

Waiheke Local Board feedback on Te Koiora o te Koiora – our shared vision for living with nature.

A discussion document on proposals for a biodiversity strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand

Waiheke Local Board is deeply committed to supporting biodiversity in the Hauraki Gulf and wishes to provide the following feedback on Te Koiora o te Koiora.

A critical element of the Waiheke Local Board Plan 2017-2020 (p. 25) is Outcome 3: “Waiheke’s environment is treasured”. The associated objectives include the following:

- Restore and protect our natural environment in partnership with the community.
- Minimise the impact of climate change.
- Improve conservation of our coastal environment including the marine area.
- Reduce the waste stream.

In 2016, the board undertook a refresh of Essentially Waiheke, a consultation document on environmental and developmental matters. “The fundamental purpose of *Essentially Waiheke* was to define and nurture the island’s unique character to preserve its mauri (vital essence, special nature) and to restore, protect and enhance Waiheke’s terrestrial and marine environments.” (Essentially Waiheke 2016, p. 4).

The document is used to guide the board’s feedback on behalf of the Waiheke community.

The board has also been working with a local organisation, Project Forever, on a Sustainable Community and Tourism Strategy which supports the board’s biodiversity goals. The purpose of the strategy is:

“To direct and enable the development of Waiheke Island community and tourism in parallel and in collaboration, to protect and preserve the island. In particular to restore and enhance its native flora and fauna, its iconic footprint - coastal, forest, pastoral– and its community spirit and character.”

The goal is that tourism should be managed to have an enhancing and restorative effect on island biodiversity - not the reverse.

Please find the board’s responses to the questions posed in the discussion paper below:

Overall comments

- The Waiheke Local Board supports the proposed vision, values and principles and need for a new biodiversity strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Part One of strategy

1. *How well does Part 1 of the discussion document set out the problem and consider the challenges and opportunities facing nature now and in the future?*

- Overall Part One does not state strongly enough the extent of the biodiversity crisis facing New Zealand and the earth. In New Zealand alone, over three quarters of all species of terrestrial birds, reptiles, butterflies and moths, frogs, bats and freshwater fish are either threatened or at risk of extinction (Te Koiora o te Koiora, 2019 p.13).
- The tussock-lands, estuaries, forests, wetlands, marine environments which sustain these species are equally under threat.
- Despite the existence of Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act and the Hauraki Gulf Forum, the biodiversity of the Hauraki Gulf continues to decline at an alarming rate.
- There is a perception amongst many New Zealanders that we have a clean and green environment. There is a general lack of knowledge about the real extent of the problem.
- There needs to be a thorough evaluation of the previous biodiversity report (Our Chance to Turn the Tide 2000) so learnings can be used in this next phase to 2070.
- There needs to be more information about successful strategies and approaches which are applicable to New Zealand going forward, such as native bird life regeneration at Tiritiri Matangi and Motutapu Islands.

Poutama strategy framework

2. *What do you think of the proposed strategy framework? Does it provide a useful way of linking the elements of the strategy together?*

- The board is generally supportive of the framework which does provide a useful way of linking the elements together. However, resolving the biodiversity crisis requires a long-term solution which can only be addressed using a planned multi-stakeholder approach.
- The paper identifies the following government stakeholders:
 - The Department of Conservation (DOC)
 - The Ministry for the Environment (MfE)
 - The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)
 - Te Uru Rākau (Forestry New Zealand)
 - Fisheries New Zealand
 - Local Government
 - Land Information New Zealand (LINZ)

but fails to effectively document in sufficient detail how these agencies will work together with iwi, non-governmental organisations and the people of New Zealand to create a long term strategic action plan to effectively address the crisis. Te Koiora o te Koiora needs to be much clearer about the way forward.

Vision, values and principles

4. What do you think about the proposed values and principles?

- Waiheke Local Board supports the proposed matapopore/vision, values and principles outlined but suggests that it could be strengthened by adding “leadership (ārahitanga)” as one of the key principles. Without strong and committed leadership there can be no reversing of the current situation and future restoration.
- In terms of knowledge systems and tools, there needs to be greater emphasis on education about the nature of the crisis and the cost to New Zealanders.
- Waiheke Local Board supports the *in-situ* management principle on the basis that we need to find solutions within existing ecosystems and ecological processes and building upon those.

Long-term outcomes

5. What do you think about the proposed long-term outcomes? Is there anything you would add or change?

- **Tangata whenua are exercising their role as kaitiaki** – this long-term goal ought to reflect the fact that Maori tikanga around conservation is based on the concept of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) which should be used as a model for Aotearoa New Zealand. Partnership should be emphasised.
- **A full range of ecosystems on land and in water are healthy and functioning** – this outcome makes no quantitative mention of restoration back to original levels or a specified proportion of that.
- **Aotearoa New Zealand’s indigenous species and their habitats are secure and thriving** – a measure is also required for this outcome.
- **Aotearoa New Zealand’s indigenous biodiversity is managed to be resilient to the impacts of global change** – nature is self-sustaining and should reach a stage where it does not need to be “managed” but rather protected.
- **Aotearoa New Zealand’s economic activity provides for the restoration and protection of indigenous biodiversity** – an excellent outcome if this can be achieved. Ideally economic and tourism activity such that they deliver to this principle.
- **Aotearoa New Zealand is making a meaningful contribution to global biodiversity management** – the board expects that Aotearoa New Zealand should be striving to achieve leadership status globally.
- Waiheke Local board agrees with Auckland Council feedback which suggests a need to provide clearer direction on how a new biodiversity strategy intends to achieve these long-term outcomes. The discussion document does not provide clear linkages between the goals, targets, principles, actions, key-shifts, and how they will move towards the long-term outcomes. Clarity could be provided through a logic framework demonstrating how all these parts of any new strategy are connected.

Goals

6. What do you think of the proposed set of goals?

- Waiheke Local Board supports the proposed goals but, as per best practice in strategic planning, would expect to see quantitative and qualitative measures detailed for these goals including baseline data. We also suggest goals be set in ten-year increments.

Implementation

7. What do you think about the proposed plan for implementation planning? What do you think are the requirements for a governance structure to oversee implementation planning and delivery?

- The board recommends that the governance structure should be legislated and chaired by a distinguished leader with the mana to bring representatives from across the biodiversity system to a cooperative outcome
- Clarity needs to be provided as to how any governance structures for the new biodiversity strategy will link with other governance structures (i.e. Predator Free 2050). These structures need to co-operate and not operate in isolation, as many of the actions are interconnected and overlapping.

8. What do you think about the proposal for progress reporting and review of the strategy? How do you think this reporting should take place to ensure it is useful, transparent, inclusive, and drives accountability?

- Waiheke Local Board supports the five-yearly reporting and review process but recommends shorter time frames over the first 10 years to give greater urgency at the outset. It is important that there is an independent review process at each interval.

Key shifts and Priority Actions

9-15. What do you think about the five system shifts? Are they the right areas to focus on in the near term? Are there other areas that should be included?

Shift 1: Getting the system right – the board supports this shift but there needs to be an evolving model based on scientific evaluation of successes and failures and development of new evidence-based, innovative solutions. Getting the system right also requires joined-up action across government, local government, non-governmental organisations, iwi, business and communities which is extremely difficult to achieve. The shift needs to be detailed into a workable methodology.

Shift 2: Empowering kaitiakitanga and mātauranga Māori – the needs to be stronger focus on Te Ao Māori perspectives as guiding the way forward to rebuilding biodiversity. The wording of the shift reads as though the Te Ao Māori process is separate in some way, so should be amended to emphasise partnership.

Shift 3: Communities are empowered to take action – this is critical, yet the paper does not elaborate sufficiently on how New Zealanders will be made aware of the biodiversity crisis or actively engaged in its remediation. Many people are committed to action but not sure how to become involved most effectively.

Shift 4: Connecting ecosystems from the mountain tops to the ocean depths –“Biodiversity is managed in a joined-up way across boundaries in the places where we live, work and play.” (p.37).

The board strongly supports this shift and reinforced the need to protect corridors and linkages which allow wildlife to migrate between habitats. There also needs to be creation of more natural corridors from ridgelines to sea which can develop natural pockets of biodiversity.

Shift 5: Innovating for the future - “The power of technology, data and science is used to transform the way we manage biodiversity.” (p. 37)

The need for a scientific evidence base to monitor progress and drive alternatives when progress is slow, is essential. One suggestion would be to link with the National Science Challenge “New Zealand’s Biological Heritage” which aims to protect and manage New Zealand’s biodiversity, improve our biosecurity, and enhance our resilience to harmful organisms.

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/science-and-technology/science-and-innovation/funding-information-and-opportunities/investment-funds/national-science-challenges/the-11-challenges/nz-biological-heritage/>

The Waiheke Local Board would add a sixth shift – **Shift 6: Ecological restoration becomes standard operating procedure.**

- Ecological restoration becomes “part of the way we do things” and is enshrined in all development and maintenance activities through people’s natural preferences, best practice and regulation.

15. Overall, are these the components of an effective strategy? What do you think of the proposals as a package? Is there anything we have missed?

- A key missing piece is the resourcing of the plan. There needs to be a sustainable long-term source of government and non-government funding to enable to work to progress and flourish over the 50-year timeframe.

16. What do you think a global vision and targets for biodiversity should look like? Are they the same as what is proposed in our national strategy, or should they be different? Are there any other things that should be included in the global framework? How do we make sure that our national strategy aligns with global goals?

- New Zealand’s Aichi targets from the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity which it signed in 1992 are listed below in Table 1 below. Given the open wording and lack of quantitative targets, it comes as no surprise that there has been little progress and ongoing loss of biodiversity in New Zealand. Global targets need to declare committed, measurable, national goals and document shared goals between nations and regions, to create a joined-up approach world-wide. A better course could be a series of agreed international goals with countries aligning their national targets with these. A good example could be taken from the Hauraki Gulf Forum i.e. that by 2030, 20% of waters within each nation’s territorial waters was under some form of marine protection.

General Comments

- Given the degradation of biodiversity through adverse planning decisions, the board recommends that a new biodiversity National Environmental Standard be developed which informs all Resource Management Act and Environmental Protection Agency decisions.

- Private land needs to be included on the biodiversity strategy to more strongly including private landowners in contributing to solutions.
- The strategy includes but tends to put more weight on issues in the terrestrial environment. The board believes that there needs to be greater emphasis on restoring biodiversity in the marine environment.

Table 1 New Zealand Aichi Targets to the Convention on Biological Diversity 2009 - 2020

Reference	Target	Related Strategic Goals/Aichi Targets
	New Zealand	
National Target 1	People's lives are enriched through connection to nature	1
National Target 2	People are taking greater action for nature	1, 18
National Target 3	Biodiversity is integrated into national and local strategies, policies, plans and reporting	2
National Target 4	More of New Zealand's natural ecosystems are benefiting from pest management	5, 9, 12, 14, 19
National Target 5	Biodiversity is integrated into New Zealand's fisheries management system	6, 7
National Target 6	Improved understanding of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity informs better management of vulnerable ecosystems and indigenous species	10
National Target 7	Sustainable use and protection of biodiversity is promoted through improved national guidance, information and industry practice	4, 7, 8
National Target 8	Invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritised, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to minimise likelihood of their introduction and establishment	9
National Target 9	Improved terrestrial and freshwater ecosystem protection and integrity	1, 5, 11
National Target 10	Landowners are supported to protect more rare and threatened habitats and ecosystems	1, 5, 11
National Target 11	Priority freshwater ecosystems are restored from 'mountains to the sea'	1, 5, 11
National Target 12	More Threatened, At Risk, or Declining species are managed to the extent necessary to minimise extinction risk and ensure genetic diversity is maintained	12, 13
National Target 13	A growing nationwide network of marine protected areas, representing more of New Zealand's marine ecosystems	11
National Target 14	Benefits of biodiversity and ecosystems for people's health and economic, social and cultural wellbeing are better understood and received	1, 14
National Target 15	Achieve multiple benefits and greater biodiversity and ecosystem services outcomes through greater coordination, integration and collaboration, particularly at the regional level	2, 4, 14
National Target 16	Enhance understanding of the contribution of indigenous biodiversity to carbon stocks	15
National Target 17	Whānau, hapū and iwi are better able to practise their responsibilities as kaitiaki	1, 18
National Target 18	Knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, function, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred and applied	19

<https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/targets/default.shtml>