ul>
Draft Transitional National Planning Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted engagement on the first draft</li> <li>• Due 13 December; will rely on TUK process and submission</li> </ul>
Select Committee Inquiry into Climate Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due 1 November</li> <li>• Will rely on TUK submission</li> </ul>
MBIE proposals to advance New Zealand's energy transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due 2 November</li> <li>• Will rely on TUK submission</li> </ul>
Biodiversity credit system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our own submission as discussed today.</li> </ul>

**Environment Committee**  
**12 October 2023**  
**Report 23.498**



**For Information**

## **RESOURCE MANGEMENT REFORM – DAY 1 IMPLICATIONS**

### **Te take mō te pūrongo**

#### **Purpose**

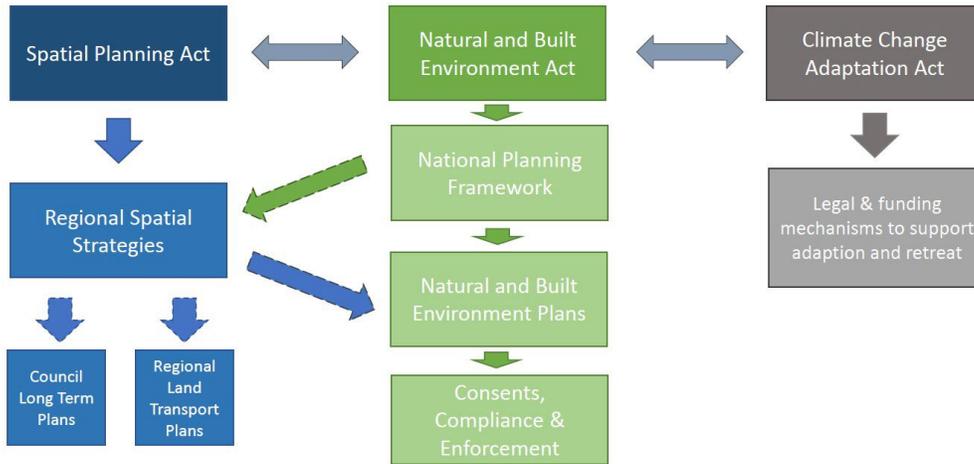
1. To inform the Committee of the Day 1 implications of the new Natural & Built Environment Act 2023 and the Spatial Planning Act 2023 for Greater Wellington.

### **Te horopaki**

#### **Context**

2. Legislation is now in force that replaces the existing resource management framework, primarily the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Two main Acts will be the basis of the system going forward: the Natural & Built Environment Act 2023 (NBEA) and the Spatial Planning Act 2023 (SPA).
3. The change is significant and introduces new frameworks and structures, including Regional Planning Committees (RPC). There will be significant input required from Greater Wellington, territorial authorities, our mana whenua partners, community groups, stakeholders, and ratepayers. This RPC will develop a Regional Spatial Strategy and a Natural & Built Environment Plan.
4. The reforms provide for a more effective role for Māori throughout the resource management system, and also provide for a more direct role for Māori in decision-making and in the designing of measures and processes to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
5. Currently the Te Tiriti clause in the RMA asks decision makers to “take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”. Section 5 of the SPA requires decision makers to “give effect to the principles of the Treaty”. Sections 7 and 7A go even further by requiring decision makers to recognise and provide for kaitiakitanga by iwi and hapū over the health and well-being of the taiao, in accordance with kawa, tikanga and mātauranga Māori in their own takiwā.
6. Furthermore, the NBEA requires decision makers to uphold Te Oranga o te Taiao and to enable the use, development and protection of the environment, within limits and targets. To enable this, a new national Māori entity will be established to provide independent monitoring of how the principles of Te Tiriti are given effect. A Freshwater Working Group will also be established to lead the engagement process between the Crown, iwi and hapū on freshwater allocation at the regional or localised levels.

7. Many parts of the NBEA will not apply until there is an NBE Plan in place. This means the RMA will not be repealed immediately. Instead, existing RMA provisions (with some exceptions), national direction, plans and consenting continues to be in force until an NBE Plan applies on the region’s NBEA date.



8. However, there are some transitional arrangements that we need to prepare and react to, including some ‘day one’ provisions. The key day one provisions are set out below.

**Fast track consenting**

9. Fast track consenting is here to stay. The reforms provide for a fast-track consenting process for certain infrastructure and housing activities. The process looks very similar to the fast-track consenting process we currently implement: the Covid-19 Recovery (Fast track Consenting) Act.
10. This approach poses a risk to environmental outcomes as it bypasses the regional planning framework. The environmental regulation unit and strategy team will continue to coordinate input into this EPA-led process. The EPA has published initial guidance.<sup>1</sup>

**Freshwater related consents**

11. During the transition period, some freshwater-related consents can only be granted for a duration that will not exceed five years after the date that allocation methods in a region’s first NBE plan have legal effect. There are exclusions to this such as major infrastructure type projects (e.g., Wastewater Treatment Plants).
12. The environmental regulation unit will need to do further work to assess this duration based on an estimated date a NBE plan will be in place. The unit will also look at our reporting requirements and alter templates and application forms accordingly.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epa.govt.nz/fast-track-consenting/nbea/overview/>

**Requiring Authorities under the NBA**

13. A requiring authority is a person or entity that can require land to be set aside (designated) for a public purpose such as a hospital, school, or network. Greater Wellington is a requiring authority and will continue to be so. Through the reforms, the NBEA:
  - a adds council-controlled organisations as requiring authorities.
  - b enables more network utility operators to apply to be requiring authorities.
  - c enables ‘other applicants’ to apply to be requiring authorities.
14. Until October 2023, the requiring authority provisions in the RMA will continue to be in effect.

**Compliance and Enforcement Day One requirements**

15. The compliance system is changing. New and updated compliance and enforcement (C&E) powers and tools will be available while the system moves from the RMA to the NBEA. These changes will come in progressively over a two-year period from now.
16. A major change is the introduction of a new suite of civil tools, alongside existing criminal ones (enforcement orders and abatement notices). These civil tools are intended to complement, not replace, infringement fines and punitive approaches under criminal law. Compliance history can now also be considered in resource consenting and a consent can be revoked/suspended when not being complied with.
17. We will look to consider what these additional requirements mean within our consenting approach and amend/adapt accordingly.

Available from Day One for any breach of the RMA	Available 6 months after enactment of NBA for any breach of the RMA	Available 2 years after enactment for any breach of the RMA
Breaches of consent conditions treated as an offence under the RMA	Adverse publicity orders	Monetary Benefit orders
Increases in financial penalties. Extended limitation period for identification of criminal offending	Enforceable undertakings	Pecuniary penalties
Abatement notices may be issued for additional reasons - i.e. to require person to take preventative action to avoid adverse environmental effects, or to require a person to take action to comply with a consent notice or covenant		
May apply to Environment Court for enforcement order for revocation of a resource consent for ongoing and severe non-compliance in relation to RMA offence		

***Contaminated land – commencement***

18. NBEA now emphasizes the 'polluter pays' principle, requiring those who cause or allow contamination to bear the costs of pollution management. Regulatory agencies and landowners are responsible for preventing or remedying harm to human health and the environment from contamination and minimizing further adverse effects. The EPA takes over as lead regulator once significant contaminated land is identified.

***Aquaculture changes to the RMA***

19. Most of these immediate changes apply to the powers of the Minister of Aquaculture to suspend consent applications, make regulations, and make decisions on the allocation of aquaculture space. However regional councils have responsibilities to update mapping in certain circumstances.

***Other changes that begin from Day 1***

20. There have also been amendments to the freshwater planning process, which defines the approach required to determine if any plan change will be a Freshwater Planning Instrument. This will apply to any regional planning changes after Day 1; any changes notified prior to this date still use the existing wording of the RMA and case law as at time of notification (the latter applies to GW's current RPS change 1 process).
21. Finally, there have been changes to LGOIMA and the addition to LIMs of natural hazards information. This is a TA function, but GW must provide TAs with natural hazards information. We already do this through the district planning process but will need to assess if this is sufficient within the new reforms.

**Te tātaritanga  
Analysis**

22. The Day 1 provisions have increased Greater Wellington's responsibility, necessitating a rethinking of planning, consenting, and compliance processes. The changes can be incorporated into existing templates and guidance. The region is unlikely to see an increase in consents, but rather a change in how decisions are evaluated and made across consents. This change should be able to be accommodated within existing resourcing and sequenced into work programs.
23. However, we are not resourced to plan and prepare for transitioning to the new Resource Management system, including SPA and NBEA implementation. If Greater Wellington decides to consider this work, it will be sought as additional resourcing through the Long Term Plan (LTP). The Ministry for the Environment is considering options to support this process.

***New requirements for freshwater consents***

24. The NBEA sets out new provisions for applications for freshwater consents lodged during the transitional period. The duration of any freshwater-related consent must not exceed five years after the date the relevant rules have legal effect<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Clause 6(4) of Schedule 1 of the Natural and Built Environment Act 2023

*Determining when rules in a region's first Natural and Built Environment Plan will take legal effect*

25. The date when rules in a region's first Natural and Built Environment Plan take legal effect depends on the timing of each region's transition to the new system. The transition is expected to take between 7 and 10 years, with regions transitioning in tranches. The first tranche will begin pre-planning steps in 2024, and a transitional National Planning Framework must be notified within 6 months of enactment of the NBA.
26. An approved Regional Spatial Strategy must be in place before a region can notify its plan. The development timeframe for a regional spatial strategy is capped at three years, and the timeframe for a natural and built environment plan is four years and four months. The rules in a region's first plan have legal effect only once they are treated as operative.

*Information to guide decisions on the timing of each region's transition.*

27. Having established the 'bookends' for when rules in NBE plans are likely to take effect (i.e., somewhere between 2031 and 2033), consent authorities must determine when, within that window, their region is likely to transition.
28. A consent authority must determine the maximum expiration date for freshwater consents granted during the transitional period. For regions in the first tranche, a maximum expiration date of 2036 (2031 + 5 years) is assumed, while regions in the last tranche have a maximum expiration date of 2038 (2033 + 5 years).

*Determining the actual duration for freshwater consents granted during the transitional period.*

29. Consent authorities must determine the actual duration of a freshwater consent after establishing a maximum expiration date.
30. This can be influenced by various factors, including national direction on freshwater management, treaty settlement legislation, regional or local planning documents, National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) implementation, state of freshwater and sensitivity of the receiving environment, effects of the activity and value of investment, and prior non-compliance.
31. The expected dates for completion of planning processes under the NPS-FM are also highly relevant. We will be bringing you further advice on relevant NPS-FM deadlines later this year.
32. Prior non-compliance, which has led to enforcement action, is now a relevant consideration when processing applications for resource consent under the RMA.

*Greater Wellington's approach*

33. Based on consideration of timing of the NBE plan and looking to a consistent approach within the regional sector at what other councils are doing, an initial actual duration of 10 years has been landed on.
34. We will continue to assess the appropriate duration for consents having due regard to the new legislation and the relevant consideration matters. Noting that this is a highly uncertain regulatory environment and all subject to change.

## **Ngā hua ahumoni**

### **Financial implications**

35. Day 1 matters are implemented through business as usual and current resourcing as outlined in the current Long-Term Plan. Reform going forward may require additional resourcing, however, this is highly uncertain and will be revisited once there is clarity on the legislation post-election.
36. It is also worth noting that the expectation on mana whenua / tangata whenua's increased participation in the new framework (including regional planning committees) will require new resourcing. Where this resourcing comes from needs to be a discussion across all participants of the system.

## **Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori**

### **Implications for Māori**

37. The reforms recognise the state of Māori/Crown relations in a predominantly post-settlement era, increasing the standard of which Māori are being included in all facets of Council business. There are several ways we can initiate and implement this direction, some of which Te Hunga Whiriwhiri (THW) has already begun to develop and implement. These include:
  - a guidance for how to implement the Treaty clause.
  - b remove barriers to participation in decision making by enhancing the role and status of iwi management plans and transfer of powers.
  - c encourage partnership arrangements.
  - d improving Māori participation in the resource consenting process.
  - e introduce monitoring and system oversight of Te Tiriti performance including Treaty audits.
  - f provide opportunities for iwi and hapū to share their mātauranga and tikanga in their roles as kaitiaki.
  - g undertake targeted capacity and capability training for resource management practitioners with knowledge of tikanga, kawa and mātauranga Māori.
38. The other issue to note is for mana whenua partners who have settled and have RMA planning-type settlement redress (e.g. the Wairarapa Moana Statutory Board), is in taking those arrangements into regional planning committee structures makes them potentially distant from Ministers and the Crown. An unanswered question is who do our partners challenge if their rights under those committees are compromised and the spirit and intent of their settlement redress is not upheld by the independent regional planning committees?
39. It also appears that section 33 of the RMA (around the transfer of powers to iwi authorities) has been repealed as part of the introduction of the NBEA and SPA. It's currently unclear what impact this has in the short-term or where such arrangements will sit under the new Acts.

### **Te huritao ki te huringa o te āhuarangi Consideration of climate change**

40. The fast-track consenting provisions that are a part of the Day 1 changes package will have impacts on climate change. The fast-track consenting provisions were intended to create a streamlined process for significant infrastructure projects – including renewable energy generation. The Day 1 changes may therefore help facilitate a more rapid reduction of carbon emissions in the region.
41. With that noted, the fast-track consenting provisions could also contribute to worsening carbon emissions. For example, if major new roads and highways were to be consenting using the fast-track consenting process that could increase private vehicle use and this increase carbon emissions.
42. It is also important to note that the resource management reforms are intended to include a third act focusing on climate change adaptation, which will have further statutory direction on climate change.

### **Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei Next steps**

43. All Day 1 matters discussed in this paper will be implemented as required, subject to any uncertainty created by a potential change in government. In the meantime, Greater Wellington continues to implement with the regulatory environment in front of us at this current time.
44. Any changes to national legislation will be brought back to you at a future meeting.

### **Ngā kaiwaitohu Signatories**

Writers	Nicola Arnesen – Team Leader Consents & Compliance, Regulation Matt Hickman – Kaiwhakahaere Matua   Manager Policy
Approvers	Fathima Iftikar - Hautū Rautaki, Kaupapa Here me ngā Waeture   Director Strategy, Policy and Regulation Lian Butcher – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Taiao   Group Manager Environment

<b>He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations</b>
<p><b><i>Fit with Council’s roles or with Committee’s terms of reference</i></b></p> <p>The Committee has responsibility to oversee the development, implementation and review of:</p> <p>(c) Regulatory systems, processes and tools to meet Council’s related legislative responsibilities.</p>
<p><b><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></b></p> <p>Resource management and protection/enhancement of Te Taiao is a key theme through Council’s planning, strategy and policy documents.</p>
<p><b><i>Internal consultation</i></b></p> <p>The following teams have been consulted internally: Rōpū Taiao – Policy and Regulation; Te Hunga Whiriwhiri.</p>
<p><b><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></b></p> <p>No specific risks or impacts for the Day 1 implications. Further analysis is required for the whole system shift, which will depend on the outcome of the General Election.</p>

Environment Committee  
12 October 2023  
Report 23.456



For Information

## TOITŪ TE WHENUA PARKS NETWORK PLAN 2020-30 IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

**Te take mō te pūrongo**

### Purpose

1. To advise the Environment Committee (the Committee) on the implementation of Toitū Te Whenua (Parks Network Plan).

**Te tāhū kōrero**

### Background

2. Council adopted Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-30 (Toitū Te Whenua) on the 10 December 2020 after a period of community consultation including a public hearing. It's the combined management plan for eight regional parks and forests: Akatarawa, Battle Hill, Belmont, East Harbour (including the Northern Forest, Baring Head/Ōrua Pouanui and Parangarahu Lakes), Kaitoke, Pakuratahi, Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP/Whareroa), and Wainuiomata parks. It provides directions for these parks managed under the Reserves, Local Government and Wellington Regional Water Board Acts. [Attachment 1](#) has a map.
3. The sub-title for Toitū Te Whenua is '*E tūhonohono ana ngā mea katoa/ Everything is connected*' reflecting the important place regional parks have within communities and broader ecological systems including catchments. Toitū Te Whenua proposes a more collaborative way of working with mana whenua and mahi tahi with community.

### ***Focusing action delivery through Toitū Te Whenua***

4. The following paragraphs describe the structure of Toitū Te Whenua, through vision, key shifts, core values, and strategic goals. All Parks management activities, from working with mana whenua and communities, to planning operations and capital works, to setting out future work plans and budgets are guided by the woven interconnectedness of all sections of Toitū Te Whenua. Giving effect to the vision of Toitū Te Whenua involves following the guidance described in all interconnected sections of Toitū Te Whenua.

### ***Vision***

5. There were two public consultation periods in Toitū Te Whenua development. In the first we asked people what they valued most about parks. This resulted in the Toitū Te Whenua vision:

*'Restoring healthy ecosystems for the benefit of people and nature'*

### **Key shifts**

6. Toitū Te Whenua identifies five 'Key shifts' or changes that we collectively seek to achieve in the way we manage parks in order to deliver more benefits from them. These are:
  - *Phasing out most livestock grazing activities to enable a concerted focus on restoring natural values across the park network including wetlands.*
  - *Improving access to, within and across parks.*
  - *Developing key destinations in parks to focus work efforts to support high-quality and memorable recreation experiences.*
  - *Building on collaborative work with mana whenua partners and community conservation and recreation groups so that we can achieve greater benefits from parks together.*
  - *Building our response to climate change into more of the things we do in parks.*
7. Work is in progress on all the key shifts. Progress has been made on most of them, particularly the first two, phasing out grazing and working on access improvements. Progress on other key shifts has been somewhat limited due to funding constraints and the need to progress Master Planning co-design with mana whenua.

### **Core values for parks**

8. 'Core Park values' are identified in Toitū Te Whenua (Section 4). They are a fundamental basis for management and reflect the directions of legislation guiding parks and community values for parks expressed through feedback. They guide decision making and delivery of Toitū Te Whenua. The overarching core value is:

*Ecosystem health, recreation experience, mana whenua partnerships and community are at the forefront of our work in regional parks.*
9. Core values for parks are useful day to day in park management work. For example, in the assessment of new proposals for activities or structures in parks or renewal of high impact activity licences, alignment with core park values is required. Reducing high impact activities is required to support recovery of ecosystem health. Activities that do not align or cannot be undertaken in a sustainable way, such as grazing on wetlands, are generally not suitable in parks. Other values focus on recreation experiences such as '*Regional parks are easily accessible and we provide for people of all abilities*', and are supported by both operational work and capital developments.

### **Strategic Goals**

10. Toitū Te Whenua vision and values are supported by six strategic goals for Park use and development. Toitū Te Whenua's six goals provide strategic focus for delivery work with the aim of achieving more benefits from parks for people through recreation experiences, communities through wellbeing opportunities such as volunteering and connecting with whenua, and for the health of nature through collaborative restoration and biosecurity conservation work. Toitū Te Whenua sets out a collaborative approach whereby implementation work is intended by Greater Wellington both leading and facilitating implementation through our mana whenua partners and communities.

11. The first three core goals are enduring, the second three are for particular focus over the next ten years.
  - a Natural heritage
  - b Recreation experiences
  - c Heritage and landscape
  - d Partnerships with mana whenua
  - e Mahi tahi, the way we work
  - f Climate change and sustainability

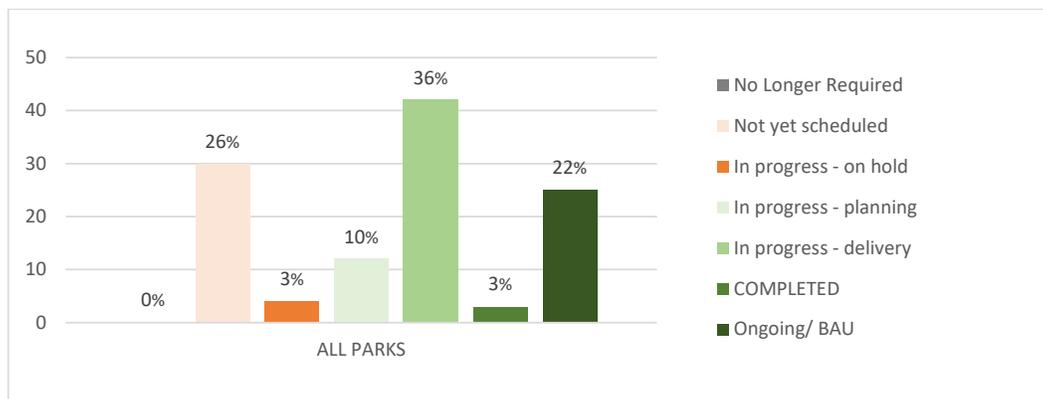
**Toitū Te Whenua Policies and actions**

12. A range of Park policies are set out to give effect to the vision and key shifts described in Toitū Te Whenua. Policies are in line with the strategic goals noted above and these lead to a series of identified actions throughout the plan. Actions are organised in short (1-3 years), medium (4-7 years) and long-term (8+ years). These actions are categorised by all-parks and park-specific. There are 504 actions in Toitū Te Whenua consisting of the 395 listed actions and their related sub-actions.

**Te tātaritanga  
Analysis**

**Toitū Te Whenua implementation summary**

13. Toitū Te Whenua sets out future aspirations of Parks management. Current operations and maintenance programmes have already pivoted direction towards Toitū Te Whenua guidance.
14. The main areas of improvement our teams are focused on currently are in the space of how we partner with mana whenua and how we enhance community relationships. Accelerating Toitū Te Whenua implementation beyond the current pace of operational and capital programmes is dependent on two main issues - building co-design relationships with mana whenua and master planning, and dedicated additional resources to fulfil the aspirational future set out in the 10-year plan.
15. We are almost three years into implementation of actions for the ten-year action plan within Toitū Te Whenua. This graph illustrates overall progress on the 503 actions.



16. Notes about Plan Action status reporting:
  - a “ongoing / business as usual” means that this work is being delivered through existing Greater Wellington programmes such as our Key Native Ecosystems environmental restoration work, parks asset maintenance or the Park ranger operational work.
  - b Most actions categorised as “In progress, on hold” are pending mana whenua capacity to engage in park amenity & landscape master plans.
  - c Detail by park is provided in **Attachment 1**. Further summary information about Toitū Te Whenua implementation is provided on the public website and available from staff.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Prioritisation of Toitū Te Whenua Actions***

17. An Implementation Framework was developed after Toitū Te Whenua was adopted by Council. The Plan has short, medium and long-term priorities identified. The Implementation Framework expands on these and prioritises based on six criteria. The Parks asset management programme has a similar prioritising process. Both prioritising criteria are detailed in **Attachment 1**.

#### ***Key achievements to date on Toitū Te Whenua goals***

##### *Goal 1 - Natural heritage*

Recloaking Papatūānuku parks restoration programme:

18. The ‘Recloaking Papatūānuku’ parks restoration programme focuses on restoring the degraded grazing legacy areas of parks and supporting environmental restoration.
19. The recloaking Papatūānuku programme is funded by the Low Carbon Acceleration Fund (LCAF) until 2025. The programme is focused on restoration works in Belmont, Battle Hill, Kaitoke, QEP/Whareroa, and Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui in East Harbour Regional Park.
20. Greater Wellington’s 2021-31 Long Term Plan (LTP) confirmed funds for Recloaking Papatūānuku from 2025/26 to be funded to 2032/33 with general rates.
21. Policies in Toitū Te Whenua guide and support restoration work. Policies 1 to 10P include protecting and enhancing health of indigenous flora and fauna and taking a catchment wide approach. Other policies restrict further investment in farming related infrastructure such as fences, if it is not required for recreation or conservation purposes, and *Adaptively reuse and recycle farming related infrastructure for conservation, recreation and community purposes* (Policy 20P).
22. Detailed place-based restoration plans for each park are planned to be co-designed in partnership with mana whenua and with input from community. These plans will provide the blueprint for restoration on the ground.
23. Partnerships with mana whenua are developing, however co-design of restoration plans is taking time. This is in part a result of resourcing constraints and competing priorities within mana whenua, and in part due to the longer-term vision of mana whenua. There

<sup>1</sup> [Greater Wellington — Implementing Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-30 \(gw.govt.nz\)](https://www.gw.govt.nz/our-work/our-plans-and-policies/our-plans-and-policies-toitutu-te-whenua-parks-network-plan-2020-30/)

is expectation from elements of community to plan and deliver restoration more quickly than is currently happening.

24. Procurement of goods and services for restoration is challenging. Securing site specific eco-sourced native plants at scale, with sufficient lead time is difficult. The absence of detailed restoration plans is a barrier to successful long-term planning for restoration.
25. The programme has been supporting small scale nurseries and kaimahi teams to build their skills and capacity to deliver restoration services, including local seed collection, propagation of native plants and planting mahi.
26. A highlight of the programme is the wetland restoration in QEP/Whareroa where previously grazed natural and historic wetlands are being restored through a mix of planting, pest plant control and hydrological modifications.
27. The programme includes pest plant and animal work to support the success of restoration. Manging pests is critical to ensure restoration is successful. Pest plants in particular are a significant risk to restoration if ex-grazed land is not well managed.
28. Removal of redundant former farm fences and infrastructure is being undertaken across a number of Parks. In QEP/Whareroa, removal of fences has helped the change the park landscape to feel more 'park' than 'farm' like.
29. With the removal of farming and grazing, there has been a focus on Fire Threat Management Plan development and implementation of works to reduce the risk of fire to people, property and restoration plantings. Measures include fire breaks, warning signs (people are the main source of fire ignition), hazardous vegetation removal and planting low flammability green fire breaks. Restoration of wetlands also reduces the likelihood of fire impacts.
30. Please refer to the public website for additional summary information about Recloaking Papatūānuku parks restoration programme.<sup>2</sup>

#### Restricted Activity Assessment

31. The Restricted Activity assessment process consider land and people values. It also follows Toitū Te Whenua core values such as '*Research and an evidence-based approach is core to our work. Innovative ways of working are supported wherever possible*'. In practice this has seen short term programme of work evolve with Greater Wellington scientists investigating and mapping park natural values such as wetlands and remnant native species to provide an evidence base for land use decision making in accordance with Plan policies.
32. Restricted Activity assessments (Appendix 3 of Toitū Te Whenua) for renewal of licences and leases in parks included pony club horse grazing licences come up for renewal. Sustainability changes are made where required, such as protection of wetlands and streams.
33. In QEP/Whareroa this saw the pony club licence area move off wetlands to higher ground and saw the end of the commercial horse trekking business with associated grazing in the park which had been operating on wetlands for many years. With less

<sup>2</sup> [Greater Wellington — Recloaking Papatūānuku \(Recloaking Mother Earth\) \(gw.govt.nz\)](https://www.gw.govt.nz/recreation/papatuanuku)

than 3 percent of the Wellington Region's wetlands remaining, restoring this area has been an important opportunity to support natural processes of recovery and restore large areas through the Recloaking Papatūānuku parks restoration programme.

34. Ending and changing grazing practices is often contentious. Such decisions are given very high scrutiny by officers to determine appropriateness and alignment with Toitū Te Whenua policies and core values for parks such as:

*'Where the environment is degraded, we focus on restoration, prioritising high quality freshwater, protection of wetlands and rare ecosystems and work to minimise threats and impacts'.*

#### *Goal 2 - Recreation experiences*

##### Access improvements

35. Public access improvements. This includes opening all of QEP/Whareroa, Western Belmont and Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui to full public access which includes activities such as dog walking, bike riding and horse riding. Previously these areas had limitations on access or activities to support commercial grazing.
36. Access improvements via the Parks capital works programme such as bridge and track renewal works in Kaitoke (3 bridges), Wainuiomata (bridge and track), and opening of former farm tracks in QEP/Whareroa.

##### Destination development to support recreation experiences:

37. Greater Wellington was successful in obtaining a grant (through the Three Waters reform programme) to develop six story telling destinations and trails in parks. The Toitū Te Whenua Storytelling Programme will see some great enhancements over the coming years and enable the delivery of multiple plan actions. The six projects within the programme are:
- a Storytelling at Parangarahu Lakes with Taranaki Whānui / Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust (PNBST) (Plan Actions A249, A250 and A241c)
  - b A dark sky museum at Wainuiomata Regional Park (Plan Actions A376c and A389)
  - c An easy access trail to enable many people to easily get to and enjoy the interesting Belmont WW2 Bunkers (Plan Actions A170h and A174)
  - d A highly accessible sensory trail at Battle Hill (Plan Actions A136 and A137)
  - e QEP/Whareroa Ramaroa building entry hub storytelling and upgrade the wetland loop (Plan Actions A344c and A352) Story project funding
  - f Storytelling and facility enhancement along a long distance horse, bike and walking route from QEP/Whareroa to the Hutt Valley via Akatarawa and Battle Hill parks which has a working title in Toitū Te Whenua of the 'Akatarawa Traverse' (Plan Action A100c)
38. The Toitū Te Whenua Storytelling programme is facilitated by a project officer (through Better Off Funding part of the Three Waters Reform Support Package) who is working with mana whenua and others. Works are currently in the planning stage. To meet grant fund requirements, the projects must be delivered over the next five years.

39. Other destination development works (identified as ‘Key destinations’ in Toitū Te Whenua’) include renovation of park cottages for public overnight accommodation use. The first bookable cottages will be in Eastern Belmont Park (Hill Road) and within the lighthouse complex at Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui in East Harbour Regional Park. This is a great new opportunity and booking levels are expected to be high. Park cottages and unique accommodation is common in Department of Conservation (DOC) conservation areas and regional parks in Auckland. There are 12 or more park cottages which could become bookable for park stays in the future.

*Goal 3 - Cultural heritage features and landscape*

40. Changing the name of Wainuiomata Recreation Area to Wainuiomata Regional Park. This has helped identify it as part of the regional park network and with promotional work, encouraged more visits. Other Park and place name updates are proposed and included in mana whenua partnership work.
41. The Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui lighthouse complex and World War II heritage site have been added to the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, with Greater Wellington support. The listing recognises the significance of the buildings and their place in New Zealand’s history. Restoration work within the Light house complex has seen new utility services installed, along with extensive interior painting and conservation work. The Assistant Lighthouse keeper’s cottage (one of two cottages) is nearly complete expected to be ready for public bookings for overnight stays early in the new year. Councillors will be invited to an opening celebration beforehand. Work will then commence on the second cottage.
42. The latest te reo signs we have produced have been created in unison with Taranaki Whānui and was approved via a vote at the Rōpū Tiaki hui about a month ago. This is a great example of working side by side with mana whenua. We are still working through the te reo translation sign off process as Rōpū Tiaki require all translations to be in the local dialect. Once this has been confirmed, we will work with them to create a range of wayfinding signs throughout Parangarau.

*Goal 4 - Mahi tahi/the way we work*

43. This goal is about working more closely with community and helping to support the success of conservation and recreation groups in parks. Examples of successful new collaborations include:
  - a At QEP/Whareroa a wide range of community groups are working together within the park. A few recent highlights include the Kapiti Biodiversity Group’s involvement in restoration trial sites, Friends of QEP group’s recent planting and restoration efforts in wetlands and pest plant control, and Tram license has been finalised to allow their continued operation for 30 years. Please see further summary information on the implementation progress page on the public website.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gw.govt.nz/parks/queen-elizabeth-park/whats-happening-in-queen-elizabeth-park/>

- b Collaborations with mana whenua and the Wellington Astronomical Society for dark sky events and story programme museum development in Wainuiomata Regional Park.
  - c The establishment of a Friends group at Battle Hill (Plan Action A151). They are supporting restoration plantings.
  - d Establishment of a *Regional Equestrian Working Group* to support implementation of Plan actions, and collaborative and consistent approaches to horse riding access and facilities across land management agencies (Plan Actions A65).
44. Additional resource in Greater Wellington’s staffing of community support has already been included in the changes of our organisational structure within the Environment Group. A dedicated team supporting community capability and change is aimed at supporting external community groups, volunteer efforts towards targeted alignment with environmental and social outcomes across Parks and other Greater Wellington community connections.

*Goal 5 - Mana whenua partnerships*

45. This goal is taking effect with working together in mahi tahi partnerships, as kaitiaki guardians, nurturing strong mauri and enhancing parks for current and future generations. Our work continues to build stronger relationship with mana whenua partners. We continue to build our approach to partnership ensuring we are moving towards trusted, mana enhancing relationships that are mutually beneficial and collaborative to ensure that Greater Wellington and mana whenua have a shared vision and understanding. This is an ongoing goal and involves significant time investment to ensure partnership is genuine and sustainable. Some examples of success and progress in building mana whenua partnerships are noted below.
46. **Rōpū Tiaki** – Te Rōpū Tiaki was established in 2012 through a Memorandum of Understanding agreed between PNBST, representing the iwi of Taranaki Whānui, and Greater Wellington. Te Rōpū Tiaki have been directly involved in:
- a The setup, recruitment and governance of the Hem of Remutaka Jobs for Nature Project
  - b Approval and participation in translocation of kākahi and Toi Toi from Lake Kohangapiripiri to Zealandia’s Roto Mahanga.
  - c Design and guidance for Bi-lingual signage at the Parangarahū lakes.
47. **Hem of Remutaka** – Greater Wellington was a founding partner of the Hem *Jobs for Nature* project along with Taranaki Whānui and Department of Conservation. This project is successful in terms of enabling mana whenua to deliver taiao projects across this area of their rohe. It has also built capacity and knowledge within the whānau. Parks has been a key partner and provided additional opportunities to the Hem team through planting, seed collection and propagation contracts.
48. **Ngāti Toa Nga Pari e Rua** – whilst not an initial partner in the establishment of this *Jobs for Nature* project, Greater Wellington has subsequently worked closely with the kaimahi team to identify opportunities for them to partner on delivering mahi within

regional parks. This has led to works contracts including planting at Waitangirua at Belmont Park.

49. **Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai** – Mahi Mō Te Taiao is a *Jobs for Nature* project. The new funding builds on the Waikanae ki Uta ki Tai (WKUKT) ‘mountains to sea’ project established in 2019 to restore the river catchment’s health. Both initiatives are a partnership of Waikanae mana whenua Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai (ĀKW), Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC), Greater Wellington and DOC. Greater Wellington has been able to offer contract planting opportunities to the kaimahi team through the Recloaking Papatūānuku restoration programme.
50. **The Rongoā Collective** – Greater Wellington has over the last year begun a journey to build a partnership with the the Rongoā Collective (the Collective) to enable its reconnection to the land at QEP /Whareroa. The Collective has nursery space at the park and a designated 5ha area, Te Pātaka Rongoa o Whareroa, from which to begin their journey of reconnection. The real opportunity is to enable Mātauranga-a-iwi co-design and plan for whole of park restoration in partnership.

*Goal 6 - Climate change and sustainability*

51. There has been significant progress made on carbon emission reduction and sequestration opportunities in parks.
52. In 2018/19 stock and horse grazing in parks made up just over 12 percent of Greater Wellington’s corporate carbon footprint from approximately 2000 ha of park land. Most of this was within Belmont, Baring Head/ Ōrua-pouanui, Kaitoke and QEP/Whareroa parks.
53. In 2022/23, stock and horse grazing in regional parks has been reduced to approximately 1,300 ha at Battle Hill, QEP/Whareroa, Belmont and Kaitoke. The park land area grazed has reduced by around 35 percent. This will reduce further as the large (approximate 1000 ha) commercial stock grazing licence in Belmont phases out prior to ending in January 2026.
54. Overall, since 2018/19, through stock retirements and licence variations, overall emissions attributed to grazing in regional parks have almost halved (reduced by 46 percent). This reduction is making a significant contribution towards helping Greater Wellington meet our ‘carbon neutral by 2030’ goal. New restoration plantings maturing will sequester carbon and support the shift to climate positive.
55. At Battle Hill Park, where sustainable grazing area in the Park will remain, we are ensuring water ways are protected and that land carrying capacity with overriding environmental goals are priority within the grazing licence renewals.

**Core delivery work - Parks Capital works programme**

56. Greater Wellington’s regional park capital works budget is around \$2.7 million per annum and focuses on asset maintenance and renewal. The programme of works is guided by the Parks Asset Management Plan and for the past two years has been aligned with Toitū Te Whenua Policies and implementation priorities.
57. Capital works prioritisation focuses on Toitū Te Whenua implementation, however there are other matters arising that require capital investment. For example,

unplanned, urgent works have included upgrades to meet national drinking and wastewater standards.

### ***Key challenges and Opportunities***

#### *Restoration of East Belmont grazing licence area*

58. Restoring 1000ha at Belmont, once grazing is phased out, is significant and not fully funded through the Recloaking Papatūānuku programme.
59. There has been extensive past investment in fencing here and resource will be required for fence removal to facilitate access and recreation activities. Some costs can be recovered through sale of recycled materials. There are great opportunities for adaptive reuse of former farming infrastructure such as the large shearing sheds and park cottages for visitor booking.
60. There is a significant under provision of recreation facilities in the current and former grazed areas of Belmont, particularly those near the lower socio-economic suburbs of Waitangirua and Cannons Creek.
61. Staff are undertaking work to plan the best approach to phase our grazing in favour of long-term restoration. This includes considering how to manage environmental challenges such as pest plants and animals, the risk of fire, and the future of recreational use.

#### *Mahi tahi/the way we work*

62. Utilising new functions of the Environmental Group staff structure is essential in unlocking the power of community relationships. With dedicated functions aimed at community engagement for catchment planning, and volunteer/partnership support we will continue and enhance investment into community engagements and relationship opportunities with ongoing Toitū Te Whenua delivery.

#### *Recreation experiences*

63. Equity of access opportunity is a key focus for Toitū Te Whenua. Actions identify key areas under access provision to be addressed. West Belmont in East Porirua, one of the lowest socio-economic areas of the region, is high priority for park facilities improvements. Addressing this gap will offer significant community wellbeing benefits.

#### *Capacity to deliver*

64. Many of Toitū Te Whenua's actions are aspirational and will require increase capital and operational funding to deliver within the 10-year plan period. That is, current funding for operations and capital programmes are maintaining the Parks network and are limited in capacity for implementing the aspirations of Toitū Te Whenua.
65. We consider that investment into our relationships with mana whenua and the communities who value each regional park, we will be able to achieve significantly more than we could working in isolation. Toitū Te Whenua therefore emphasises collaborative work, and we are confident that the new Environment Group structure will empower this approach.

### **Ngā hua ahumoni**

#### **Financial implications**

66. There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, given the programme of actions involved in Toitū Te Whenua implementation, there will be significant financial implications relating to the pace and scale of delivery to meet community expectations. These will be conveyed through Council's standard financial planning processes, including through LTP planning.

### **Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori Implications for Māori**

#### ***Effective Partnering***

67. Working in partnership with mana whenua is essential to the success of the delivery of our work programmes. As the relational space evolves there is a need to adapt the pace of Toitū Te Whenua delivery to ensure our mana whenua partners are able to genuinely input into the process. For example, landscape & amenity master plans are priority actions in Toitū Te Whenua. However, as we set to work in meaningful partnership with mana whenua, working at their pace, master planning work is investing time in early stages to enable co-design.

#### ***Engagement for equitable outcomes***

68. Shifting to a partnership approach with mana whenua can create tensions with community expectations and perceptions of a need to “get stuff done”, but in the long term our mana whenua partnerships and a more holistic approach to our work enable better outcomes for Māori and the wider community.

#### ***Strong, prosperous and resilient Māori communities***

69. Te Hunga Whiriwhiri is supporting Greater Wellington Kaupapa agreements with mana whenua, many relating to Toitū Te Whenua delivery. Over the last two years Kaupapa opportunities with mana whenua have been explored. Starting with an initial project-based approach (as prescribed through Kaupapa Funding templates) and later adapting to consolidate these projects into multi-year roles that fitted with mana whenua's aspirations and will deliver better outcomes for Māori.

#### ***Capable workforce***

70. As noted in comments above under Goal 5 - Mana whenua partnerships represent a growing capability in the mana whenua workforce. However, this is only the beginning of strengthening mana whenua as kaitiaki with capability and capacity and realising opportunities to progress shared aspirations within Toitū Te Whenua delivery.

### **Te huritao ki te huringa o te āhuarangi Consideration of climate change**

71. Toitū Te Whenua Goal 6 supports climate change and sustainability action; *Parks are managed in highly sustainable ways, building environmental resilience as part of the natural solution to climate change.*
72. Significant progress has been made on reducing parks contribution to Greater Wellington corporate carbon emissions through grazing phase out. Restoration programme work will see parks forests and peat wetlands sequestering carbon and supporting the carbon positive goal.

73. The parks asset renewal programme is helping to ensure that park facilities are appropriately located and more resilient to extreme weather events. In some cases vulnerable assets have been proactively removed, such as in coastal areas of QEP/Whareroa.

**Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei**

**Next steps**

74. Mana whenua partnership and progressing master planning is critical to progressing a significant portion of Toitū Te Whenua implantation work. With Te Hunga Whiriwhiri support this is expected to progress in 2023/24.
75. Staff and Council Long Term Plan funding prioritisation will determine the degree in which Toitū Te Whenua delivery will be paced over the next few years.
76. There will be ongoing publication of updates about progress on the Implementing Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan public website pages.

**Ngā āpitihanga**

**Attachments**

Number	Title
1	Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- map of parks,</li> <li>- action and capital works prioritising, and</li> <li>- action progress graphs by park</li> </ul>

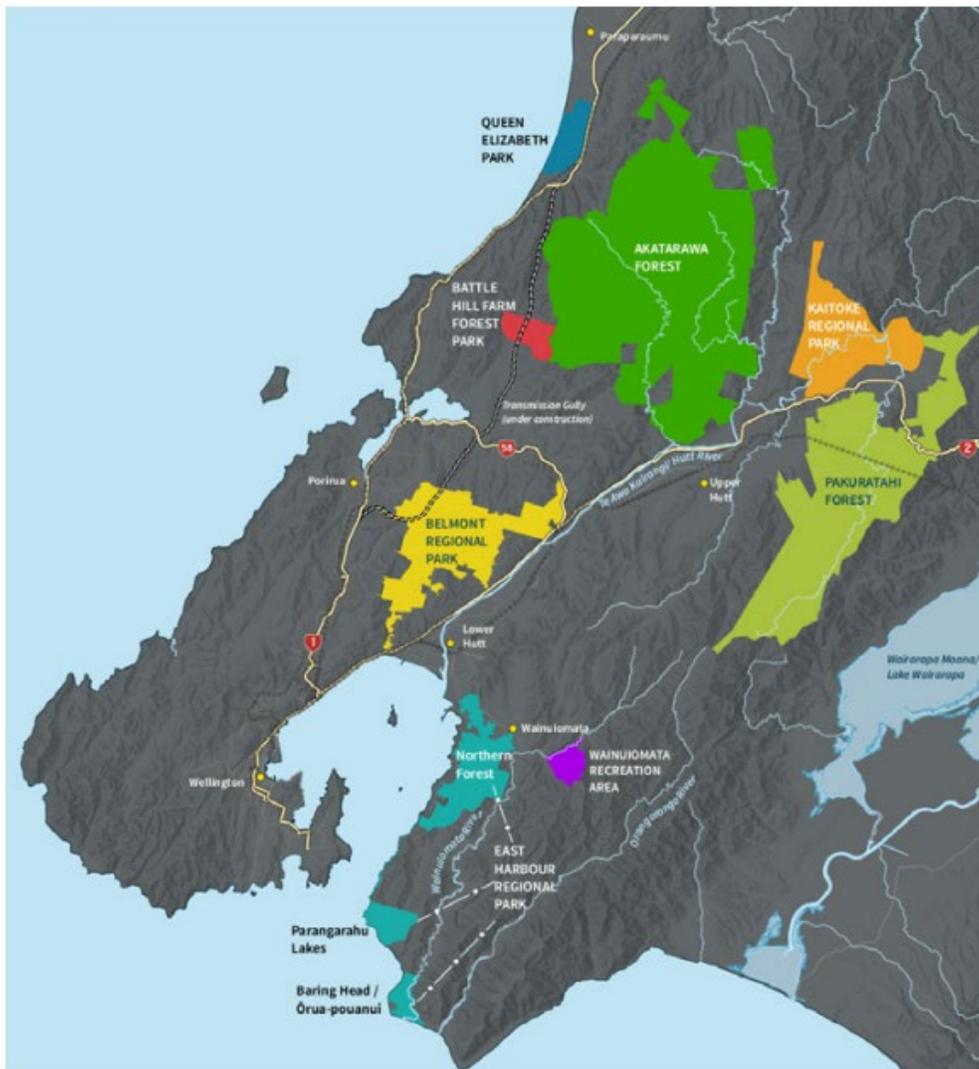
**Ngā kaiwaitohu**

**Signatories**

Writers	Fiona Colquhoun – Strategic Planner Parks Ricky Clarkson – Eastern Parks Team Leader David Boone – Manager Ecosystems and Community
Approvers	Anita Anderson – Manager Environmental Strategy Jack Mace – Director Delivery Lian Butcher – Group Manager, Environment

<b>He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations</b>
<p><b><i>Fit with Council’s roles or with Committee’s terms of reference</i></b></p> <p>The specific responsibility as provided in the Terms of Reference which enables the Environment Committee to consider this report is:</p> <p>2.3 Review periodically the effectiveness of implementing and delivering Council’s:</p> <p>a) Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators</p>
<p><b><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></b></p> <p>The contents of this update are relevant to upcoming Long Term Plan prioritisation considerations which will determine future years’ funding allocated to Toitū Te Whenua implementation.</p>
<p><b><i>Internal consultation</i></b></p> <p>Staff across Environment Group and Te Hunga Whiriwhiri have collaborated to produce this report.</p>
<p><b><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></b></p> <p>There are no risks or impacts associated with this report.</p>

Map of Regional Parks



## **Toitū Te Whenua Action and Asset management programme prioritising**

The Actions of Toitū Te Whenua are identified as short, medium or long term in the Plan. They have been further prioritised for implementation based on six criteria which are weighted:

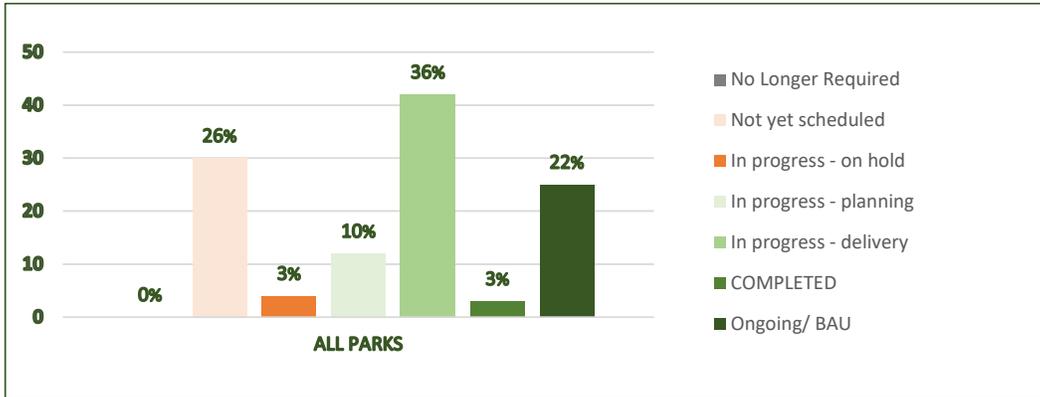
1. Directly supports Toitū Te Whenua key shift (benefit):
  - Restoration
  - Access/ accessibility
  - Key destinations
  - Collaboration with mana whenua, others
  - Climate action
2. Significant reputational risk (if not done), significant external support/ advocacy
3. Significant demand (via public survey), addresses signs and/or story telling gap, will enable more park visitation
4. Social and economic wellbeing benefits:
  - Directly builds/ supports community connections / opportunity for mana whenua/ community leadership (e.g. social/volunteering, community restoration programme)
  - Addresses access & equity gap in provision (core value)
  - Directly supports enhanced visitor experience
  - Supports local enterprise / regional economy + recovery (e.g. tourism/Māori business)
5. Visitor safety, Asset protection (assets- built and natural), new legislation or policy requirements
6. Interdependency with other project or business activity e.g. asset management plan priority, other agency, Impact of not proceeding

The **parks asset management programme** also has prioritising criteria for the capital works and includes alignment with Toitū Te Whenua:

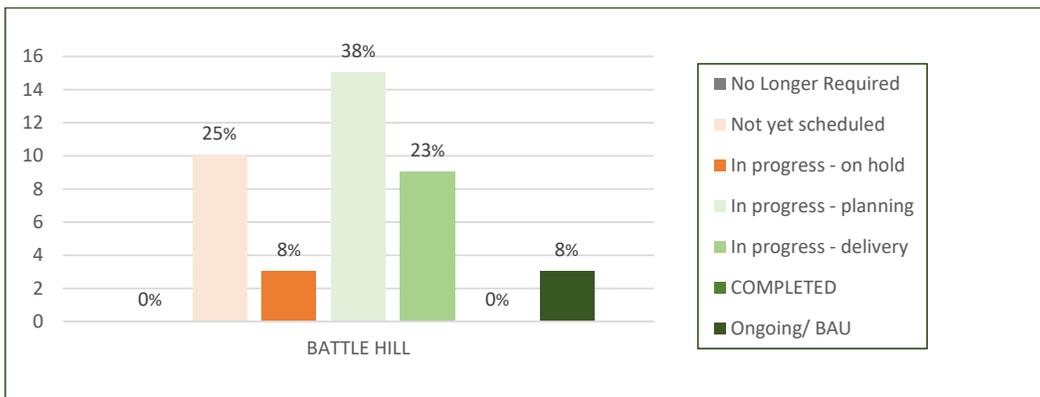
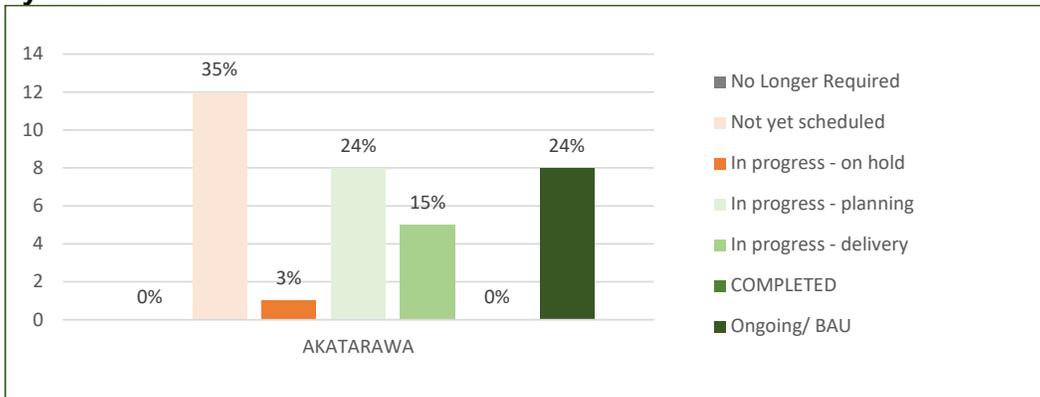
- H&S - asset end of life
- Environmental – Regulatory
- Lifelines – critical infrastructure
- Storm damage– damages go through the notification process.
- Reputational
- Toitū Te Whenua priorities
- Continuous improvement priority already identified

### Implementation progress of Toitū Te Whenua Plan Actions by park

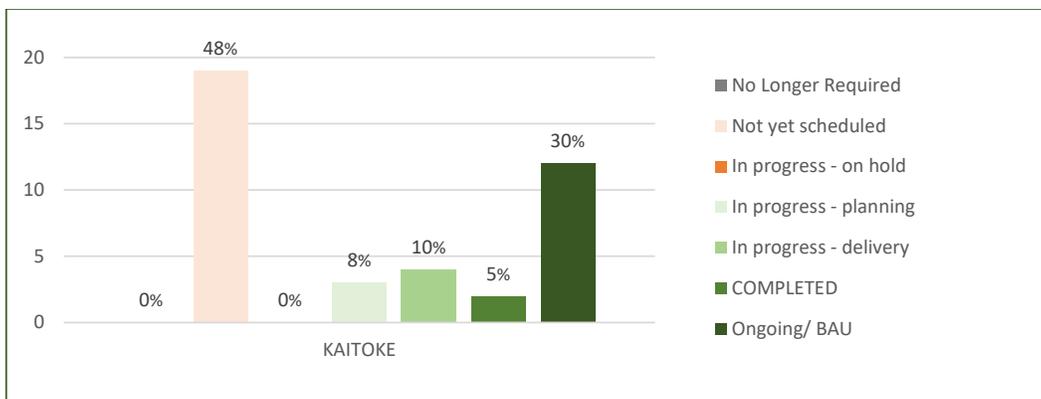
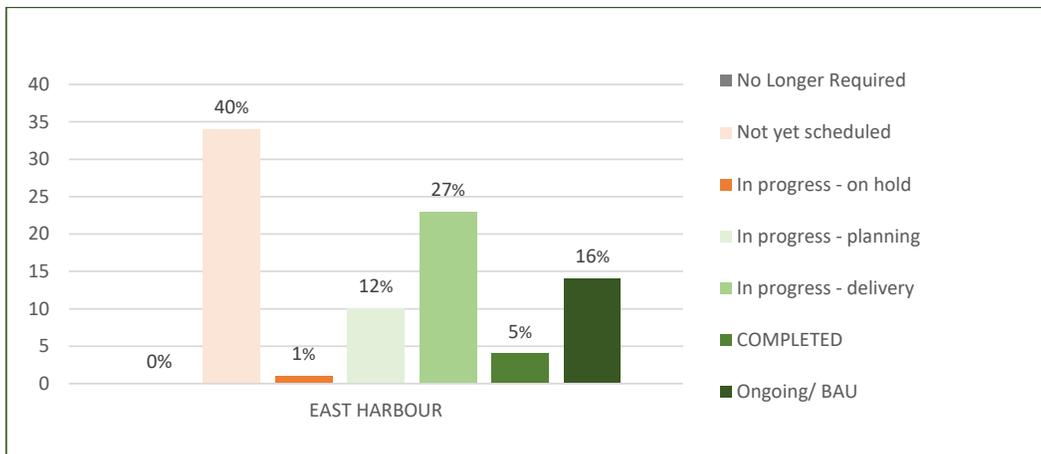
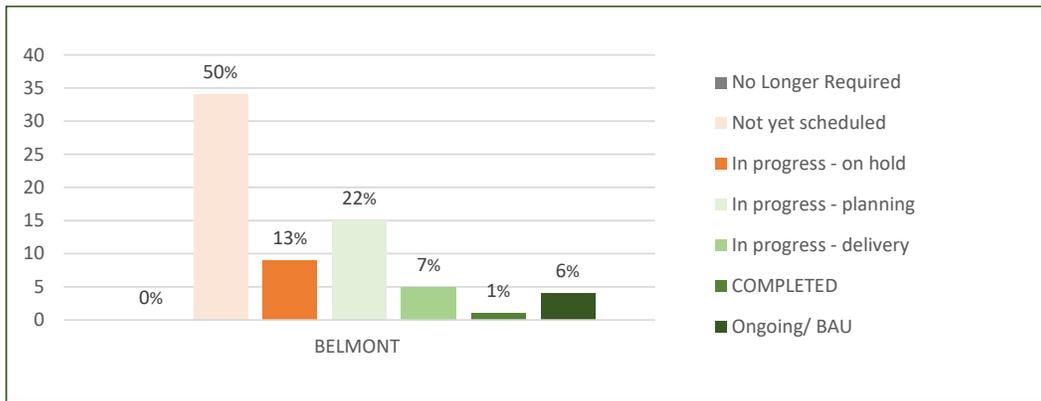
#### All parks



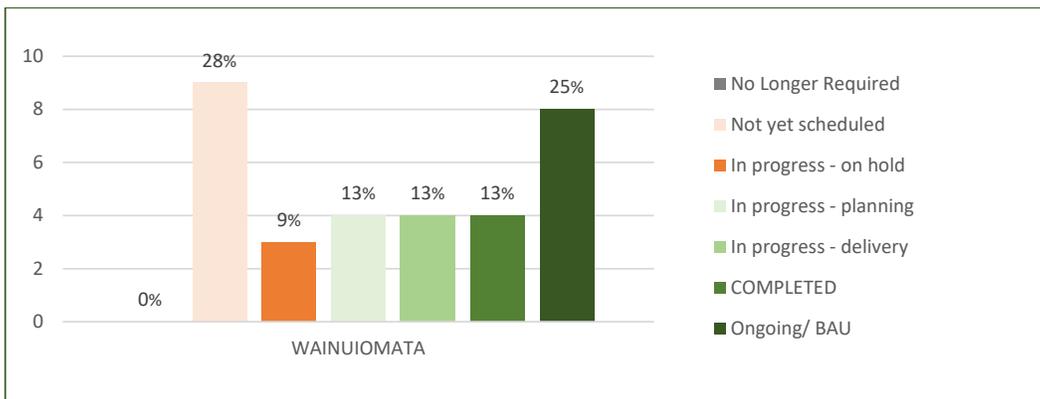
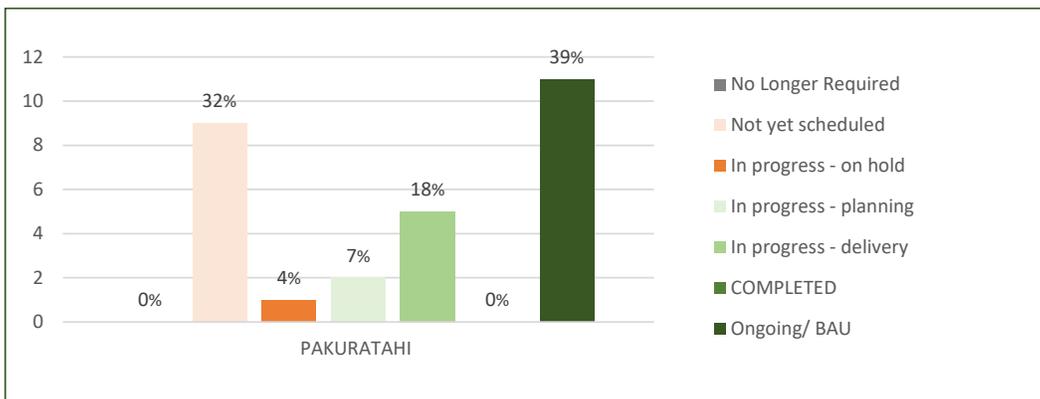
#### By Park



**Attachment 1 to Report 23.456**



Attachment 1 to Report 23.456





**Environment Committee**  
**12 October 2023**  
**Report 23.467**

**For Information**

## **PEST MANAGEMENT REPORT**

### **Te take mō te pūrongo** **Purpose**

1. To give an overview of the pest animal management programmes undertaken by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington), in line with the Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP).
2. The RPMP provides the strategic and statutory framework for managing pests in the Greater Wellington region.

### **Te horopaki** **Context**

3. The key focus of Greater Wellington's pest animal control work is to reverse the loss of biodiversity, particularly in certain critically valuable areas (Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) sites and managed territorial authority reserves), reduce the impact of plant and animal pests, support a regionally co-ordinated approach to pest management with other individuals and organisations, and make considerable areas of the region pest-free.
4. This is a core function of Greater Wellington. The pest animal operational work sits within the Delivery function and supports the objectives of the wider Environment group. Our intergenerational strategy provides clear guidance on how we are delivering our pest management approach. In particular managing pests to *Safeguard* our biodiversity, doing that while developing new *Tools and Techniques* for pest control through projects such as Predator Free Wellington and investing directly in the capability of our *People and Partners* so mana whenua aspirations are realised and there are more community trappers in our region.
5. The organisations biosecurity capability is recognised nationally and through its programmes has brought about significant regional benefits to agriculture and indigenous biodiversity.
6. Greater Wellington are experts in pest animal control and have staff with extensive experience and skill in managing a wide range of pests in high-risk operations. There is specialist equipment, skilled staff and very good procedures in place to enable work to occur efficiently and safely.
7. The control of possums and, at selected high value sites such as KNE sites, the control of other pest animals and plants has allowed native vegetation to thrive and support biodiversity.

8. Greater Wellington also have a key role giving support and advice to the community. The extent of this is determined by the RPMP and approved programmes. When a species is not covered by a policy or programme, advice may limit e.g. providing a list of contractors on the Council website.

***Greater Wellington programmes***

9. Outlined below are the existing programmes of animal pest control work currently undertaken by Greater Wellington and in partnership with other agencies. Greater Wellington staff carry out approximately 70% of pest animal operational work directly, with the remaining work being delivered through contractors.

***RPMP***

10. Species led programmes are used to control pests covered by the RPMP.
11. The exclusion programme is for pests that aren't established in the region (eg wallabies, alligator weed, chilean needle grass).
12. Eradication is for species we aim to eradicate in the life of the plan (eg rooks, moth plant, senegal tea, woolly nightshade).
13. Progressive containment is for species that are well established, and keeping them at certain levels will result in fewer sites infested (eg purple loosestrife, wilding conifers)
14. Sustained control is for pests that are well established and if left uncontrolled cause adverse effects (eg rabbits, wasps, blue passionflower, boneseed).

***Predator Free Wellington (PFW)***

15. PFW is a programme co-funded in partnership through Greater Wellington, Wellington City Council (WCC), the NEXT foundation and central government funding through Predator Free F2050 Limited. The objective is to eradicate mustelids, possums and rats from Wellington City starting with the Miramar Peninsula.
16. All staff within the PFW delivery operations team are employed by Greater Wellington, due to their recognised expertise in predator control. The relationship between Predator Free Wellington Ltd and Greater Wellington is dependent on the trust built by Greater Wellington's track record of delivering pest control throughout the region and a close working relationship with the organisations' respective leads. The relationship is a nationally recognised example of how a private entity and local government can work together to achieve successful outcomes.
17. Norway rats, weasels, and possums have been eliminated from Phase 1 of the project (Miramar Peninsula) and the final species (ship rats) are very close to elimination. As of writing only 10 hectares of active predator control is still active out of a 1000-hectare project area. The second phase of the operations, in the heart of the Wellington CBD, is well underway. The first phase of elimination delivered to 20,000 residents and phase 2 is delivering to 70,000 more.
18. Since its inception, PFW has sought to create a community movement, facilitating and enabling the public to get involved in pest animal trapping. As well as the projects core goal of eradicating pests using Greater Wellington staff, PFW runs a comprehensive network of volunteers, which significantly contributes to the project outcomes. This

has been achieved by training and promotion of PFW goals and aspirations through staff employed specifically to engage with the community.

19. PFW is setting the standard for pest animal control in urban landscapes and is a benchmark for New Zealand in its Predator Free 2050 goals. It is a world first when it comes to urban eradication of this type, and project learnings are shared nationally and internationally.

#### *Regional Predator Control Programme (RPCP)*

20. The RPCP started in 2010 as the Regional Possum Predator Control Programme (RPPCP) and was a pest management initiative that aimed to control possums and other predators that threatened the region's native biodiversity and economy. It focused on areas which had been declared free of bovine tuberculosis by OSPRI NZ. Greater Wellington built on the work undertaken by OSPRI through the RPPCP, by maintaining low possum populations in areas declared bovine tuberculosis free.
21. In 2022/23 the Regional Possum Predator Control Programme (RPPCP) became the Regional Predator Control Programme (RPCP) and is now funded by general rates so needs to deliver regional benefits.
22. The RPCP controls predators that are a serious threat based on protecting the best biodiversity ecosystems outside of the KNE programme.
23. The RPCP possum control currently covers 226,761 hectares. Approximately 100,000 hectares are treated annually as these sites are serviced on a cycle of 1 to 3 years. Predator control is implemented along particular stretches of rivers to provide protection to regionally threatened shorebird species. The RPCP undertakes 4,300 hectares of mustelid control annually and there are 8 services per year, either side of the breeding season (from September to April).
24. This programme needs to continue to transition from one that was driven by declarations of tuberculosis freedom to one focusing on maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity.

#### *KNE Programme*

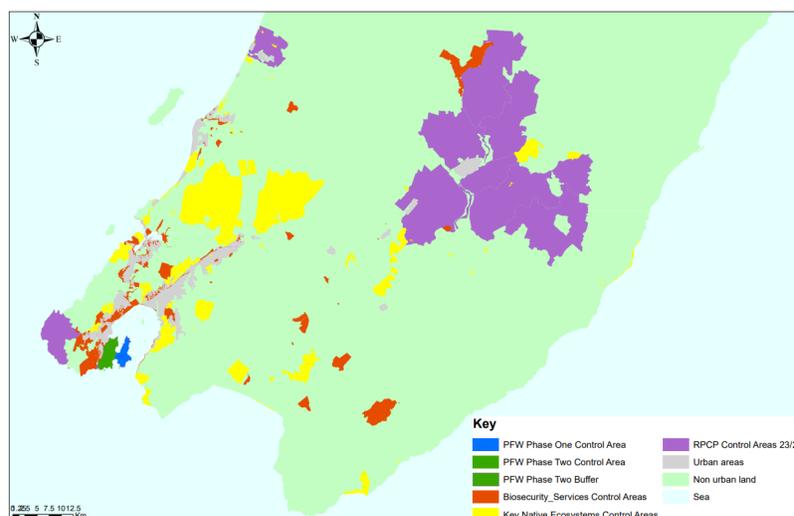
25. Pest control within KNE sites is aimed at protecting representative examples of indigenous ecosystem types of high value (58 sites, approximately 48,000 hectares). These areas are recognised as some of the best remaining examples of original ecosystem types in the Wellington Region.
26. Different types of ecosystems (forest, wetland, freshwater, estuarine, and coastal and marine) have been identified on both public and private land using widely accepted criteria, including representativeness, rarity and diversity. This aligns with central government policy and direction such as the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.
27. These sites have plans developed, usually with partners, landowners and other groups involved with the sites, which set out values, priorities, threats, budgets and roles.
28. These sites often have a very high level of pest animal and plant control to support a rich diversity of native plants and animals.

### *Aerial Possum Control Programme*

29. Aerial 1080 operations aim to primarily control possums to very low levels across all large forest sites to minimize the effects that possums have on the native forest ecosystems and the likelihood that water quality, in the Water Collection Areas, is compromised due to those effects. Operations will likely reduce rodent and mustelid populations for a short period. Aerial application of 1080 by helicopter is a commonly used technique that can effectively control these species across thousands of hectares of terrain that is unsuitable for ground control techniques.
30. Operations may also be undertaken at the Wainuiomata Mainland Island (within Wainuiomata Orongorongo Water Collection Area) to manage rat population irruptions and resulting increases in other mammalian predators in mast year events.
31. The forested Greater Wellington regional parks are included within the 1080 programme and control is scheduled on a five-year rotation.
32. 1080 operations are part of the KNE programme and funded by Greater Wellington, or Wellington Water in the water collection areas. The aerial control programme can also be used to complement the work carried out under other programmes. The operation undertaken on Terawhiti Station is an example of where areas covered under the RPCP can be included within the aerial 1080 programme.
33. This programme has enabled pest animal control across almost 48,000 hectares.

### *Biosecurity Services*

34. Due to the expertise within Greater Wellington, officers regularly undertake a range of cost recovery services for pest animal control for most of the territorial authorities in the region, the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI), Greater Wellington internal departments, private landowners and external companies/agencies.
35. Species targeted under this programme include possums, rats, mustelids, pigs, goats and deer. This is generally done for the purpose of biodiversity protection but can also be carried out due to nuisance caused by the pest species.



RPMP Operational Plan Pest Animals 23-24

Date printed: 6/09/2023



## **Te tātaritanga Analysis**

### ***Successes***

36. Working with MPI we have eradicated a population of wallabies in Kaitoke that was discovered and continue to respond to any sightings as a result of communications around this population.
37. Sustained possum control in conjunction with OSPRI has resulted in no infected herds within the Wellington for the last few years. This reduction occurred from a high of 321 infected herds in 1995.
38. Rook eradication activities are on target to meet the objective of the RPMP to have no active rookeries by 2029. This programme has achieved a reduction from 881 rook nests when control started and rooks were impacting on agricultural crops, to just 21 active nests in the 2022 season.
39. There has been a significant amount of protection provided for Pūkaha through control within their buffer area (2,200 hectares). Captures between 2009 to 2023 include 1,174 cats, 291 ferrets, 66 stoats, 5,352 rats and 5,239 hedgehogs. This has a significant impact on the wildlife within this area.
40. Wellington City is one of a few cities worldwide where biodiversity is increasing, with native bird numbers increasing by 40% over the past 10 years. Wellington City Council supports a large community volunteer effort, contributing to over 8000 hours of pest animal control efforts annually in addition to the GWRC possum control program. These projects work in tandem and ensure predator numbers remain low in Wellington city's forests.
41. The continued collaboration and contracting work Greater Wellington does in Wellington City provides other conservation organisations such as Zealandia and Capital Kiwi, the opportunity for re-introductions of native bird species to the city.
42. Possums have been eradicated from Miramar since 2006 and have not been able to establish due response to any incursions and the city-wide possum control program in conjunction with Wellington City Council. Native bird numbers have increased by 500% in the past three years since the launch of PFW on Miramar.
43. Possums have also been eradicated and kept off Whitireia Park peninsula with the help of a buffer with the KNE control work to the south and RPCP control programme in Ohariu Valley.
44. Challenges
45. Populations of feral ungulates (goats, deer and pigs) continue to build up in parts of the region. Ungulates are particularly destructive of indigenous vegetation due to browsing, trampling and subsequent erosion. They are also now present and causing damage in urban and rural residential areas.
46. There are legislative constraints when it comes to the control of these ungulates across public and private land. The Department of Conservation (DOC) fulfils the Minister of Conservation's responsibilities under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 (WAC) and the Game Animal Council seeks to improve the management of game animals including

through the provision of advice to the Minister of Conservation. Greater Wellington cannot supersede any rules or powers in the WAC, therefore cannot create effective rules in our RPMP to manage these animals on land where we do not have permission to operate.

47. Therefore rules sit within DOC to manage, who have a lack of resource to assist with the management of these ungulates. DOC has developed a framework Te ara ki mua to focus on improving wild animal management across New Zealand. Greater Wellington officers will continue to work with DOC on enabling the effective management of ungulates in the Wellington Region.
48. Greater Wellington frequently receives requests for assistance with feral ungulates coming onto private property and causing damage to pasture, new revegetation plantings and native forest areas. Often these ungulates are travelling a considerable distance around the area where their property is, nobody is responsible for these animals, and control is hard as some neighbours oppose control. This often happens to be where the ungulates are largely based and/or where they are easiest and safest to control.
49. Goat control in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchment has been undertaken by Greater Wellington under the KNE programme for many years now and goats are generally at low levels. Part of the feasibility study identified that to keep up with ongoing immigration and to drive pest numbers below the rate of annual harvest would require considerably more effort, and other eradication project resource was projected to achieve those targets. Most of the neighboring DOC land has traditionally had high goat numbers and continue to provide a source of re-invasion into this KNE area, although in recent years DOC has undertaken some control work adjoining which will have provided temporary relief from the same amount of immigration.
50. There are issues that need to be considered through changes to the RPCP programme. The areas of the region not in the programme currently have received minimal if any possum control in the last decade and in some places possums are back at pre-control levels having been reduced through 1990-2010. If possum control doesn't continue within current areas, a similar pattern will occur with an increasing population. The maximum acceptable possum level needs to be determined across this landscape to enable prioritisation of control.
51. Exotic forests within the region have increased over the last decade and continue to increase as carbon farming becomes an option. These forests harbour pests, mainly ungulates and possums. Control within forested areas is difficult and becomes expensive when carrying out operations on foot.
52. The pest animals being controlled in site led programmes are landscape pests which move around the region, often with large dispersal ranges. Control programmes are focused on the site, with devices in place in the same location as the biodiversity values being protected and there can be little or no control in the surrounding landscape.
53. Kiwi are now in parts of our region through successful reintroduction programmes. Ferrets are the top pest predator for kiwi as they can kill adult birds. Buffer zones to stop ferrets getting onto the Wellington peninsula and into the Remutaka Forest Park

would future proof populations. The current buffer around Pūkaha is also not large enough to cope with the constant immigration of ferrets into Pūkaha.

54. Rabbit populations around some of these site led areas have been higher over the last five years than they have been for 20 years. Although not high enough to trigger rules in the RPMP for control, constantly moderate to high rabbit populations facilitates increases in the mustelid population, which then puts threatened species at risk.
55. Large parts of coastal, estuary and river habitat, particularly on the eastern Wairarapa coast have remaining populations of threatened coastal, wetland and shore birds. There is very little pest animal control to protect any of these species, especially in a landscape context.
56. There are several opportunities to progress pest animal management in the region.
57. The RPCP programme needs to be reviewed within the next three years with a focus on multi species control for biodiversity outcomes and considering how this can be done effectively. It will also determine the options for minimising the loss of broad biodiversity benefits we have achieved from landscape scale control of possums.
58. There are a number of options to consider for the RPCP programme that would create this focus on high value biodiversity sites and working with our partners:
  - a Expand the KNE programme and associated work to achieve wider biodiversity outcomes, prioritising sites of significance to mana whenua.
  - b Protect shore bird breeding sites by expanding the current RPCP networks to intercept mustelids and cats before they get to the river channel, focusing on new sites identified in Schedule F2I of the Natural Resources Plan.
  - c Secure ongoing funding for the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands (once Jobs for Nature funding ends) to enable the continuing to service the predator control infrastructure in place. Additional predator control is also proposed surrounding Wairarapa Moana to protect the numerous bird species present, prevent re-invasion and create a buffer area around sites. This will enable the ongoing work with iwi and support the successful DOC community fund bid from Aorangi Trust – Aorangi to Wairarapa Moana Landscape Predator Control project.
  - d Predators move around the landscape, favouring easy to access pathways such as those created by Te Aranui o Te Rangihaeata – Transmission Gully, and invade areas where control has been undertaken. Targeting these pathways with control methods will slow immigration across the landscape and provide protection on a wider scale where we cannot do intensive control.
  - e Aorangi Forest, and its buffer areas (including the three Greater Wellington forests), has been treated with aerial 1080 by OSPRI three times over the last 2 decades, but no more work is planned. Aorangi Trust are investigating funding avenues through DOC to continue 1080 operations in the core forest area. Greater Wellington support through funding aerial operations in the buffer areas as a collaborative project with the Trust, DOC and landowners would enable wider benefits for reduced cost.

- f The Pahaoa River area contains a regionally important forest type, an outstanding estuary and coastal area. Many of these areas are recorded as high valued sites in the Proposed Natural Resources Plan and contain Mana Whenua Sites of Significance. Due to this combination of values, this is an ideal site for landscape multispecies predator control and working with landowners on sustainable ground control techniques for long term control.
  - g Support planting programmes such as Recloaking Papatuānuku and the Major Rivers Riparian Management Project and catchment plantings. These programmes have funded fencing and seedlings for revegetation and riparian planting and hill country erosion control, but do not have funding for protecting these plantings from browsing pest animals.
59. In order to achieve better biodiversity outcomes at other site led areas, we need to control pest animals on a landscape scale. This control would not be as intensive as at the high value sites, and would not replace this effort, but will help by slowing down the traffic of immigration into these sites. Mustelids, pest cats and possums would be the target for this work. This would benefit our partner project areas such as Pūkaha, Predator Free Wellington, Remutaka Forest Park Trust and Capital Kiwi.
60. A dedicated resource to support private landowners with ungulate control would allow more assistance with advice and control. This could be done under a cost recovery model and would include meeting with landowners, the purchase of control devices for loaning, and managing small-scale control operations. This resource would also research and develop a system for connecting recreational hunters and landowners having issues and trial new methods and techniques to provide the best information to the public. Legislative changes to allow Greater Wellington to do more through rules in the Biosecurity Act are not in the scope of the Te Ara ki Mua framework at this stage, so ownership and control of these animals will continue to remain an issue in affected communities.
61. A feasibility study was undertaken in 2022-23 for eradicating goats from the Remutaka Range. While this was technically possible, immigration around boundaries of the proposed project area with no barriers in place made a zero density within high value Greater Wellington and DOC land a much more achievable target.
- a Increasing control efforts in Remutaka Range to achieve zero goat density will require significant ongoing funding and commitment from Greater Wellington and should target all ungulates. Ongoing commitment from DOC will also be needed to control areas adjoining the KNE to prevent reinvasion and to collaborate with this control work and protect their own special ecosystem values on public conservation land. If zero density can be achieved, this forms a good model to progress this methodology further up the Remutaka Range. This would then incorporate the Pakuratahi Forest KNE site and adjoining DOC land and making the feasibility of zero density goats in the Remutaka range an achievable prospect.
62. There are opportunities to partner with mana whenua across the region to deliver on these enhanced programmes. There are also opportunities to leverage further support

from community through providing coordination roles within Greater Wellington. Studies of conservation volunteering in New Zealand estimate a return of \$3–\$4 for every \$1 of government funding, and community are already engaged in pest animal control. Not only would these roles develop new approaches and consistent systems for support, they would review how we support mana whenua restoration and ensure future support systems are fit for purpose and meet our treaty obligations.

### **Ngā hua ahumoni**

#### **Financial implications**

63. Outside of the KNE programme, pest animal control budgets have remained neutral for many years. The RPMP was built around what could be delivered within available funding rather than what is required to meet biodiversity outcomes. The RPCP has a small reserve built up through the collection of targeted rates, which has been used for previous cost savings.
64. A review of the RPCP can be carried out within the existing budget, and provision of advice for ungulates on private land would be partially funded through cost recovery.
65. Financial implications for an increase in pest animal control as part of protecting our most important places from pests have been included as part of LTP considerations.

### **Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori**

#### **Implications for Māori**

66. Greater Wellington pest animal control programmes directly support Māori outcomes including the protecting the mauri of te taiao and taonga species. Many of the existing programmes work to enhance areas that are sites of significance to mana whenua. This includes areas such as Pūkaha and Wairarapa Moana.
67. There is also mana whenua representation at a governance level on projects, such as Taranaki Whānui sitting on the PFW board.
68. However there are a number of opportunities to grow our partnership with mana whenua in this space. This would enable Greater Wellington to better target programmes to deliver to mana whenua outcomes.
69. One example is that the increase in pest animal funding proposed through Long Term Plan considerations is largely proposed to be allocated to contracts. Officers would work with mana whenua through the development of these programmes to ensure that Greater Wellington was delivering to agreed outcomes. There are opportunities through the procurement process to engage mana whenua to carry out this work. Greater Wellington would support mana whenua to continually develop the capacity and capability to deliver the work under current legislative requirements.

### **Te huritao ki te huringa o te āhuarangi**

#### **Consideration of climate change**

70. Introduced herbivores directly consume the biomass of natural ecosystems (leaves, branches, buds, leaf litter, etc) and produce methane that are estimated to be equivalent to 3.1 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. Studies have estimated that the mid-

point figure for carbon sequestration reductions due to browsing damage is a further loss of 8.4 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year. Removing these introduced herbivores has the potential to sequester a reasonable percentage of annual emissions while allowing Greater Wellington to better manage its carbon reserves.

71. Research into this relationship between herbivore control and carbon sequestration is continuing.
72. Greater Wellington has expended considerable resources into the One Billion Trees programme, but very little in providing protection from pest species for these plantings. Additional funding should be considered for these areas to protect the new plantings while they become established. This will improve the growth of trees and protect the new carbon sinks which have been created.

### **Ngā kaiwaitohu**

#### **Signatories**

Writers	Glen Falconer – Team Leader Pest Animals John Hambidge – Project Leader Predator Free Wellington Graeme Butcher – Senior Advisor Logistics Myfanwy Hill – Environment Operations Manager
Approvers	Jack Mace – Director Delivery Lian Butcher – Group Manager Environment

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga</b> <b>Summary of considerations</b></p>
<p><b><i>Fit with Council’s roles or with Committee’s terms of reference</i></b></p> <p>The Environment Committee has responsibility to review periodically the effectiveness of implementing and delivering Council’s environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators.</p>
<p><b><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></b></p> <p>This work aligns to the RPMP and contributes to the strategic goals of Greater Wellington under the Long Term Plan. The contents of this update are relevant to upcoming Long Term Plan prioritisation considerations which will determine future years’ funding allocated to pest animal management.</p>
<p><b><i>Internal consultation</i></b></p> <p>Teams involved in operational pest animal management have contributed to this report.</p>
<p><b><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></b></p> <p>Pest animal management is carried out under the Biosecurity Act and health and safety is carefully managed through extensive processes and procedures.</p>

Environment Committee  
12 October 2023  
Report 23.522



For Information

## FARMING REFERENCE GROUP CHAIR UPDATE REPORT

### Te take mō te pūrongo

#### Purpose

1. To update the Environment Committee on the items discussed at Farming Reference Group held 13 September 2023.

### Te horopaki

#### Context

2. The Terms of Reference for the Environment Committee and the Farming Reference Group state that a written report will be provided to the Environment Committee after each Farming Reference Group meeting. The Chair of the Farming Reference Group is a member of the Environment Committee and will speak to the written report at each meeting.

### Ngā āpitihanga

#### Attachments

Number	Title
1	<a href="#">Farming Reference Group Chairs report</a>

### Signatories

Writer	Barbie Barton – Chair, Farming Reference Group
Approvers	Jack Mace – Director Delivery Lian Butcher – Group Manager Environment

<b>He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations</b>
<b><i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i></b> The Environment Committee's terms of reference state that they will review, after each Farming Reference Group meeting, a written report of the business conducted at that meeting.
<b><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></b> The Farming sector is a key demographic within the Greater Wellington Region with a focus on environmental matters.
<b><i>Internal consultation</i></b> There was no internal consultation.
<b><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></b> There are no known risks and impacts related to this report.

**Attachment 1 to Report 23.522**

**Farming Reference Group report to Environment Committee**

**12 October 2023 following a meeting on 13 September 2023**

I am writing this report on behalf of the Greater Wellington Farming Reference Group.

The recent Farming Reference Group meeting was well attended by both our members and GWRC management staff showing the strength of the group in providing a valuable information pipeline about the mood of the rural communities and the challenges GWRC staff face in the delivery of the land management requirements that they work under. It was very heartening to see the relationships building with the new GWRC personnel and the opportunity this group allows in providing on the ground feedback.

The round table discussion focused on both landowner morale and the added concern post cyclone of the weakening financial forecasts seeing at best a break-even budget on farm or more likely a loss. Unusually for the sector this across all land-based enterprises, sheep and beef, dairying and forestry where normally when one is down the other is okay.

The good news is that for those who have lambed in September is that the weather gods gave us a great run of warm sunny weather although as I write this the rain anxiety has returned with a cold weather system making its way slowly over New Zealand.

There is mixed reaction to NIWA's drought predictions with the need to be able to get on farm access tidied up but maybe without the ability to finish stock to higher values to both support the infrastructure spend and help the budgets.

A very interesting presentation for Stan Braaksma about poplar and willow research and the review into the Tinui Flood of 1990/91. Interesting look at *pinus radiata* and assessing its ability to hold on hillsides as better than previously thought. Continued poplar and willow plantings have had mixed results with the main threat to survival being predators. This has been identified as a huge problem in the Gisborne area and definitely a growing issue in the wider Wairarapa.

As an action from this discussion DOC is to be invited to the next FRG meeting to discuss their role in ungulate management nationally and what this might mean for our region.

Good discussion had on the role of GWRC and the timeline for compliance with the new Freshwater Farm Plans. We need to encourage the landowners to engage in the process and start adapting their existing farm Plans or creating the new plans as per the regulatory requirements. Parkvale and the Waitawa Catchment are the first in our region and require certified plans by December 2023. GWRC are working closely with the community but to date only one of the predicted 70 plans has been received.

The ongoing Catchment Group space in the Wairarapa is moving towards being project managed by a new entity called the Wairarapa Catchment Collective. The aim of this group is to secure funding and provide an umbrella structure to support to individual Catchment Groups and guide them to the resources available for them to meet their water quality goals. The GWRC region is well serviced by groups wanting to contribute in the space from GWRC, to Mountains to Sea and Predator free 2050. The Wairarapa Catchment Collective will aim to be the co-ordinating body in linking groups to the resources available as well as facilitating the startup of new Catchment groups. Currently the Wairarapa Catchment Collective is setting up the incorporated structure and preparing an application to Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) for three years of funding to get the entity underway.

Discussion around the Kapiti Whaitua process and the complexity of what is involved as a participating member - Kerry Walker who is a member of the FRG is sitting on the Kapiti Whaitua committee. Good

**Attachment 1 to Report 23.522**

preparation by GWRC and the use of the Tiriti House model is seeing the committee progress with a clear way forward to get consensus and recommendations.

The GWRC are currently doing a lot of the science groundwork for the Wairarapa Coast Whaitua but there is strong FRG member concern about good representation due to the time commitment required of committee members and the general time poor nature of landowners currently.

Biodiversity Credits received a very favourable response from the FRG members with a feeling that it was a chance to measure and reward on farm commitment to biodiversity. There is also a study being completed by the Whangāehu Bideford Catchment group and EKOS consulting to look at the possibility of biodiversity credits providing the ongoing funding to allow the Catchment Group to be self-funding. The FRG fully supported further work being done to look at the potential of Biodiversity Credits.

In summary the moral of the farming community is not great and Rural Support Trust continues to deal with a massive workload. The challenges are both around damaged farm infrastructure after a prolonged wet couple of years along with the economic challenges of high interest rates, inflation of farm inputs (circa 16.3% for the 22/23 year) and the projected reduction in farm revenue due to low product price forecasts.

If NIWA's predictions of the dry period pending, then the conversation round water storage will certainly be revisited. GWRC are facing their own challenges with Wellington Water already imposing water restrictions in the urban region with one solution voiced to build another storage dam rather than fix the leaks.

An update from the GWRC Ballance Farm Environment Awards is that we are on track to have enough entries to run the competition this season and show case good environmental practice in the region. Judging will commence in either side of Christmas with the GWRC Ballance Farm Environment Award ceremony on April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2024 at the Carterton Events Centre- please put this date in your diaries.

Thank you  
Barbie Barton  
Chair, GWRC Farmer Reference Group  
[RogBar@xtra.co.nz](mailto:RogBar@xtra.co.nz)  
0274 418 187

Environment Committee  
12 October 2023  
Report 23.505



For Information

## WHAITUA DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

### Te take mō te pūrongo

#### Purpose

1. To inform the Environment Committee about the progress of the Whaitua Kāpiti Committee and development of the Wairarapa Coast-Eastern Hills Whaitua approach.

### Te tāhū kōrero

#### Background

##### *Kāpiti*

2. The Whaitua Kāpiti Committee (the Committee) was established by Council (*Establishment of the Whaitua Kāpiti Committee – Report 22.374*) in August 2022 to support Council giving effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM). Appointments to the Committee were completed in February 2023.
3. The Committee is using a Tiriti House model, which proposes a Tiriti approach to decision-making providing for equal recognition of and input from each house (Mana Whenua House and Kāwanatanga House). This partnership recognises both types of authorities (rangatiratanga and kāwanatanga) functioning together.
4. The Terms of Reference provides for at least 12 committee meetings.

##### *Wairarapa Coast*

5. The Wairarapa Coast Whaitua was scheduled to begin in the second half of 2023 with the purpose of giving effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM) by the December 2024 deadline. The timing for this is linked to staff capacity, currently under consideration.
6. The approach for the Wairarapa Coast Whaitua will be determined with mana whenua and community and this discussion has not begun in earnest yet although a number of early connections have occurred.

### Te tātaritanga

#### Analysis

##### *Kāpiti*

7. The Committee has held its seventh, eighth and ninth meetings through August and September 2023. The Committee has extended its October 2023 meeting to two days

and has added an additional meeting to the schedule, proposed for 6 December 2023. The Committee has a strong commitment to stay on track with their end of year timeframe for producing the Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) document.

8. Across these meetings the committee achieved decision outcomes on proposed Te Mana o te Wai objectives for the Regional Policy Statement (RPS), draft Freshwater Management Units (FMUs) and developing long-term Freshwater Visions across the FMUs.
9. The Committee is continuing to populate a WIP template with the decisions as they go. Draft narrative elements of the WIP will begin in the coming month with designated writers for each House capturing the committee's views.
10. Content for the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) section 32 report that will underpin the plan change to the Natural Resources Plan (currently scheduled for next year) is also being captured alongside the WIP document.
11. Greater Wellington Regional Council Directors Nicola Patrick and Tania Parata have engaged with the taurite (co-chairs) and committee in September 2023 to explore options to support the committee's request to continue having input to the section 32 report and draft plan change document in 2024. Discussion on options is ongoing.
12. Resourcing challenges that were causing frustration for both the Kāwanatanga and Mana Whenua Houses have had partial resolution through confirmation of resourcing for key personnel that is more equitable plus recent changes to honoraria payments. There are a couple of further items that may need resourcing that are going through scoping before they are confirmed.

#### ***Wairarapa Coast***

13. This Whaitua process will look different from other Whaitua processes, as each one has been different. Meetings may be less frequent and use different approaches, reflecting the availability of this largely rural community, but still aim to build the same trusted relationships.
14. Pre-design work is looking at identifying key National Policy Statement – Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) requirements and what is achievable within the timeframes with a strong emphasis on an implementation-focused, wider and ongoing catchment planning process. The approach must enable the community to be engaged in a practical and meaningful way while keeping environmental outcomes at the forefront.

#### **Ngā hua ahumoni**

#### **Financial implications**

#### ***Kāpiti***

15. Any requirements for the committee beyond the WIP production will be considered separately and are yet to be determined.

**Wairarapa Coast**

16. The financial and wider resourcing implications are still be determined.

**Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori**

**Implications for Māori**

**Kāpiti**

17. The Terms of Reference for the Whaitua Kāpiti Committee were drafted in conjunction with, and approved by, Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai Charitable Trust, Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, Ngāti Toa Rangatira and the wider Whaitua Committee.

18. In upholding the Terms and our Tiriti House commitments, the Whaitua Kāpiti process is developed in conjunction with mana whenua representatives.

**Wairarapa Coast**

19. The approach for the Wairarapa Coast Whaitua will be determined with mana whenua.

**Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei**

**Next steps**

20. The remaining Whaitua Kāpiti Committee meetings scheduled for 2023 will be held on the following dates:

- a 11 October
- b 12 October
- c 1 November
- d 8 November
- e 6 December.

21. Discussions with Wairarapa Coast mana whenua partners are to be scheduled.

**Ngā kaiwaitohu**

**Signatories**

Writers	Tash Styles – Catchment Manager, Wairarapa Coast Michele Frank – Catchment Manager, Kapiti Nicola Patrick – Director, Catchment
Approver	Lian Butcher – Group Manager, Environment

<b>He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations</b>
<b><i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i></b> The Environment Committee has wider responsibility to consider all matters across the development and implementation of Greater Wellington's Environment Group's work programmes.
<b><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></b> The Whaitua Programme contributes to Council's obligations to give effect to the National Policy Statement – Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) through engagement with mana whenua and the community.
<b><i>Internal consultation</i></b> This report was prepared by Catchment and reviewed by Te Hunga Whiriwhiri.
<b><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></b> There are no known specific risks and impacts related to this report beyond the constrained circumstances as outlined.

**Environment Committee**  
**12 October 2023**  
**Report 23.7**



**For Information**

## **ENVIRONMENT UPDATE**

### **Te take mō te pūrongo**

#### **Purpose**

1. To inform the Environment Committee (the Committee) of Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibilities.

### **Te horopaki**

#### **Context**

#### ***Regional issues***

2. Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings are being progressed. For an update on specific action items, please refer to [Attachment 1](#).

#### ***Mauri Tūhono***

3. The Mauri Tūhono working group is looking to launch the final version of the Kaipupuri Taonga ki te Ao Whānui framework for te taiao in the Wellington region. The engagement period demonstrated strong support for the framework from 67 groups and individuals, who either submitted or participated in meetings, or other engagements. Much of the feedback focussed on suggestions for implementation and some expressed a desire to move quickly to coordinated action. Other comments supported the strong te ao Māori framing and noted that they can see how the framework will support a more inclusive approach to restoring te taiao.
4. The working group has updated the text and is getting it translated before completing a revised document. Planning is underway for communications and engagement to support the launch of the final version, and to transition to the implementation phase. We are also planning for how Greater Wellington can implement the framework and a new leadership rōpu has been established to lead this work.

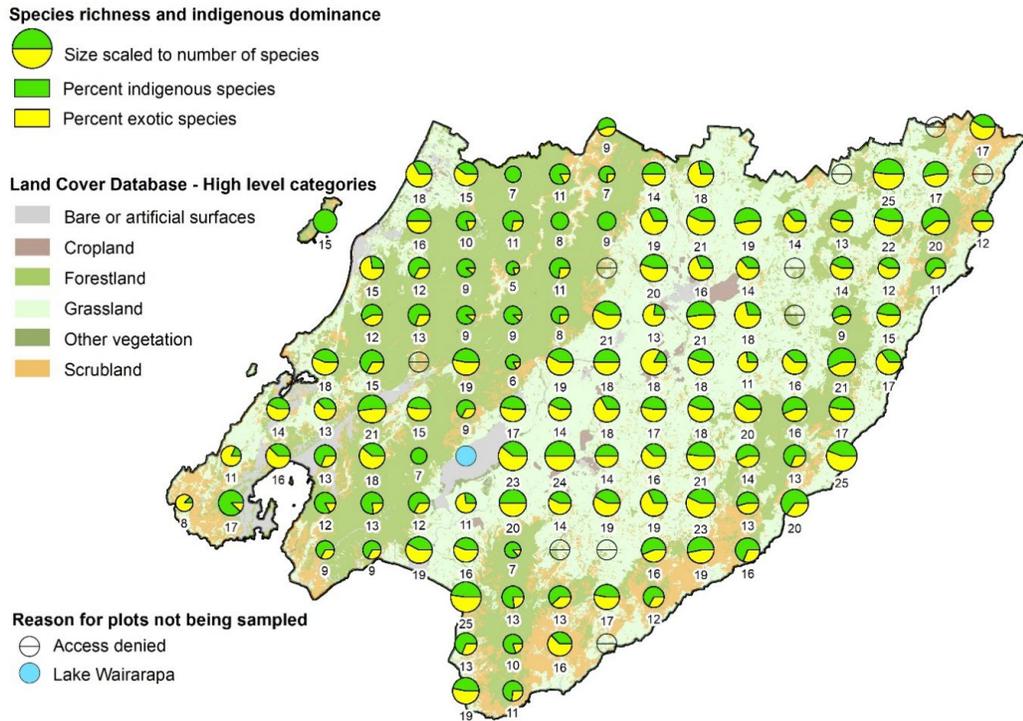
#### ***Environment Operations***

5. The amended version of the Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) (2019-39) will be made available to the public imminently.
6. Publicity for annual rook control has begun. Signs around the region are generating inquiry, with Wairarapa farmers phoning in to report rook sightings.
7. Rabbit enquiries remain constant, but we won't do any more pindone rabbit control until early 2024, as spring grass growth and rabbit breeding cycles mean control

operations will limit our effectiveness. From July 2023 to September 2023, we made 1.37 tonnes of pindone carrot bait, and distributed it almost entirely in Kāpiti, with a few Hutt Valley sites. These areas are now mostly compliant with RPMP rules.

8. Regional Predator Control Programme work has been slowed by sodden ground conditions limiting access to sites.
9. Possum habitat areas are being targeted with control, directed towards seasonal food sources to avoid wet areas until the land dries out and access is possible again. Existing bait stations, that have been in place for a long time, are being removed in possum control operations where there are low possum numbers. These are less likely to be utilised on a regular basis and keeping infrastructure fresh is our preferred approach.
10. So far, this financial year we have found 26 new sites of RPMP plant species, mainly woolly nightshade, which have all been successfully controlled within existing resourcing.
11. Marine habitat mapping surveys have been ongoing since December last year and the results have been recently reported. Working in partnership with the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) and Victoria University of Wellington, we have mapped numerous high biodiversity habitats in Wellington Harbour, Wellington's south coast and along the Porirua and Kāpiti coastlines. Surveys revealed rich sponge gardens, meadows of tube worms, horse mussels and brachiopods, all of which in turn provide habitat for a range of other species. These habitats will be assessed against established criteria and scheduled in the Natural Resources Plan as sites of significance for indigenous biodiversity.
12. This summer the Terrestrial Ecology state and trend surveillance programme will complete its second sampling cycle. While the first cycle gave us a picture of the state of the region, completing subsequent cycles will allow us to track the trend in terrestrial biodiversity across the region (Figure 1). Vegetation, Birds, Possum, and Ungulate richness and diversity are measured to inform the health and pressures on terrestrial environments. The work underpins our regional policy and has provided deeper insight into the prioritization and effectiveness of environmental management interventions.

*Figure 1: Example map of the state of bird populations in the Wellington Region 2015-2021. Indigenous dominance and richness of species across varying land-uses, showing high indigenous dominance in montane forested areas, but equal species richness in lowland production landscapes, demonstrating the value of these areas to indigenous biodiversity*



**Global resource consents**

- Wellington Water has applied for a global resource consent covering discharges from the stormwater network across 35 sub-catchments in Wellington, Porirua, Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt. The impact assessment, included with the application, identified the potential for urban stormwater to cause ‘more than minor’ adverse effects in the receiving environment for 12 of the 35 sub-catchments. The global consent will focus on managing discharges from the local authority stormwater networks to progressively reduce adverse effects through staged investment over 35 years. This application is currently on hold while it is assessed by technical experts and any further information required is identified. The application will likely be publicly notified sometime after March 2024.
- Wellington Water has also applied for resource consents related to existing wastewater network discharges resulting from wet weather overflows in Wellington and Karori, Porirua and north Wellington, Hutt Valley and Wainuiomata. Wastewater network overflows are a common occurrence in wet weather when wastewater networks are overloaded with rainwater. Some of the overflows were designed into the system when it was constructed, others are unplanned. The overflows are diluted by rainwater but untreated as they have not been through a wastewater treatment plant. Some of these overflows have been consented in a reactive way, but Wellington Water now propose

a prioritisation process and management plan to progressively reduce the frequency of overflows during a consent term of 35 years. Wellington Water states that this approach will enable the prioritisation of works and upgrades on a catchment-wide basis to deliver the best environmental outcomes, while efficiently and effectively managing the wastewater network. These applications are currently on hold while they are assessed by technical experts and any further information required is identified. The applications will likely be publicly notified after March 2024.

### ***Regional Policy Statement (RPS) Change 1 hearings***

15. The RPS Change hearings continue; hearing streams 1-3 (general, integrated management and climate change) are complete; hearing stream 4 (urban development) begins the week of 2 October 2023 and hearing stream 5 (freshwater and Te Mana o Te Wai) begins on 20 November 2023. All Greater Wellington's reporting, submitter evidence, presentations and transcripts of the hearings are published on our website.<sup>1</sup> As noted below, the RPS Variation process will feed into this current hearing's process; most likely hearing stream 7 (mid-March 2024).

### ***Summer boating safety campaign***

16. Our funding application to Maritime NZ for summer safety work was partially successful. We were allocated \$58,000 towards staff time and marketing and communications work. This involves staff being on the water and boat ramps, and interacting with boat skippers for education and enforcement. Some safety materials that will be distributed are provided by Maritime NZ and others, including the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Skippers Cockpit Guide, will be funded from existing budgets.
17. Safety promotional work will be visible shortly with a national official launch in mid-October 2023.

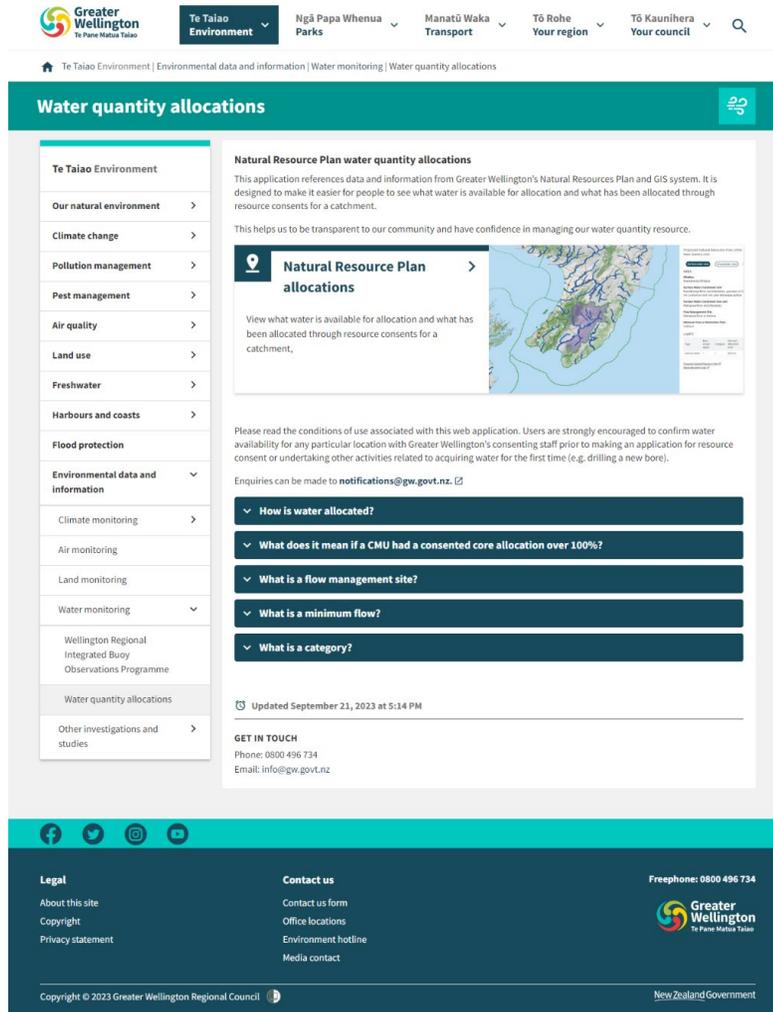
### ***He Kākano update***

18. He Kākano is Greater Wellington's environmental outcomes platform. Our mission is to provide environmental data to our community in an accessible way. We do this by pulling the data together to achieve outcomes together.
19. Our first outcome enables us to be more transparent with our community and manage our water resource with confidence. The Environment Committee received a demonstration on our first web application which makes it easy to see what allocations from our Natural Resources Plan apply for an area interest. Now, we are gearing up to release our next iteration and make it easily accessible via the Greater Wellington website. This will include valuable information that tells us how much water we have consented through the consenting process. The information is connected to our consenting system to supply us up-to-date information enabling us to make informed decisions.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/plans-policies-and-bylaws/updating-our-regional-policy-statement-and-natural-resources-plan/regional-policy-statement-change-1/hearings/hearing-stream-3-climate-change/>

20. We endeavour to continually add value and as we near the end of the year we will deliver another iteration which enables everyone to see how much stress a catchment is under through our water use, which enhances our understanding of environmental pressures.

Figure 2: Natural Resource Plan Allocations<sup>2</sup>



21. On the horizon, we are looking at developing another tool which will provide rural landowners important catchment context, challenges and values (CCCV) to enable them to plan actions in their Freshwater Farm Plans. Initially focussing on two catchments in the Ruamāhanga valley, we are aiming to have something rural landowners can use, test, and provide feedback on, to ensure the tool will be fit for purpose for a regional roll-out.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/environmental-data-and-information/water-monitoring/water-quantity-allocations/>

***Catchment-specific issues***

*Te Whanganui-a-Tara*

22. The Whaitua Te Whanganui-a-Tara Reference Group held its first meeting on 30 August 2023. The group's primary purpose is to help oversee progress on the Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP), in particular the non-regulatory recommendations, including those to be delivered by other agencies such as Wellington Water and territorial authorities. At the first meeting, however, the focus was on regulations, as the group took the opportunity to discuss the limited release of draft Plan Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington region. As this plan change implements many of the recommendations in the WIP and Te Mahere Wai through regulatory changes, there was a high degree of interest from the group. Some of the members submitted feedback.
23. Feedback from the limited consultation on draft Plan Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan has been analysed and integrated into the plan change and Section 32 documents. There will be a Council workshop on 5 October 2023 and then the Council meeting for notification on 26 October 2023.
24. Te Whanganui-a-Tara Freshwater Vision was approved for notification as a Variation to RPS Proposed Change 1. There will now be a period of submissions and further submissions, which will be heard as part of the current RPS Change 1 hearing process. The vision is required by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM) and is a key step in whaitua implementation.
25. Bait samples from the Hutt Water Catchment aerial 1080 operation were tested as non-toxic at the end of August 2023. This is an important risk factor for users of the area, and assists with requirements around monitoring signage and carcass risk, particularly if there is a flood.
26. A wallaby sighting was reported near Johnsonville / Ohariu Valley, but was identified as a cat in photos, and no evidence of a wallaby was observed during inspection.
27. Ungulate suppression control has been successfully undertaken at Parangarahu Lakes, East Harbour and Wainuiomata / Orongorongo as part of scheduled work in these key native ecosystem sites. This keeps ungulate numbers down and helps manage re-invasion from surrounding land.
28. We have collaborated with Wellington City Council to extend the AT220 trap network to help out with the Regional Predator Control Programme at Te Kopahou. This has been a real boost in helping to set the area up to deal with high possum numbers, and working together will achieve more control over the site which has traditionally been a challenge.
29. Wellington City Council rodent monitoring has been completed, with rat numbers at acceptable levels. However, there are higher numbers of mice at some sites, which could indicate natural food sources are plentiful. If mice numbers stay high, this could drive higher stoat numbers into summer.
30. Hutt City Council funded ungulate control work has increased again for the 2023-24 year, which will allow more effort to be put into continuing to lower numbers and

enable us to seek out and target other key areas to increase the overall area controlled. An annual report (2022-23 report) has been produced for Hutt City Council for this work.

31. The resource consent for the Southern Landfill extension by Wellington City Council has been publicly notified and is now open for submissions. A useful summary from Wellington City Council can be found at <https://wellington.govt.nz/your-council/projects/southern-landfill-extension>. The final date for submissions is the 19 October 2023 and the hearing will be held mid-December 2023. The extension involves 'piggy-backing' on the existing landfill. A number of extension options were canvassed with the residents group by Wellington City Council, with the 'piggy-back' option being the preferred method of extending the landfill.
32. Following the successful riverbed recontouring work, between Melling Link and Kennedy Good Bridge, the second stage of this operation has commenced. The contractor, Dixon and Dunlop Ltd, has been appointed, and they will extract approximately 20,000m<sup>3</sup> of gravel material to improve the river channel flow capacity and support river management for erosion mitigation. The extracted gravel is being used by Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi (RiverLink) and is initially being placed against the existing eastern stopbank (river side face) upstream of Melling Bridge. The work is expected to take approximately three months to complete.
33. Progress on the IRex project (new Interisland ferries) will be visible soon with the arrival of more work barges and a temporary jetty built, extending southward from the Kaiwharawhara reclamation.

#### *Te Awarua-o-Porirua*

34. Te Awarua-o-Porirua Freshwater Vision was approved for notification as a Variation to RPS Proposed Change 1. There will now be a period of submissions and further submissions which will be heard as part of the current RPS Change 1 hearing process. The vision is required by the NPS-FM and is a key step in whitua implementation.
35. Feedback from the limited consultation on draft Plan Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan has been analysed and integrated into the plan change and Section 32 documents. There was a Council workshop held on 5 October 2023 and the Council meeting for notification on 26 October 2023.
36. Greater Wellington and Ngāti Toa Rangatira have received 13 applications for the Te Awarua o Porirua Community Environment Fund. This contestable fund supports community groups and kaitiaki planning environmental restoration projects within this whitua area and is co-managed with mana whenua.

#### *Wairarapa Coast/Eastern Hills*

37. Following the two cyclone events in January and February 2023 that severely affected Eastern Wairarapa, the Wairarapa branch of the Rural Support Trust became the main vehicle for coordination and on-ground support, with additional support from various agencies such as Councils and Civil Defence.
38. The Ministry of Social Development engaged a local training firm with funding under the Task Force Green programme. Two teams of local workers were mobilised, and are still currently employed seven months on, to clear flood debris from essential infrastructure, rebuild fences, and undertaking planting for flood and erosion

protection. Greater Wellington was involved with helping Rural Support Trust identify and contact the most vulnerable people, attending support meetings, and coordinating with farmers where planting works needed to happen to stabilise riverbanks and protect infrastructure.

39. The community in this part of our region still have a long road ahead of them. The effects will continue to be felt for at least the next 3-5 years as they rebuild their farms and businesses, and Masterton District Council works through a daunting and expensive programme of rural roading work. Greater Wellington staff will continue to support the community to build resilience and mitigate the effects of future severe weather events through our long-standing hill country erosion programme.
40. Wairarapa Pūkaha to Kawakawa Alliance (WaiP2K) are approaching the end of the two-year contract with Ministry of Primary Industries. The WaiP2K team is meeting with catchment community groups to present their water quality monitoring reports from their catchments, review their draft Catchment Action plan and plan out the next steps. Representatives from Mountains to Sea Wellington and Greater Wellington are involved and attending these hui.
41. The next phase of this project will likely be called “The Wairarapa Catchment Collective”, formed under a new Incorporated Society. The purpose of the new entity is to create a space where members drive the decisions for funding and there is a strong connection and identity with rural communities. This will build on all the previous years’ work and be structured to provide support to groups that work in partnership with Greater Wellington and Mountains to Sea Wellington.
42. Staff attended a field trip to a Wairarapa hill country farm with Ministry for the Environment (MFE) Freshwater Farm Plan staff, to discuss the implementation of the up-coming freshwater farm plan regulations. An update for the Environment Committee on Freshwater Farm Plans in our region is planned for the 23 November 2023 meeting.
43. A significant portion of the regional planting programmes (both native and exotic) is completed in the Wairarapa Coast/Eastern Hills each winter. The regional summary report of this year’s planting will be provided to the Environment Committee at completion. It is currently around 90% complete.

#### *Ruamāhanga*

44. Implementation of the Te Kāuru Upper Ruamāhanga Floodplain Management Plan (Te Kāuru FMP) is underway. At present the following projects are in progress:
  - a Stage two, River Road Masterton - 150m rock revetment is to be constructed this summer at the confluence with the Waipoua and Ruamāhanga Rivers. All preconstruction documentation is underway. We hope to start in November 2023, if we can secure the rock in time, otherwise it will be a late January 2024 start.
  - b Paierau Road Masterton. Flood warning signage has finally been completed after months of struggling to obtain a contractor.

Figure 3: Road Signage



- c The Memorandum of Understanding with Masterton District Council around each parties' responsibilities for protecting the Masterton raw water supply pipeline is progressing slowly and we will endeavour to have this resolved soon.
  - d A Wairarapa Programme business case is being developed that involves 21 projects to be completed between now and the end of the 2026/27 financial year. These projects are within the Te Kāuru FMP, the Waiōhine River Plan and the Lower Wairarapa valley, some of which are listed in this report. By undertaking a programme of works we will be able to bundle the procurement process to enable the works to get underway in a more efficient manner.
45. The Waiōhine River Plan implementation has now commenced. Members of the Waiōhine River Plan Advisory Committee have been elected by the Nominations Evaluation Group and were approved by Council at the 21 September 2023 meeting.
46. The capital works process to construct two inland stopbanks is underway. We anticipate further consultation will be needed due to the Waiōhine River Plan approach. We do not currently have full landowner consent for the works to occur.
47. The FMP Implementation team also have a number of operational capital works underway, mostly in the lower Wairarapa valley, with two in the upper catchment.
- These are:
- a Mahaki Stopbank relocation. The current stopbank needs to be retreated as it is currently under threat from erosion. We have an initial design but are now going out to a consultant for a final design. We are also working with Powerco as one of their poles (which supplies power to Martinborough) needs to be moved to allow the stopbank to be retreated. Work on the relocation will commence this summer.
  - b The Awaroa and Tawaha sills both require rebuilding. We are currently at the landowner discussion/ initial design phase.
  - c Fish Friendly Flood Gates is a project we are commencing shortly. There are over 120 flood gates in the lower Wairarapa valley and some of them do not have fish friendly passage. This project has so far identified 15 gates that require

replacement with fish passage. Each gate will require a review of the most appropriate fish passage, which is our next stage of works.

- d Waipoua River urban reach has two erosion areas that require erosion protection. One is by the State Highway 2 bridge where we will install a 40 metre rock revetment and the other is upstream of the railway bridge where an industrial property is at risk. Both sites have had an initial design completed. Next stage is to engage a consultant to undertake the final design.
- 48. We received a report of a wallaby along Western Lake Road in the Wairarapa, this is under investigation (trail cameras and a thermal drone will be used).
  - 49. Rook nest surveys are planned, weather permitting.
  - 50. Via the Regional Predator Control Programme in Carterton/Taratahi we are targeting possum habitat areas and removing all existing old bait stations. The old bait stations are a risk for becoming brittle due to UV derogation, and we will target areas of possum habitat for future control in these areas.
  - 51. At Boggy Pond (Wairarapa Moana programme), stock have been entering the wetlands and damaging planted areas as well as interfering with the trapping infrastructure – this is hopefully now under control.
  - 52. We will be using a multi spectral drone and artificial intelligence technology in Wairio Wetland to detect purple loosestrife. Purple loosestrife is a plant pest that has a limited range in Wellington. We are controlling it because it has the potential to cause significant harm to wetlands, including the Wairarapa Moana RAMSAR site.
  - 53. At Lake Ferry, we noted heavy infestations of large mature boneseed plants, particularly on the southern escarpment behind the houses, raising concerns about the work contractors carried out last season. Remedial work is being carried out.
  - 54. There continues to be an increase in land-based quarry applications being lodged in the Wairarapa. At least 6 resource consents have been granted for such quarries in the last 2 years.
  - 55. Currently, we have two land-based quarry (bulk earthworks) consent applications that are being processed in the Wairarapa. These applications are often highly contentious within communities in the Wairarapa, with their primary concerns often relating to matters out of our jurisdiction (such as traffic and noise). Further information on this:
    - a. Both quarries are located within the Carterton district adjacent to major rivers (Waiohine & Waingawa).
    - b. One application has been put on hold while further information is requested, the other application has recently been returned as being incomplete due to a lack of information on erosion and sediment control and dust management.
    - c. Both quarries vary in size and intensity – one is proposed to be 28 ha over 30 years, and the other is proposed to be 10 ha over 2 years.

#### *Kāpiti*

- 56. Significant cost recovery pindone rabbit control operations have been delivered for private landowners. These pindone operations have been very successful at reducing rabbit numbers in the areas treated.

57. Mustelid trap servicing to protect river and wetland bird species has started for the year in Ōtaki as part of the Regional Predator Control Programme.
58. A report on the health of the Waikanae Estuary shows that, overall, the estuary has shown marked variation in sedimentation, sediment mud content, and other indicator values since monitoring began in 2010. Monitoring from last summer showed that metals continue to be in very low concentrations, sedimentation rates were low and the mud content of sediments was in the Fair category. The report indicates that strong variability in environmental conditions is an inherent characteristic of the estuary and is determined mainly by flow conditions in Waikanae River. We will continue to work across functions to investigate and manage current and future catchment activities that could adversely affect estuary state (e.g., harvest of plantation forestry).
59. The Greater Wellington website has recently been updated with our progress on Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan, specifically about wetland restoration work at Queen Elizabeth Park. <https://www.gw.govt.nz/parks/queen-elizabeth-park/whats-happening-in-queen-elizabeth-park/>
60. The Kāpiti Whaitua Committee is continuing to meet and progress through their decisions. An update on the Kāpiti process is included in the Whaitua Development update paper provided at this meeting (*Report 23.505 – Whaitua Development Update*).

### **Regional Park management**

#### *Kāpiti, Te Awarua-o-Porirua, Te Whanganui-a-Tara*

61. A separate report is being presented at this meeting regarding the overall implementation of the Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan since it was adopted by Council in December 2020. (*Report 23.456 – Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-30 Implementation Update*)
62. The parks Recloaking Papatūānuku restoration programme’s winter planting season is coming to completion. Here is a summary of this year’s planting in Parks:
  - a Planting is progressing in Queen Elizabeth Park for two areas totaling over 53,000 plants. A further 9,000 plants will be planted in October 2023 following removal of horse grazing.
  - b 130,000 plants have been planted in Belmont Regional Park across both the Kilmister block and near Transmission Gully. Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Inc have been involved in the planting works.
  - c 18,000 have been planted at both Battle Hill and Baring Head Regional Parks.
63. Regional planting and eco-source seed collection - an eco-sourcing training pilot was delivered in September 2023 in Masterton. After feedback on this, and with input from Te Hunga Whiriwhiri on mātauranga Māori components, we hope to deliver further sessions, including on the western side of the region. We aim to improve our own capability and capacity for Eco source seed collection and that of nurseries we rely on to provide plants for our programmes.
64. *Queen Elizabeth Park wetland restoration* - rewetting of the central Queen Elizabeth Park wetlands via the Recloaking Papatūānuku programme. The consenting process continues with cultural values assessment progressing with mana whenua. We are

expecting consent to be granted in early 2024 and related works to begin this financial year. A separate \$114,000 grant the Kapiti Biodiversity Project received, and is managing, will enable a large part of the former central wetlands to be restored.

65. *Te reo Māori in our Parks* - Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan provides policy guidance and a number of actions relating to park and place names. Naming is required to follow guidance from the Greater Wellington te reo Māori and Tikanga Policy 2019-2022, LINZ Geographic Place Name Board directions and legislation governing a park when naming parks, places, areas, tracks or features.
66. Staff are engaged in multiple continuous improvement efforts giving effect to te reo Māori in our parks, as identified by mana whenua. Sign improvement efforts are currently focussed on improving wayfinding signage. Our wayfinding project was created with the ability to easily update designs, or te reo as required, but with the core focus of keeping people safe. Occasionally, we replace entrance signs but only when necessary. We are not creating any te reo signs without approval from mana whenua, or Te Hunga Whiriwhiri.
67. *Commercial grazing in regional parks* – A phase out plan will be developed for the last remaining large commercial grazing licence in parks, East Belmont, which currently expires in 2026. This is still in the scoping phase and will be contingent on Long Term Plan decisions.
68. At Queen Elizabeth Park, the majority of Kāpiti Stables casual horse graziers left the park in November 2022 when the licence ended, after the grazing areas were found to be wetlands. Four casual graziers were given extra time via concession agreements while they searched for new grazing. This agreement ends at the end of September 2023, and it is expected that they will leave the park. Assistance for exit has been provided by Greater Wellington and alternative grazing opportunities offered by members of the equestrian community. Much of the former Kāpiti Stables grazing area has been planted in this year's planting programme.

69. *Figure 4 and 5: Plantings that help with flood resilience*



**Crown Funded Projects – Flood Protection Resilience**

70. All projects under the Climate Resilience Programme are complete and all sites are now in the one-year maintenance period.

**Ngā āpitihanga  
Attachments**

Number	Title
1	Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings

**Ngā kaiwaitohu  
Signatories**

Approver	Lian Butcher – Group Manager, Environment
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<b>He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations</b>
<b><i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i></b> The Environment Committee has responsibility to consider all matters across the development and implementation of the work programmes of Greater Wellington's Environment Group
<b><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></b> Development and implementation of related work programmes fall under the core activities of the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan
<b><i>Internal consultation</i></b> Internal consultation was limited to officers of Greater Wellington's Environment Group
<b><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></b> This report covers the full breadth of work programmes, and equally a broad range of environmental, reputational, legal, financial and health safety and wellbeing risks and associated implications.

**Attachment 1 to Report 23.7**

**Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings**

Date	Action item	Status and comment
9 February 2023	<p><b>Environment/Catchment Update – Report 23.1</b></p> <p><b>Noted:</b></p> <p>The Committee requested that a report to be presented at a future Committee meeting on the responsibilities that Greater Wellington has in marine biosecurity and how this may be addressed going forward</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Completed</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Marine Biosecurity Paper delivered to Environment Committee on 10 August 2023. See Report 23.347 – Developing a Marine Biosecurity Programme for the Wellington Region for the paper which proposes next steps for developing the Marine Biosecurity Programme at Greater Wellington.</p>
27 April 2023	<p><b>Environment/Catchment Update – Report 23.2</b></p> <p><b>Noted:</b></p> <p>The Committee requested that:</p>	
	<p>a an update on Transmission Gully and the wetlands in Queen Elizabeth Park in future reports</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Underway</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Staff will coordinate an update on Transmission Gully for the 23 November 2023 Environment Group update.</p> <p>Greater Wellington’s public website has recently been updated with information about wetland restoration at Queen Elizabeth Park.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gw.govt.nz/parks/queen-elizabeth-park/whats-happening-in-queen-elizabeth-park/">https://www.gw.govt.nz/parks/queen-elizabeth-park/whats-happening-in-queen-elizabeth-park/</a></p>

**Attachment 1 to Report 23.7**

**Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings**

	<p>b a workshop to discuss the role of councillors in a flood event</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Completed</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Presented at the last Environment Committee</p>
	<p>c that officers include ungulate culling in the 2023-33 Long Term Plan</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Completed</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Options around increased ungulate control have been included in the material prepared for the draft Long Term Plan</p>
15 June 2023	<p><b>Environment Update – Report 23.3</b></p> <p><b>Noted:</b></p> <p>The Committee requested that:</p>	
	<p>a An update the on control and prevention of marine pests be provided at a future meeting</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Completed</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Marine Biosecurity Paper delivered to Environment Committee on 10 August. See Report 23.347 – Developing a Marine Biosecurity Programme for the Wellington Region for the paper which proposes next steps for developing the Marine Biosecurity Programme at Greater Wellington.</p>
	<p>b A timeline on the programme of Te Reo on signage at Greater Wellington’s parks</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Underway</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> An email was sent to Councillor Connelly on 1 July 2023 outlining our work with Te Reo in Park signage. This email was noted in the <a href="#">Councillor Requests Tracker - Te Reo and signs on parks</a>. A summary of this email update has also been included in the 12 October 2023 Environment Group update report to the Environment Committee.</p>

Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings

<p>10 August 2023</p>	<p><b>Developing a Marine Biosecurity Programme for the Wellington Region – Report 23.347</b></p> <p><b>Noted:</b></p> <p>The Committee requested:</p>	
	<p>a A report to a future Environment Committee meeting outlining what powers Greater Wellington has currently in managing marine incursions and the options for including marine pests into the Regional Pest Management Plan.</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Underway</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> This will be provided as an email update to councillors prior to the Environment Committee.</p>
	<p>b That officers liaise with the three other councils in the Partnership and arrange a joint workshop.</p>	<p><b>Status:</b> Underway</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> The business case for joining TOS MBP has been approved. The Partnership is in the process of finalising the new contract with GW becoming financial members from 1 November.</p>