

# Developing sustainability strategy for Waiheke Island - A Biosphere Reserve application feasibility study

## Summary

- *To ensure that Waiheke Island retains its 'special character' and remains a 'highly liveable' island for residents old and new, Waiheke needs to develop unique, customised sustainability strategy.*
- *An effective medium for developing sustainability strategy, planning and action appropriate to key features of the island's character, core assets, and increasing vulnerabilities, is for Waiheke Island to become a Biosphere Reserve.*
- *Becoming a Biosphere Reserve is, initially, a multi-faceted and labour-intensive process that requires careful planning, a sound understanding of how to navigate the application process, and sufficient resourcing.*
- *We are requesting a grant of (a) \$15,000 + GST to fund the initial feasibility study for a Biosphere Reserve application and (b) a further \$15,000 + GST to undertake the stage (ii) activities .*

## A. Why Waiheke Island needs a sustainability strategy

### What's happening to the island?

In the summer of 2016-2017, ferry travel numbers to the island increased by nearly 30%<sup>1</sup>. The impacts were felt by all residents, especially those who struggled to have access to their usual ferry to and from work or other essential appointments on the mainland. Aside from island businesses that benefit from tourism, the impacts were experienced as largely negative for residents, as the island's limited infrastructure struggled to cope with the number of visitors. Those problems reflected precisely the issues identified in 'Essentially Waiheke', and took some of those issues to crisis level, in particular problems with traffic, sewerage, ferry inadequacies and wharf congestion, beach congestion and water quality, and inadequate public facilities (e.g. public toilets; parking). It is likely to have been much worse if the island had experienced the drought conditions common in summer.

It is widely recognised on the island now that there is no plan for managing the increasing number of visitors and the unwillingness of Fullers Ferries to either limit visitor numbers, provide priority boarding to residents, or remove the double-decker buses that, to many islanders, have become the symbol of the kind of future that will drive from the island those very individuals whose philosophies, ideas, energy and efforts are the key to retaining the 'special character' of the island.

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<sup>1</sup> Reported by Fullers Ferries CEO Doug Hudson; this increase is highly likely to have been solely visitors, since island resident use the ferries less over this period.

## **What strategy guides Waiheke development currently, and how appropriate is it?**

Currently Waiheke Island does not have its own sustainability strategy, even though arguably that is now essential to the retention of the ‘special character’ of the island referred to in many previous Council and island planning documents. Neither, it appears, does Auckland Council have a sustainability strategy as such; nor does Waiheke have its own tourism strategy. *The process of applying to become a Biosphere Reserve would require the development of a sustainability strategy and plan for the island.*

## **What a sustainability strategy for Waiheke should achieve, and how**

Strategy for sustainability is essential now for Waiheke, not only to retain the island’s special character, but simply for the island to be able to cope with the rapid increases in ferry use and visitor numbers and the other impacts of the changing demographic of island residents. Without such strategy, Waiheke will rapidly become suburbanised through the kinds of Council activity that are occurring currently. The most visible examples of this are Council’s response to the advent of the double-decker buses and the widespread flooding and slips that occurred due to the post-cyclonic rains that we experienced in March and April 2017 – for example, large-scale curbing and channelling, and installation of poorly considered road and other drainage mechanisms that have already caused more problems than they will solve.

Around the world, the most popular eco-tourism destinations are placing quotas on visitor numbers so that the very features of those places that attract visitors will not be destroyed by tourism. To achieve the kinds of protections that Waiheke needs, it is essential that the island has robust strategy, enshrined in local regulation, to guide the ‘development’ of the island in all its forms.

## **B. Establishing a Waiheke Island Biosphere Reserve**

### **1. Waiheke Forever - Overview**

#### **What is a ‘Biosphere Reserve’?**

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are places set on a path of ‘sustainable development’. This has been defined as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Reserves are involved in both environmental conservation and economic and social development. They think long term and initiate projects to ensure communities survive and retain their essential identities without damaging the environment.

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves have no legal powers within the country. A nomination to become a UNESCO Reserve must come from central government and requires a decision by Cabinet. [*Need to check that this is still accurate.*]

*Core components of Biosphere Reserves are:*

- *A defined geographic area*
- *A clear sustainability strategy and plan*
- *Local or central government endorsement*
- *A robust and continuous management function*
- *One or more sustainability projects*
- *Regular monitoring and reporting on those projects.*

### **What do Biosphere Reserves do?**

There are many different types of Reserve around the world. At least six Reserves are islands comparable to Waiheke. Many Reserves have large numbers of tourists, with both positive and negative effects. Tourists help sustain local businesses and economy, but if not properly managed can cause major environmental damage and social problems (e.g. housing deficits). There is a growing recognition that 'ecotourism' and 'sustainable tourism' are not the same thing.

Several existing Reserves have projects to replace fossil fuel consumption with renewable energy. Two island Reserves have very advanced projects to become self-sufficient in renewable energy. Almost all reserves have projects to conserve natural habitats and protect biodiversity. Increasingly, Reserves are monitoring and adapting to climate change.

### **What would a Waiheke Biosphere Reserve be like?**

It is suggested that a Waiheke Biosphere Reserve cover the same area as our Local Board: that is, Waiheke Island plus a number of nearby islands. It is suggested that it be managed by a representative group, and that it operate outside of but under the auspices of local government.

*It should be possible to become a Reserve without new legislation, though it may be advantageous to consider special legislation after a few years. The group would represent the Reserve locally, nationally and internationally to both government and non-government organisations.*

*Initially, the Reserve should play a major role in developing long-term sustainable policy for the island in areas such as tourism, economy, transport, planning, energy, climate change, and social and economic inequality.*

*The Reserve could decide upon one or more significant projects. Examples relevant to*

*Waiheke might include: sustainable tourism strategy; becoming predator-free; restoration of threatened native plants and biodiversity; self-sufficiency in renewable energy within ten years. The number and size of projects undertaken would depend on the capacity of Reserve participants, and on funding; project participants and associates could include corporate funders, universities and other tertiary institutions, and volunteers from off-island, as well as Waiheke residents.*

An application from Waiheke would have a reasonably good chance of being accepted by UNESCO. This is based on current work on biodiversity, the legal protections currently in place, the steps we have taken towards economic sustainability, and the monitoring and research that has taken place (though this could be improved).

### **What are the benefits?**

*The establishment of a Biosphere Reserve would develop and promote a single cohesive sustainability vision and strategy for Waiheke's future. This would encourage a more positive sense of community, and make decision making and relationships with other bodies more effective.*

*It would provide Waiheke with a UN-credentialed identity that would promote local government taking account of Waiheke's 'special character' and wairua, so that development on the island would have to protect and facilitate that special character.*

It could help attract more funding for projects, help coordinate new, very large projects, and help to ensure that good work in one area is not cancelled out by other activity that erodes the sustainable Waiheke vision. It would assist the many local volunteers and community groups on the island to work more effectively and cohesively.

It could support local businesses by creating and promoting a sustainability 'brand' for Waiheke that extends across tourism, local produce and local retailing. It could bring improvements through monitoring and researching major issues of concern, and in documenting and making available the results. It would improve our access to knowledge of similar projects overseas, and their knowledge of us.

## **2. What do Biosphere Reserves do?**

Each Biosphere Reserve must come up with its own strategy and plan for sustainable development.

First they must identify possible unsustainable practices. In our case, that might mean asking questions such as:

- In what ways is Council infrastructure development on the island

- undermining the scenic values that attracts people here?
- If we 'improve' our roads, are we damaging the natural environment and/or the Waiheke aesthetic and special character? won't we end up with all the traffic problems that are the curse of large cities?
  - Is the duplication of community-based initiatives that compete for the same fund counterproductive?

Biosphere Reserves use their local knowledge to identify where policies are either not sustainable in themselves, or are in conflict with other policies that are sustainable. Having identified the problems, there is a commitment to use research and knowledge to find better solutions. Other Reserves, as well as national and international organisations, can be enlisted to help understand a problem and suggest a better solution.

Waihekeans know all this. That is why they have come up with so many excellent ideas for a sustainable future: Adopt a Verge, BeachCare, BirdSafe Waiheke, Native Bird Rescue, Community Gardens, Community Supported Agriculture, Cycle Action, Dotterel Guardians Trust, Farmers' Market, Forest & Bird, Friends of 'you-name-it', Initiative for Sustainable Energy, Junk to Funk, Keep Waiheke Beautiful, organic vineyards, Transition Towns, Waste Resources Trust, Weedbusters, Wetland Initiative, several Trusts undertaking large revegetation projects... We are doing it already – let's do it under an umbrella that facilitates cohesive goals and action.

### **3. What are the main benefits?**

#### **For Waiheke**

##### *Strengthened local governance*

- UN credentialling for Waiheke Island's 'special character' and vulnerabilities, as set out in Essentially Waiheke
- A unified vision for Waiheke based on sustainable development
- A new forum for making long-term policy decisions on Waiheke
- Agreement between Waiheke and Auckland on the island's future direction

##### *Sustainability focus*

- A new environmental 'branding' to support sustainable Waiheke development, including but not limited to tourism
- Support for local producers and retailers by a new environmental 'brand'
- Support for groups involved in environmental sustainability projects
- New skilled employment opportunities in education and research
- Monitoring of projects to discover and report on their effectiveness
- One internationally significant sustainability project for the island
- Participation in an international network of like-minded communities
- Visits of people from other Biosphere Reserves to the island

## For Auckland

- Agreement between Waiheke and Auckland on the island's future direction
- International accreditation that validates Auckland as a world-class city
- Clearer 'branding' of Waiheke for Auckland Tourism
- Recognition that Auckland is active on sustainable development
- New knowledge on how to live sustainably in the region
- Leadership role for Auckland within the Pacific region on sustainability

## For New Zealand

- *A model for other NZ communities struggling with uncontrolled development and tourism that puts communities at risk*
- New knowledge on how to live and develop sustainably in New Zealand
- International accreditation that validates New Zealand as protecting its environment and pursuing sustainable development
- Contribution to the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (NZBS) and the country's obligations under the Biodiversity Convention
- Leadership role for New Zealand within the Pacific region on sustainability
- Approval within UNESCO and the UN for New Zealand's active involvement.

## 4. How do we become a Biosphere Reserve?

The formal process would require a nomination to be submitted by the New Zealand Government to UNESCO. Current New Zealand Government procedures state that such an application would require a decision by Cabinet.

Practically, though, the process starts on Waiheke. The people of Waiheke must be the first to consider this proposal and indicate their support. If the island unites behind the proposal, then it would be normal to set up a Steering Group representing a variety of interests on the island to take the proposal forward. At this stage it would need to be discussed with a wide range of people and organisations, such as the Waiheke Local Board, mana whenua, Auckland Council, the Department of Conservation (regionally and nationally), local MPs and political parties. Ultimately it would most likely come before the Ministers of Conservation, the Environment, Tourism and Local Government, as well as the relevant MP/s for Auckland<sup>2</sup>. If it were supported at all levels, then it is likely that the government would appoint a consultant to help with drawing up a formal application.

The application must demonstrate the following components:

- The first is that the geographical area of the Reserve must be divided into three 'zones':
  - a *core zone* which is a legally protected area of high environmental

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<sup>2</sup> Though other Ministers may be valuable; for example, in 2013 Chris Finlayson supported in principle the notion of Tuhoe applying for Te Urewera park to become a BR.

- quality,
  - surrounded by a *buffer zone* where land management and use is sympathetic to the objectives of the core area,
  - surrounded by a *transition zone* where it may be that “it is pretty much business as usual” but communities are encouraged to carry out sustainable development.
- In addition to having three zones, it must be shown how the three main functions of Biosphere Reserves are fulfilled. These are:
  - *conservation*: to contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation;
  - *development*: to foster economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable; and
  - *logistic support*: to provide support for demonstration projects, environmental education and training, research and monitoring.

*The application needs to contain a management strategy, plan or policy for the proposed Reserve, with some indication as to how it is going to be achieved. Finally, the way the Reserve will be managed and funded has to be described.*

## **5. Do we have enough legal protection?**

A legal opinion<sup>3</sup> supplied in 2010 concluded that: “Once the political support is secured, the legal requirements under the MAB<sup>4</sup> Statutory Framework will not present any hurdles.”

Te Matuku Marine Reserve was established under the **Marine Reserves Act 1971**. That Act enables Marine Reserves to be set up and preserved in their natural state, and requires that the marine life of the reserve shall be protected and preserved.

The **Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000** recognises the national significance of the Hauraki Gulf and enabled the establishment of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. The intention of this Act is to integrate the management of land and sea across 21 other Acts (including the Resource Management Act). It is a national policy statement, which means that local authorities must ensure that their policies and plans are in accordance with it.

**The Resource Management Act 1991** (RMA) is the main piece of legislation that places limits on what can be built anywhere in the country. It is based upon the idea of “sustainable management” of our natural and physical resources. In each locality it operates through the District Plan which is approved by the local

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<sup>3</sup> Legal Opinion Waiheke UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Ben Gussen via Professor Klaus Bosselman, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Biosphere Reserve.

Council. In July 1996 the Hauraki Gulf Islands District Plan was the first district plan to become operative under the RMA.

*The resource management framework for Waiheke Island was based on two strategic management areas: western Waiheke and eastern Waiheke... further separated into... ten landscape-based land units (for example, cliffs, wetlands, foothills, forest) and fifteen activity based (for example, traditional residential, bush residential, retailing) and special land units (such as a wharf).*

These could well become the basis for defining our buffer and transition zones. While there is probably sufficient legislation here to demonstrate adequate protection of the core and buffer zones, the question is whether it is the right kind of legislation to meet the long-term aim of sustainable development. According to the Ministry for the Environment, it is significant that the RMA only seeks to achieve sustainable management, and not sustainable development. *Sustainable development is not synonymous with the definition of sustainable management under the RMA, but is a more encompassing concept recognising the possibility of simultaneously improving social, economic and environmental outcomes.*

It goes on to say that the Resource Management Act  
*... is focused on the biophysical environment and leaves the pursuit of economic and social goals to other mechanisms available to Government and the community.*

Biosphere Reserves are all about the integration of environmental, economic and social goals. In more popular terms, we could say that Waiheke needs more “joined-up thinking” so that economic development and environmental protection work together and not be seen as opposites, as they sometimes are under the RMA.

## **6. Has Waiheke done enough environmentally?**

Probably – but the environmental activity needs to be updated, documented and ‘mapped’, so that it can be seen as coordinated action with a common sustainability goal, and a ‘gap’ analysis undertaken to see whether there are areas that need enhancement in order to make a viable BR application.

Two hundred years ago, Waiheke was covered in kauri and kanuka forest. Between 1820 and 1870 almost all of that forest was removed for human use, leaving poor quality land suitable only for limited pastoral farming.

Action on biodiversity means regenerating the natural environment so that it can better support indigenous plants, trees, birds, animals and marine life. Fortunately there still remains a small, ‘core’ area of native forest in the east of the Island that was never completely cleared. This now acts as a natural source for regeneration, and many local, and sometime rare, species of flora can still be

found there. Part of this land is in private ownership and some a reserve run by NZ Forest & Bird. It is envisaged that this would be the 'core area' of the Biosphere Reserve on Waiheke Island.

*Waiheke's 'core' environmental zone.* There are a number of significant reserves around the Island that work together to restore a patchwork of habitats to provide protection. Whakanewha Regional Park has a successful New Zealand dotterel breeding programme of national significance. The threatened variable oystercatcher (torea-pango) also nests successfully in the area. The wetland has been identified as a Site of Special Wildlife Significance supporting the giant kokopu and dotterel breeding area on the foreshore. The Rocky Bay scrubland is also identified as a site of ecological significance. Te Matuku Marine Reserve contains two shell spits on the eastern side of the bay which are important roosting and nesting areas for native and overseas migrant shorebirds such as the variable oystercatcher, Caspian tern and the endangered New Zealand dotterel. Annual migrants such as godwits, knots, sandpipers and turnstones can also be found here. There are also 55 other reserves on Waiheke.

It is envisaged that the more rural areas, as defined in the District Plan, would form the *buffer zone* of a Waiheke Biosphere Reserve, while the more urban areas (primarily Oneroa and Ostend) would be the transition zone. The other islands also play an important role in biodiversity. Rangitoto and Motutapu have pest eradication programmes in preparation for the introduction of kiwi, kaka, tuatara and mistletoe. Motuihe has reintroduced saddlebacks, kakariki and kiwi. Browns Island is home to the New Zealand dotterel and sand spurge.

The identified *transition zone* (if required) could be (i) initially the adjacent island and (ii) ultimately the rest of the country.

Currently Waiheke is experiencing a raft of environmental threats, some of them common to the whole country, others specific to the island. As part of the application for a BR, we need to undertake an audit (e.g. using the 'SWOT' analysis model) of resources, threats, current mitigation activity and other opportunities as a basis for the on-going BR monitoring programme. This analysis could be undertaken through a UN WTO programme collaboration, such as is occurring currently in the Waikato, in a collaboration between the University of Waikato Management School and the communities of Raglan and Waitomo, which are encountering issues similar to those being experienced here on Waiheke. See <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/news-events/media/2017/waikato-to-host-nzs-first-un-tourism-monitoring-observatory>

*An initial discussion with Professor Brent Lovelock at the University of Otago Tourism*

Department indicates an interest by them in such a collaboration with Waiheke.

## **7. Are we doing enough research?**

Not yet – but we can, without great expense, especially in collaboration with a university-accredited programme (e.g. University of Otago, or possibly NZTRI) - this is where a UN WTO programme will be relevant. A priority task will be to map previous and current environmental/sustainability activity on or for Waiheke.

Many organisations work for nature conservation, biodiversity and sustainable development on the Island, and we probably have one of the highest levels of such participation per head of population in the country. But the projects they work on, and the effects they have, are not always recorded. The lessons learned tend to be passed on through personal contact rather than by publication so that others can read about them. Looking for evidence of past projects, there is disappointingly little available. In compiling a bibliography of work published mainly in the last 20 years and relevant to sustainability on Waiheke, one cannot help but note how patchy it is.

The natural features of the Island are described in various official publications, such as Auckland City's *District Plan Annexures* which cover the history, archaeology and geology of the islands. Auckland Regional Council's *Whakanewha Regional Park Management Plan* also describes the physical features of area around the Park. The flora and fauna are described in Don Chapple, Rachael Ebbett & Ivan Kitson's *Greening our Gulf Island*.

Special sites are recorded in DoC's *Sites of Ecological Significance – Waiheke Island* and there are a number of articles that have appeared in the *Auckland Botanical Society Journal*.

Ongoing monitoring of the Gulf is carried out annually and reported in Hauraki Gulf Forum's *Tikapa Moana – Hauraki Gulf State of the Environment Report*.

When it comes to economic and social development, aspects are covered in Auckland Regional Council's *Rural Economies in the Auckland Region*. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's *Managing Change in Paradise: Sustainable Development in Peri-urban Areas* contains a section on Waiheke Island, and The University of Auckland's School of Geography, Geology and Environmental Science have recently produced a detailed *Waiheke Island Visitor Survey Report*.

A number of projects have been initiated as a direct response to this UNESCO project: a database of sustainable buildings on Waiheke; a survey of small (one-

person) businesses operating on or from Waiheke; a list of native species on Waiheke.

Taken together, a case could be made that there has been sufficient research and monitoring on Waiheke, but UNESCO may well expect us to be more organised in this regard in future.

## **8. How would a Waiheke Biosphere Reserve be run?**

Once a Waiheke Biosphere Reserve has been approved, the following resourcing will be needed:

1. a Management Group, under the auspices and governance of the LB, for monitoring the BR once it has been established (also including mana whenua representation)
2. a project Coordinator, to manage the first BR project
3. an on-going evaluation function (2-3 evaluation researchers – could be done within the UN WTO programme with UoO Masters students annually)
4. the on-going moral support of the Local Board
5. annual LB funding of around \$10K for the first 3 years and biannually after that.

*“Organizational arrangements should be provided for the involvement and participation of a suitable range of ... public authorities, local communities and private interests in the design and carrying out the functions of a biosphere reserve.” (UNESCO)*

In practice, there is no single organisational model for Biosphere Reserves. In some cases, management is effectively in the hands of the environmental body that looks after the core zone. In others, management is given to the local authority. In others, a special governing body is set up with representatives from local and central government departments. In others, it is set up with strong local input. The general advice is that the form of governance should follow the particular context and aims of the reserve.

Once a decision to proceed were arrived at, the first step would probably be to set up a Steering Group representing different interests on the island to take the project forward. This could be done locally and at an early stage. In the longer term, it is suggested that the most appropriate body to manage a Waiheke Reserve would be a representational forum, as is the case now with the Hauraki Gulf Forum. There is a need to have various interests represented (for example, economic, environmental, tangata whenua and local government) while insisting upon strong local representation.

The Biosphere Reserve management body would represent the Reserve to local and national government, to non-government organisations and funding

agencies, to UNESCO and other international organisations. It would be clearly separate from the Local Board and would operate in a wider arena. In general philosophy, the Reserve would be bound to the concept of sustainable development, while the agenda of the Local Board will largely be set by its parent authority.

The Biosphere Reserve management body would have no legal powers. This can be seen as a weakness, as no one can be forced to change their ways. It can also be seen as a strength, as it provides an alternative to the current political system. Because biosphere reserves are largely aspirational, becoming a reserve is not the end of a process after which everything is different. Rather, it is a beginning: it is an opportunity to begin addressing the needs of the future and to implement a common vision of Waiheke's future.

The Biosphere Reserve management body would have to raise funds for its own activities. It would probably need to obtain regular funding for its basic requirements (e.g. costs of meetings and meeting basic expectations). Mostly, though, it will raise funds based on the quality and relevance of its proposals and projects.

## **9. Getting started**

We envisage five overlapping stages in making a Biosphere Reserve application, as follows:

### **i. Scoping the application process – a Feasibility Study**

A feasibility study is required initially to determine whether a BR application is within the resources of Waiheke, in terms of the key requirements. The first step in the feasibility study will be to undertake an audit of (i) the extent to which Waiheke can already meet the BR application requirements, and (ii) what else needs to be achieved for the application to be viable and successful. We envisage that this analysis will involve, in particular:

- Undertaking an audit of Waiheke conservation, environmental and other sustainability achievement to date and already in progress
- Undertaking a 'gap' analysis to determine whether such achievements are sufficient to achieve BR status, and if not, what additional activity or achievement needs to be undertaken or identified
- Identifying and 'mapping' all key stakeholders
- Identifying 'priority' stakeholders – that is, those whose agreement in principle is pivotal to making a viable BR application
- Determining a schedule and strategy for stages (ii)-(iv) - see below.

## **ii. Determining essential support, actions and resourcing towards a BR application**

### *Determining essential support*

Having confirmed feasibility, a key first task will be to liaise and consult with priority stakeholders, in particular local and central government parties, mana whenua, and any other stakeholders whose support is crucial, to determine the pathways and criteria that they each require before committing support for a Waiheke BR application.

### *Developing sustainability strategy - Establishing a UN WTO collaboration (or similar) with an appropriately resourced university programme*

Initial discussions with University of Otago and AUT academic staff indicate that support could be available from either of those institutions for a collaboration. The collaboration will require some funding, though there is a good possibility that the universities themselves may be able to contribute to this, as well as supplying personnel (usually doctoral students to undertake the research).

### *Determining essential resource*

Sources of resource will need to be identified and a commitment obtained for such resource. This will include but not be limited to funding. For example, personnel resource will be needed to support Waiheke organisations to compile documentation to support a BR application.

## **iii. Building community and local government understanding of and 'buy-in'**

Building community and Council interest, understanding and buy-in will require several strands of target-specific activity. These will be identified in the feasibility study, along with the development of a draft BR communications strategy.

### *The Waiheke Biosphere Forum*

Once the feasibility study has been completed, a Biosphere Forum will be established, comprising 6-7 Waiheke residents selected to incorporate a range of knowledge and skills relevant to its functions. Its role will be to raise awareness of and interest in and support for a Waiheke Biosphere Reserve. The benefits of starting up a Biosphere Forum immediately are that it can:

- Kick-start awareness-raising of the Biosphere Reserve concept, and of the sustainability issues generally on the island, through community discussion and events
- Bring overseas expertise to the development of a Waiheke Biosphere Reserve identity (e.g. through research, publications, invited speakers, etc.)
- Provide support for a BR application.

#### **iv. Identifying and scoping a possible BR project**

Following the development of initial sustainability strategy, we would work with all relevant stakeholders to identify and scope in detail a manageable first project for Waiheke as a BR. Key parameters would include optimal inclusion of community and local government stakeholders.

#### **v. Making the application**

Making the application will require specialist support, and will need meticulous planning. That support has been offered by Peter Hunnam, who was the Director of the successful Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation.

#### **Timing**

We envisage that these five steps will take around two years in total. However there should be measurable gains for the island through each stage, particularly in terms of:

- Development of a sustainability strategy
- A stronger environmental identity and 'brand' for Waiheke
- A better understanding between the Waiheke community, Local Board and Auckland Council as to the desired direction for the island.

### **10. Request for funding**

a) We are requesting a **grant of \$15,000** to undertake the feasibility study outlined above. Once funding for this is available, we will draft a detailed feasibility study plan, including specific tasks, responsibilities, outputs and a schedule. We anticipate being able to report on feasibility, including a plan for progressing stages (ii)-(iv) (or a variation thereof) by early October 2017.

A rough schedule is as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Completion</b>
Detailed plan for the feasibility study	30 July
Meetings with key informants - UK/Europe and Noosa (including travel costs)	31 October
Initial discussions with key central government and mana whenua stakeholders	31 October
Discussions and meetings with potential university collaborators - University of Otago (Professor Brent Lovelock) and AUT (Dr Simon Milne)	31 October
Documentation review - evaluations of previous relevant BR projects; previous successful BR applications;	30 November
Legal scoping	30

	November
Feasibility report	31 January

b) We also request that a **further \$15,000** be 'tagged' for stages (ii)-(iii), to take place early-mid 2018.