

Policy and Planning Committee

Tuesday 25 July 2017

10.30am

Taranaki Regional Council, Stratford



Agenda for the meeting of the Policy and Planning Committee to be held in the Taranaki Regional Council chambers, 47 Cloten Road, Stratford, on Tuesday 25 July 2017 commencing at 10.30am.

Members	Councillor N W Walker Councillor C L Littlewood Councillor D H McIntyre Councillor B K Raine	(Committee Chairperson)
	Councillor D L Lean	(ex officio)
Representatives	Councillor R Jordan	(New Plymouth District Council)
	Councillor G Boyde	(Stratford District Council)
	Councillor P Nixon	(South Taranaki District Council)
Apologies	Councillor M P Joyce	
	Councillor D N MacLeod	
	Councillor C S Williamson	
	Mrs B Muir	(Taranaki Federated Farmers)

Notification of Late Items

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Agenda Memorandum

Date 25 July 2017



**Memorandum to
Chairperson and Members
Policy and Planning Committee**

Subject: Confirmation of Minutes – 6 June 2017

Approved by: A D McLay, Director-Resource Management

B G Chamberlain, Chief Executive

Document: 1898430

Resolve

That the Policy and Planning Committee of the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. takes as read and confirms the minutes of the Policy and Planning Committee meeting of the Taranaki Regional Council held in the Taranaki Regional Council chambers, 47 Cloten Road, Stratford, on Tuesday 6 June 2017 at 10.30am
2. notes the recommendations therein were adopted by the Taranaki Regional Council on 27 June 2017.

Matters arising

Appendices

Document #1875640 – Minutes Policy and Planning Committee

Minutes of the Policy and Planning Committee Meeting of the Taranaki Regional Council, held in the Taranaki Regional Council Chambers, 47 Cloten Road, Stratford, on Tuesday 6 June 2017 at 10.30 am.



Members	Councillors	N W Walker	(Committee Chairperson)
		M P Joyce	
		C L Littlewood	
		D H McIntyre	
		B K Raine	
		C S Williamson	<i>from 11.00am</i>
		D L Lean	(ex officio)
		D N MacLeod	(ex officio)
Attending	Councillor	G Boyde	(Stratford District Council)
	Councillor	P Nixon	(South Taranaki District Council)
Attending	Messrs	B G Chamberlain	(Chief Executive)
		A D McLay	(Director-Resource Management)
		M J Nield	(Director-Corporate Services)
		S R Hall	(Director-Operations)
		C L Spurdle	(Planning Manager)
		G C Severinsen	(Policy and Strategy Manager)
		S Tamarapa	(Iwi Communications Officer)
		P Ledingham	(Communications Officer)
		R Ritchie	(Communications Manager)
		Mr R Phipps	(Science Manager)
	Mrs V McKay	(Science Manager)	
Mrs K van Gameren	(Committee Administrator)		
Mr J Clough	(Wrightson Consulting)		

Apologies The apologies from Councillor R Jordan (New Plymouth District Council) and Mrs B Muir (Taranaki Federated Farmers) were received and sustained. Councillor C S Williamson’s apology for lateness was received.

Notification of Late Items There were no late items of business.

1. Confirmation of Minutes - 2 May 2017

Resolved

THAT the Policy and Planning Committee of the Taranaki Regional Council

1. takes as read and confirms the minutes of the Policy and Planning Committee meeting of the Taranaki Regional Council held in the Taranaki Regional Council chambers, 47 Cloten Road, Stratford, on Tuesday 2 May 2017 at 10.30am
2. notes that the recommendations therein were adopted by the Taranaki Regional Council on 8 May 2017.

Littlewood/Raine

Matters Arising

Submission on Clean Water consultation document

The Committee were advised that a summary of the Council's submission on the *Clean Water consultation document* was sent by the Council Chairman to Taranaki Members of Parliament. No responses have been received to date.

2. Implementation of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity

- 2.1 Mr C L Spurdle, Planning Manager, spoke to the memorandum introducing the final gazetted *National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity* and outlined the Taranaki Regional Council's requirements relating to its implementation.

Recommendations

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives the memorandum on the *Implementation of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity*
2. notes that New Plymouth is likely to be identified as a high growth urban area
3. notes that the Taranaki Regional Council will be working with New Plymouth District Council to set minimum targets relating to New Plymouth's urban development capacity to be included in the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* and in the development of appropriate monitoring and reporting systems.

McIntyre/MacLeod

3. Report by Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor: *New Zealand's fresh waters: values, state, trends and human impacts*

- 3.1 Mrs V McKay, Science Manager, spoke to the memorandum advising the Committee of the release of a report (the Report) on *New Zealand's Fresh waters: values, state, trends and human impacts*, prepared by Sir Peter Gluckman, the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor. A presentation was made to the Committee on the Report's key points and observations and learnings from Mrs McKay's attendance at the recent Local Government Zealand Freshwater Symposium 2017.
- 3.2 The close alignment between Sir Peter's views on resource management and those of the Council were discussed and strongly acknowledged.

Recommended

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives the memorandum noting the release of a paper by the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor on the issues surrounding fresh water in New Zealand
2. receives the report *New Zealand's fresh waters : values, state, trends and human impacts*
3. notes the strong alignment between much of what the Council is undertaking or promoting for environmental management of fresh water, and the stance taken by Sir Peter within the report to address environmental issues.

Joyce/MacLeod

4. SEM Freshwater Physico-chemical monitoring programme 2015-2016 report

- 4.1 The memorandum presenting an update to the Committee on the latest results of the Council's state of the environment monitoring (SEM) programme for freshwater quality (physicochemical measures) was noted and discussed. A presentation was provided to the Committee on the Council's monitoring of the SEM freshwater physicochemical sites in the 2015-2016 year, including an analysis of trends in the data since 1995.

Recommended

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives this memorandum noting the preparation of a report into the state of and trends in regional physicochemical water quality data for Taranaki, for 2015-2016 and over the periods 1995-2016 and 2009-2016, respectively, together with information on trends for the period and compliance with the NOF and regional guidelines
2. receives the report *Freshwater Physicochemical Programme State of the Environment Monitoring Annual Report 2015-2016 Technical Report 2016-27*
3. notes the findings of the trend analyses of data from the SEM physicochemical programme
4. notes the findings of the analysis of water quality state data from the SEM physicochemical programme
5. adopts the specific recommendations therein.

Littlewood/McIntyre

5. Our Fresh Water 2017 - national environmental report from Ministry of the Environment/StatsNZ

- 5.1 Mr R Phipps, Science Manager, spoke to the memorandum presenting to the Committee the main findings and observations of the report *Our fresh water 2017: Data to 2016* recently released by the Ministry for the Environment and Stats NZ together with commentary by Council officers and selected commentary from experts/authorities on water quality and management in New Zealand.

Recommended

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives the memorandum *Our Fresh Water 2017- national environmental report from Ministry for the Environment/StatsNZ*
2. notes the release by the Ministry for the Environment/StatsNZ of the report referenced in the memorandum.

Raine/Williamson

6. Submission on managing third party risk exposure from onshore petroleum wells

- 6.1 Mr A D McLay, Director-Resource Management, spoke to the memorandum introducing a submission made to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment on their discussion document *Managing third party risk exposure from onshore petroleum wells*. The submission was sent by the due date of 28 April 2017.

Recommended

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives the memorandum *Submission on managing third party risk exposure from onshore petroleum wells*
2. adopts the submission.

Boyde/Williamson

7. Coastal and Marine Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011: Taranaki applications

- 7.1 Mr C G Severinsen, Policy and Strategy Manager, spoke to the memorandum summarising the provisions of the *Coastal and Marine Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011* that recognises Maori customary rights in the marine and coastal area, identifying the applications for Maori customary rights that have been made in Taranaki, and, advises the Council, after legal advice, has joined proceedings to keep a watching brief in relation to the applications.

Recommended

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives the memorandum *Coastal and Marine Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011: Taranaki applications*
2. notes the Council has joined the High Court proceedings
3. notes that further information will be provided to Members on the applications as it comes to hand.

Littlewood/McIntyre

8. Extension to the dung beetle introduction programme to Taranaki dairy farms

- 8.1 Mr A D McLay, Director-Resource Management, spoke to the memorandum providing information on an extension to a dung beetle release programme for Taranaki.

Recommended

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives the memorandum on the *Extension of the dung beetle programme to Taranaki dairy farms*
2. notes it is considered too early to consider an investment in an extension programme until there is evidence of beetle establishment and growth from past releases
3. notes if there is further Council investment it will be minimal with farmers contributing most of the cost.

Nixon/Raine

There being no further business, the Committee Chairperson Councillor N W Walker, declared the Policy and Planning Committee meeting closed at 12.10am.

Confirmed

Chairperson _____

N W Walker

Date

25 July 2017

Agenda Memorandum

Date 25 July 2017



**Memorandum to
Chairperson and Members
Policy and Planning Committee**

**Subject: Update on the Pest Management Review
for Taranaki**

Approved by: S R Hall, Director - Operations
B G Chamberlain, Chief Executive

Document: 1895371

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to update Members on submissions made by the public on the *Proposed Regional Pest Management Plan for Taranaki* ('the RPMP') and the *Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy 2017-2037* ('the Biosecurity Strategy') and to recommend that the Council conduct a hearing of submissions on both documents.

Executive summary

- The Taranaki Regional Council has commenced a review of its pest management for Taranaki. Pursuant to the *Biosecurity Act 1993* (the BSA) any pest management plans must be reviewed once every 10 years.
- There are currently two regional pest management plans for Taranaki. These plans, which were made operative in 2007, are the rulebooks for pest animal and plant management in the region.
- On 20 May 2017, the Council publicly notified a combined statutory RPMP for animal and plant pests. Not all harmful organisms necessarily need to be subject to regulation (and included in a RPMP) for effective control to take place so as part of the review the Council has prepared and sought submissions on a draft Biosecurity Strategy. The Biosecurity Strategy addresses all harmful organisms (not just the ones for which rules are required), and sets out programmes and activities for achieving their control, including site-led programmes, advice and information, or biological control.
- The closing date for submissions on the RPMP and Biosecurity Strategy was 30 June 2017.
- Council received 10 submissions. Four of the 10 submissions received were from persons or organisations in the region and the remaining six came from outside the region.
- In general, the submissions received have been positive. Most indicate support for the RPMP and Strategy, as well as the overall vision, and management approach used to achieve objectives in both documents. The main issues raised by submitters related to:
 - the species identified as pests and their inclusion in the RPMP (or otherwise);

- support/opposition for good neighbour rules; and
- new or additional programmes, methods, or rules, or changes to certain rules, and/or wording in the RPMP and Strategy.
- Officers have commenced reviewing and analysing the submissions. As part of that process, officers will be seeking to organise pre-hearing meetings with key submitters to clarify and discuss potential issues and policy responses. The pre-hearing process has proved to be very successful in resolving issues or narrowing down the issues that submitters wish to present to the Council at the Hearing of submissions.
- To assist Council in its deliberations on the making of the Plan, officers recommend that the Policy and Planning Committee be convened as a Hearing Committee to hear submissions and make its recommendations on submissions to the Council.
- It is recommended that the Hearing of submissions will take place at the Policy and Planning Committee meeting on 17 October 2017.
- The Hearing Committee will report to the Council. Once the Council has made its decisions and served these on submitters, submitters have 15 working days to appeal to the Environment Court against the Council’s decisions on the RPMP.

Recommendations

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives this memorandum on the *Update on the Pest Management Review for Taranaki*
2. notes that 10 submissions have been received on the *Proposed Regional Pest Management Plan for Taranaki* and the *Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy 2017-2037*
3. notes that six of the 10 submitters have stated that they wish to present their submission at a Council hearing
4. agrees that the Policy and Planning Committee be convened as a Hearing Committee to hear submissions and make its recommendations on submissions to the Council on 17 October 2017.

Background

Under the *Biosecurity Act 1993* (the ‘BSA’), the principal means for imposing rules and obtaining funding for regional pest management is through the preparation and implementation of pest management plans. Pest management plans set out the regulatory framework by which agencies such as regional councils impose costs and obligations on people for the control of pest animals and pest plants.

The BSA requires pest management plans to be reviewed once every 10 years. The RPMP is the fourth plan prepared by the Taranaki Regional Council (the Council). Once operative, the adopted Plan will enable the Council to exercise the relevant enforcement, and funding provisions, available under the Act. It will replace the current regional pest management plans for pest animals and plants, which became operative in 2007.

The proposed RPMP builds on the success of current pest management work. It identifies and sets out management programmes in relation to 18 ‘pest’ animal and plant species that the Council believes warrant regional intervention (and therefore the imposition of obligations and costs on individuals and the regional community). The RPMP includes rules for requiring people to control the nominated animal and plant pests.

Not all harmful organisms necessarily need to be subject to regulation (and included in a RPMP) for effective control to take place. Alongside the RPMP the Council has prepared the draft *Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy* ('the Biosecurity Strategy') that addresses all harmful organisms (not just the ones for which rules are required), and sets out programmes and activities for achieving their control, including site-led programmes, advice and information, or biological control.

Pursuant to the 2012 amendments to the BSA, Council was not legally required to publicly notify the RPMP (section 72 BSA). However, given the wide public interest in such matters, Council agreed to the public notification of the proposal (and the draft Biosecurity Strategy) to test its proposals against community expectations and address any feedback received. This process involves the receipt of public submissions (see below) and a hearing of submissions prior to Council making its final determinations.

Submissions on the Proposed RPMP and Draft Biosecurity Strategy

Members will recall that the Proposed RPMP and Biosecurity Strategy were publicly notified for submissions on 20 May 2017. As a non-statutory document, the Council was not required to consult on the Biosecurity Strategy. However, Members agreed that it would be useful for the public to be given an opportunity to have input into the development of a Strategy that covers the full range of biosecurity work undertaken by the Council.

Ten submissions were received on the RPMP and Biosecurity Strategy by the closing date for submissions on 30 June 2017. Of the 10 submissions received, four were from persons or organisations in the region with six submissions being received from persons or organisations outside the region.

The four submissions received from within the region came from Federated Farmers, North Taranaki Forest and Bird, Fish and Game New Zealand, and one individual. The six submissions received from outside the region came from Waikato Regional Council, Taranaki Mounnga Project Limited, Predator Free New Zealand Trust, the Morgan Foundation, the Department of Conservation (DOC), and KiwiRail Holdings Limited.

Officers have undertaken a preliminary review of the submissions. In general, the submissions received have been positive. Most of the submissions indicate support for the RPMP and Strategy, as well as the overall vision and management approach used to achieve objectives in both documents. In terms of changes sought or issues raised by submitters, the following broad themes are identified:

- new or additional species recommended for inclusion, or reinstatement, in the RPMP. These included Sycamore tree, goats, feral cats, brown bull-headed catfish, Darwin's barberry, climbing asparagus, plague skink, wallaby, gambusia, and moth plant;
- broad support for proposed good neighbour rules from three submitters (Federated Farmers, KiwiRail and Environment Waikato);
- opposition to good neighbour rules for gorse, broom and yellow ragwort (DOC);
- new or additional programmes, methods, or rules, or changes to certain rules, and/or wording in the RPMP and/or Biosecurity Strategy. Federated Farmers highlighted issues with the management of Yellow bristle grass and the need for effective actions, either through the RPMP, or the Biosecurity Strategy. DOC sought new or additional programmes or rules, or changes to certain rules and /or wording in the RPMP and

Biosecurity Strategy relating to broom, old man's beard, giant buttercup, and giant gunnera. Three other submitters sought rules for feral cats and/or goats;

- opposition to the inclusion or proposed management regime for Pampas (Federated Farmers, DOC and Waikato Regional Council);
- mechanisms for promoting integrated pest management. KiwiRail sought minor RPMP changes to support the development of memorandum of understanding/management plans along the rail corridor. Waikato Regional Council highlighted and supported the inter-regional cooperation that occurs for the management of possums near the boundary between Taranaki and Waikato's areas of operation;
- support for strong enforcement; and
- support for the vision and programmes in the Biosecurity Strategy.

Next steps

Officers will continue to work on reviewing and analysing the submissions. To inform that process officers will prepare a report(s) identifying and summarising the issues raised in individual submissions. The Officer's Report will, in relation to each issue raised by the submitters, comment on the Council's recommended response, including reasons and recommendations on how the Council might address each issue raised in the submissions. Amended versions of the Proposed RPMP and Biosecurity Strategy, incorporating the proposed changes, will also be prepared.

To assist Council in its deliberations on the making of the RPMP, officers recommend that a Policy and Planning Committee be convened as a Hearing Committee. The Hearing Committee will hear verbal submissions, consider all written and verbal submissions, and make recommendations to the Council in relation to adopting, amending, or declining the proposed RPMP (and the Biosecurity Strategy).

Prior to that hearing, officers will be seeking to organise pre-hearing meetings with key submitters to clarify and discuss potential issues and policy responses. The pre-hearing process is standard planning practice for this Council and has proved to be very successful in resolving issues or narrowing down the issues that submitters wish to present to the Council at the Hearing of submissions.

The amended versions of the RPMP, section 71 costs and benefits assessment, and the Officer's reports will be distributed to all submitters and Committee members prior to a Hearing of submissions.

Officers suggest that a Hearing Committee be constituted immediately following the Policy and Planning Committee meeting on 17 October 2017.

The Hearing Committee's recommendations will be presented to and considered by the Council. Pursuant to sections 73 and 74 of the BSA the Council may then take the step of approving the preparation and making of the RPMP. The Council must then prepare a written report on the RPMP and its decisions (section 75 BSA). The Council's decisions are then publicly notified and a copy of the report sent to every submitter.

Once the Council has made its decisions and served this on submitters, submitters have 15 working days to appeal to the Environment Court against the Council's decisions on the RPMP. Appeals can be on any aspect of the Plan.

Decision-making considerations

Part 6 (planning, decision-making, and accountability) of the *Local Government Act 2002* has been considered and documented in the preparation of this agenda item. The recommendations made in this item comply with the decision-making obligations of the *Act*.

Financial considerations—LTP/Annual plan

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the Council's adopted Long-Term Plan and estimates. Any financial information included in this memorandum has been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

Policy considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the policy documents and positions adopted by this Council under various legislative frameworks including, but not restricted to, the *Local Government Act 2002*, the *Resource Management Act 1991* and the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987*.

Legal considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations comply with the appropriate statutory requirements imposed upon the Council.

Agenda Memorandum

Date 25 July 2017



**Memorandum to
Chairperson and Members
Policy and Planning Committee**

**Subject: Report back on the interim review of the
Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki**

Approved by: A D McLay, Director – Resource Management
B G Chamberlain, Chief Executive

Document: 1847114

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to present for Members feedback obtained on the report entitled *Final report on the interim review of the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010 – Evaluation of appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness* (the Report), thus completing the process of the interim review of the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* (the RPS).

The aforementioned report has been amended to incorporate stakeholder feedback and a revised copy of the Report is attached separate to the agenda for Members' consideration.

Executive summary

- The current *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010* (the RPS) became operative on 1 January 2010.
- Pursuant to sections 35(2)(b) and (2A) of the *Resource Management Act 1991* (the RMA), the Council must undertake a non statutory interim review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the RPS every five years.
- The interim review process has involved a desktop review of possible change factors, a series of workshops and meetings with Council staff and stakeholders, and targeted consultation. A draft report and its preliminary findings was circulated to stakeholders, for comment and further input into the review. The deadline for feedback on the draft report was 7 April 2017.
- Feedback on the review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS was received from Fish and Game, Te Kaahui o Rauru, Federated Farmers, TrustPower, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine, oil companies, Climate Justice Taranaki Inc, and Enviroschools.
- Stakeholder feedback was largely supportive of the preliminary findings from the Report but respondents took the opportunity to highlight specific areas of interest to them and/or areas where they sought changes or improvements.
- Key conclusions reached in the Report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS are:
 - There are a number of legislative and policy change factors that have emerged since the RPS became operative. However, these do not, so far, require immediate changes

- to the RPS.
- State of the environment monitoring confirms that the RPS is largely on track to meet its objectives (environmental outcomes).
 - Methods for implementing RPS objectives and policies are being implemented.
 - The RPS is efficient and effective and delivering benefits that are considered to be substantially greater than its costs.
 - Notwithstanding the above, as part of the full review scheduled to occur in 2020, there are a number of opportunities to improve and build on the current RPS. Of particular note is the recommendation to investigate developing a combined RPS and regional plans for air, the coast, freshwater and soil, the use of digital and spatial technology to improve the accessibility of our planning documents and their user friendliness, and options to better incorporate Maori values and principles.

Recommendations

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives this memorandum and attached report *Final report on interim review of the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010 – Evaluation of appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness*
2. notes the views and responses of key stakeholders on the preliminary report
3. notes that the RPS continues to be relevant, efficient and effective
4. agrees that no immediate changes to the RPS are required.

Background

Under the *Resource Management Act 1991* (RMA) the Council must, at all times have an RPS.

The RPS is one of the most important planning tools for Taranaki. The RPS does not contain rules but sets out 33 objectives, 92 policies and 332 methods of implementation on how natural and physical resources (land, water, air, soil, minerals, and energy) in the Taranaki region should be managed. The RPS's stated purpose is to:

"... promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the Taranaki region by:

- *providing an overview of the resource management issues of the Taranaki region*
- *identifying policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the whole region."*

The current RPS became operative on 1 January 2010. It was the second RPS to be prepared by the Council. Like the first RPS, no Environment Court hearing process was required with any issues being resolved through an engagement process.

Pursuant to the RMA, a full statutory review of the RPS in accordance with Schedule 1 of the RMA must be commenced within 10 years of it becoming operative, i.e. 2020. However, a **non statutory** interim review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS is also required pursuant to section 35(2) of the RMA.

Effectiveness and efficiency review – purpose, methodology and criteria

Section 35(2) of the RMA requires the Council to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and other methods and to report on the results of its monitoring every five years.

This is a non statutory review that examines the effectiveness and efficiency of regional policy statements and regional plans. It is a monitoring mechanism for ensuring that policy is 'on track', that implementation is occurring, and that outcomes sought are being achieved. In the event that policy is not on track, a council can then determine whether immediate changes need to be made to the planning document.

For the purposes of this review, the Council undertook:

- A desktop review of legislative and government policy changes, state of the environment information, and other relevant information;
- A series of workshops and meetings with Council staff, iwi and stakeholders, including major consent holders, the three district councils, non-governmental organisations and community groups, Department of Conservation, Heritage New Zealand and the Taranaki District Health Board, were held in July and August 2016;
- The preparation of a draft report to set out the Council's preliminary findings and to seek further feedback from stakeholders; and
- The analysis of further feedback from stakeholders and the preparation of the final Report (see attached).

Assessment on the effectiveness of the policies towards achieving the RPS objectives was largely based upon the Council's *Taranaki as One; Taranaki Tangata Tu Tahī State of the Environment Report 2015*. For some RPS issues, particularly those associated with process or management issues (e.g. use and development of resources), the interim review necessarily relied on alternative sources and qualitative assessments, including the views of internal and external stakeholders.

The scope and methodology to document the interim review on the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS is similar to previously exercises undertaken by the Council in relation to its other RMA planning documents, i.e. the *Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki*, the *Regional Air Plan for Taranaki* (both of which were completed in 2002), the *Regional Freshwater Plan for Taranaki* (completed in 2007) and the *Regional Soil Plan for Taranaki* (completed in 2008).

Stakeholder feedback

As previously noted, a key part of its review process into the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS is seeking stakeholder feedback on Council's preliminary findings and recommendations. Accordingly, following its Policy and Planning Committee meeting of 28 January 2017, the Council released its draft report on the interim review of the RPS for targeted consultation.

The draft review report was distributed widely to potentially interested stakeholders, including Government departments, iwi authorities, major industry groups, non government organisations, community groups, the three territorial authorities, and all those who participated in the stakeholder workshops. The distribution of the Council's preliminary findings is considered a useful step to test assumptions and canvas the experiences of stakeholders with regards to their views on:

- Whether the RPS is achieving its purpose and the issues remain relevant?
- Whether the RPS has been effective in terms of achieving stated outcomes and implementing its methods?

- Whether RPS provisions are useful and readable?
- Whether the RPS has been efficient in terms of its benefits being greater than its costs?
- Whether any changes are urgently required (having regard to the criteria set out in Section 2.2 of the Report) to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS and/or to ensure its ongoing relevance in terms of new national and regional initiatives and policies?

The deadline for feedback on the draft report was 7 April 2017. Eight stakeholders provided written feedback to the Council's interim review.

Stakeholder feedback was largely supportive of the Council's preliminary findings. However, respondents took the opportunity to highlight specific areas of interest to them and/or areas where they sought changes or improvements. A summary of their key points is as follows:

- **Fish and Game:** Fish and Game noted the thorough process, which included input from stakeholders, undertaken in developing the RPS (2010). It was their view that the RPS continues to be relevant. However, Fish and Game supported investigating developing a combined RPS and regional plans as part of the full review in 2020. In terms of the effectiveness of the RPS, Fish and Game highlighted their concerns around the loss of wetlands, the cumulative effects of the piping and modification of small streams, the need to set allocable volumes and define full allocation, declining water quality down the length of ring plain streams, and the need to improve fish passage. Fish and Game also highlighted the difficulties to effectively assess whether additional public access to rivers and lakes has been created since the RPS became operative (although they did acknowledge that this issue is largely under the jurisdiction of the district councils).
- **Trustpower:** Trustpower noted that the RPS is generally effective and appropriate in terms of its provisions for energy and infrastructure. They noted that at this stage the evaluation report does not raise any significant concerns for Trustpower and that they look forward to working with the Council when the full review occurs in 2020.
- **Federated Farmers:** Federated Farmers noted that the RPS is achieving its purpose and that they consider it efficient and effective. They believe there are no issues that require urgent changes to the RPS.
- **Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust (TKONT):** TKONT supported proposals to develop a combined RPS and regional plans plus e-planning. However, they were unclear as to how alignment would be achieved given different planning processes have been commenced. TKONT highlighted their concerns relating to indigenous biodiversity, the need to set instream limits (including soil nutrient levels), natural hazards and climate change, and waste management. TKONT noted that they looked forward to further developing and enhancing efforts better involving iwi in resource management issues. TKONT also noted that they wish to engage in conversation with the Council regarding how tangata whenua values and principles could be represented and woven throughout a revised RPS.
- **Te Kaahui o Rauru:** Ngāa Rauru highlighted the need for building capacity and process engagement within both iwi and Council. It included the use of memorandums of understanding that acknowledge the level of unpaid commitments delivered by iwi and hapu and addresses the resourcing of iwi and hapu to more effectively participate in resource consent processes. Ngāa Rauru also highlighted concerns regarding dependence on mineral and energy industries and their contribution to climate change, loss of biodiversity and wetlands, and natural hazards. Support was given to report recommendations that a revised RPS providing more directive content and E-planning.

- **Oil companies:** Z Energy Ltd, BP Oil New Zealand Ltd, and Mobil Oil NZ Ltd provided combined feedback. The oil companies were generally supportive of the current RPS but highlighted areas of particular importance to them. These related to the importance of bulk fuel storage facilities as regionally significant infrastructure, expanding RPS methods to address reverse sensitivity effects on regionally significant infrastructure, for a revised RPS to being more directive to district councils, to facilitating and recognising oil companies as 'lifeline utilities' in an emergency event, to supporting RPS methods relating to industry guidelines and monitoring programmes, to addressing passive discharges associated with contaminated sites. Oil companies also sought that a revised RPS better provide for short term construction activities having minimal environmental effects.
- **Climate Justice Taranaki (CJT):** CJW welcomed the interim review noting their primary concerns were climate justice and associated social justice issues. CJW highlight the need for a revised RPS to be updated to incorporate the findings and implications of recent major research reports on climate change, sea level rise, state of the environment, freshwater, and oil and gas operations in New Zealand. CJW highlight a number of sections where changes are considered appropriate to the narrative and policy framework. Support was given to some parts of the RPS being made more directive while, in other areas, a more flexible approach maybe more appropriate. content and E-planning.
- **Taranaki EnviroSchools:** EnviroSchools highlighted areas where its programme supports and complements RPS goals and activities. It was recommend that Council financially support the EnviroSchools programme in the region.

The views of these parties and responses to them have subsequently been included into the final Report and are presented in full in Appendix IV of the Report.

Final report

In brief, the Report concludes that the RPS is standing the test of time well and is assisting the Council in carrying out its resource management responsibilities. That is, the RPS has been both effective and efficient and no issues have been identified that would warrant an urgent review. Key findings from the Report are:

- The identification of legislative and policy change factors that have emerged since the RPS became operative. These change factors include legislative changes, the promulgation of national policy statements and national environmental standards. However, these do not, so far, necessitate immediate changes involving a full review of the RPS.
- The RPS is largely on track to meet its objectives.
- In relation to the maintenance of the quality of our air, water, coastal and health of our soil resources, state of the environment monitoring indicates that Taranaki is tracking well in terms of environmental trends.
- In terms of water quality, data suggests that the water quality is improving, or at the least being maintained (no significant change).
- There continues to be a small but on-going loss in the areal extent of both wetlands and indigenous forest and shrub land in Taranaki.
- Achieving the RPS's objectives is based on a broad combination of regulatory and non regulatory methods. Methods for implementing RPS objectives and policies are being implemented.

- Administrative costs associated with the RPS are low with minimal costs on resource users. The costs of implementing methods are annually reviewed and tested via the annual plan process and though not insignificant, nevertheless the costs are not large in comparison to the environmental outcomes being achieved.

In conclusion, the Report does not identify any change factors or issues with the implementation of the RPS that necessitates making immediate changes involving a full review of the RPS. The report notes the promulgation of the new *National Policy Statement for Urban Development Capacity 2016*, which is likely to require the inclusion of new policies setting minimum urban development capacity targets. However, that requirement can be given effect to in accordance with section 55(2A) of the RMA without using the process in Schedule 1 of the Act.

Notwithstanding no immediate changes involving a full review of the RPS are required, the Report highlights a suite of actions or areas where there are opportunities for improving and building on the current RPS and which should be taken into account as part of the full review scheduled to occur in 2020. These are presented on pages 45 and 46 of the Report and include recommendations to investigate developing a combined RPS and regional plans, the use of digital and spatial technology to improve the accessibility of our planning documents and their user friendliness, and options to better incorporate Maori values and principles.

Stakeholders were generally supportive of developing a combined RPS and regional plans to promote alignment, reduce unnecessary duplication, and enhancing integrated management outcomes across our regional planning instruments. Of note the Council is likely to commence a full review of its Coastal Plan in 2017/2018 and full reviews of the RPS and other plans are scheduled to occur in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 financial years. Work on the plans will proceed, in terms of structure and content, with a view towards the plans being able to be inserted into a combined plan.

Section 35(2A) of the RMA requires that the Council undertake and make available to the public a review of the results of its monitoring into the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and methods in the RPS. The attached Report gives effect to that requirement.

Decision-making considerations

Part 6 (Planning, decision-making and accountability) of the *Local Government Act 2002* has been considered and documented in the preparation of this agenda item. The recommendations made in this item comply with the decision-making obligations of the Act.

Financial considerations—LTP/Annual Plan

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the Council's adopted Long-Term Plan and estimates. Any financial information included in this memorandum has been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

Policy considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the policy documents and positions adopted by this Council under various legislative frameworks including, but not restricted to, the *Local Government Act 2002*, the *Resource Management Act 1991* and the *Biosecurity Act 1993*.

Legal considerations

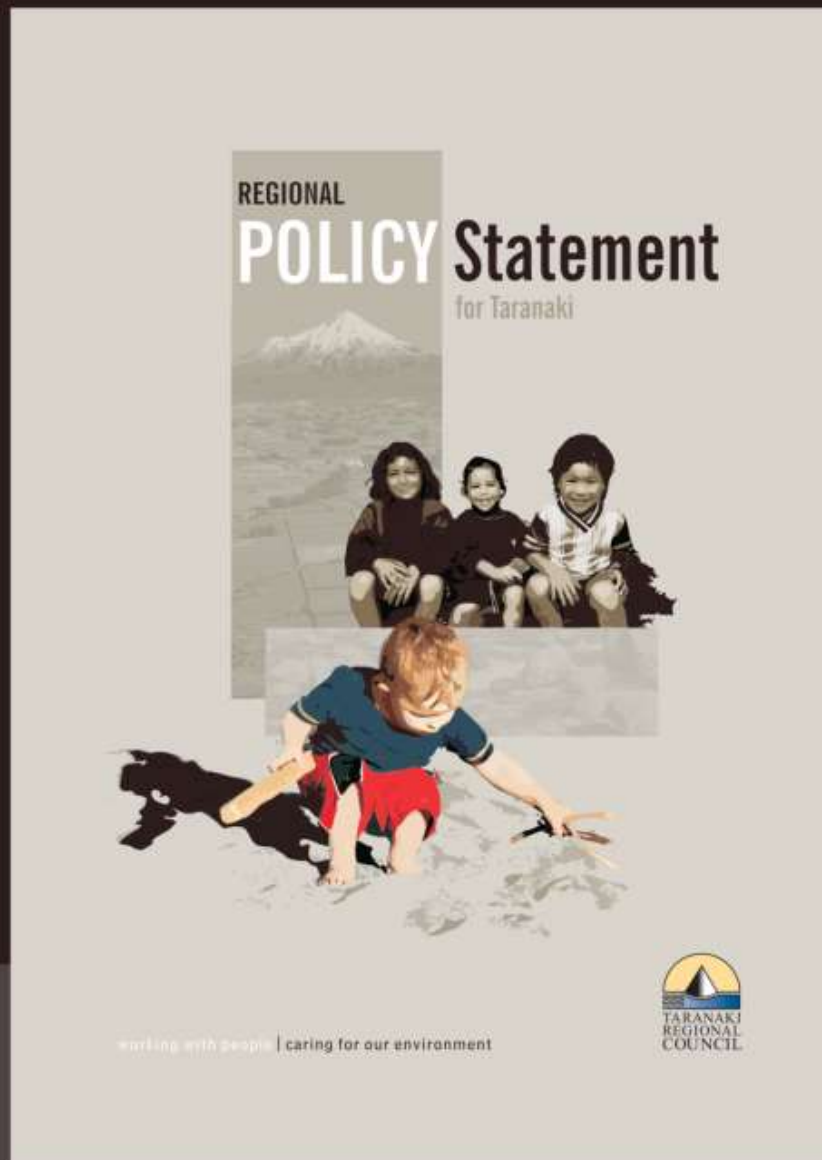
This memorandum and the associated recommendations comply with the appropriate statutory requirements imposed upon the Council.

Attachments – separate report

Document number 1847085: *Final report on the interim review of the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010 - Evaluation of appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness.*

Interim review of the
Regional Policy Statement
for Taranaki 2010

Evaluation of appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness



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Final report on
Interim review of the Regional
Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010
Evaluation of appropriateness, efficiency
and effectiveness

Taranaki Regional Council

Private Bag 713

Stratford

June 2017

Document number: 1847085

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Executive summary

Under section 35 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) the Taranaki Regional Council (the Council) is required to undertake and make available to the public a review of the results of its monitoring into the efficiency and effectiveness of the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010* (RPS).

The RPS was adopted in 2010. It is now timely to carry out an interim review of the RPS. The purpose of the interim review is to set out the findings of an internal evaluation and targeted consultation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS. Have the outcomes sought been achieved? Did the Council implement what it said it would implement in the RPS? Finally, do the benefits of having the RPS outweigh the costs?

From its evaluation to date, which involved an internal review and targeted stakeholder consultation, six years on, the RPS is standing the test of time well and is assisting the Council in carrying out its resource management responsibilities. Key preliminary findings are:

- State of the environment monitoring confirms that the RPS is largely on track to meet its objectives (environmental outcomes).
- In relation to the maintenance of the quality of our air, water, coastal and health of our soil resources, state of the environment monitoring indicates that Taranaki is tracking well in terms of data trends.
- In terms of water quality, data shows that the water quality is improving, or at the least maintaining (no significant change).
- Only one of the indicators relating to maintenance and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity showed data trends of concern. A small but ongoing loss in the areal extent of native forests, shrub-lands and wetlands is still occurring. Offsetting this trend however is the amount of work going into improving the condition of remnant sites.
- The assessment shows that the methods for implementing RPS objectives and policies are being implemented.
- The RPS contains no rules but maintains a suite of regional plans that regulate the use and development and protection of air, land, freshwater and coastal resources. Other non regulatory programmes, particularly the riparian and sustainable hill country programmes cover large parts of the region and protect freshwater quality and at risk soils.
- The RPS is efficient and effective. An internal analysis of the RPS shows that it has been efficient with it delivering benefits that are considered to be substantially greater than its costs.

The review has not so far identified cause for making immediate changes to the RPS. Notwithstanding the above, the report also identifies a number of 'change' factors (e.g. changes to legislation and government policy, and development of best practice), which have emerged since the adoption of the RPS that should be taken into account as part of the full review scheduled to occur in 2020. The report also identifies a number of areas to improve and build on the current RPS as part of the next review. It is recommended that Council investigate:

1. Developing a combined RPS and regional plans for air, the coast, freshwater and soil (of note the Council is likely to commence a full review of its Coastal Plan in 2017/2018 and full reviews of the RPS and other plans are scheduled to occur in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 financial years).
2. Reframing RPS policies and methods, including those that apply to district councils, to be more directive.
3. Reframing RPS issues and objectives to focus on integrated management across the wider environment by having a smaller number of high level issues with other more specific issues/policies being left to regional plans.
4. Updating RPS provisions to ensure alignment with national policy directives (e.g. NZCPS, NPSFM, NPS-UD) and emerging Council policy, including a revised Coastal Plan.
5. Reviewing biodiversity provisions in the RPS in terms of their adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency to avoid small but ongoing biodiversity loss.
6. Working with iwi to better incorporate Maori values and principles and reframe the issues of significance to iwi so they reflect the Treaty settlements and apply across all the Council's plans.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to undertake and document an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010* (RPS) as part of the Taranaki Regional Council's (the Council) non-statutory interim review of that document.

Accordingly, this report:

- assesses the appropriateness and ongoing relevance of the RPS (i.e. are the significant resource management issues still relevant in 2016 and are there any drivers for change?);
- assesses whether the RPS is achieving its purpose of providing for the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the region;
- assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of RPS policies and method; and
- on the basis of the above, identifies whether changes to the RPS are required as a matter of urgency, including any recommendations for change.

integrated management of our resources (land, water, air, soil, minerals, and energy). This means considering the environment as a whole and recognising change and the effects of human activities, in one area or on one resource, can affect other resources.

Its stated purpose is to "... promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the Taranaki region by:

- Providing an overview of the resource management issues of the Taranaki region
- Identifying policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the whole region."

This report gives effect to the requirements of Section 35(2) of the RMA. This report examines the ongoing relevance of RPS issues and the effectiveness and efficiency of its objectives, policies and methods. It is an important step in ensuring the RPS is delivering efficient and effective policy direction for the Taranaki region.

1.2 Background

The RPS became operative on 1 January 2010. It is the second RPS to be prepared by the Council. Like the first RPS, no Environment Court hearing process was required with any issues being resolved through the engagement process.

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) the Council must, at all times have an RPS, and a full review of the RPS must be commenced within 10 years of it becoming operative. The current RPS is due for full review on 2020.

Section 35(2) of the RMA further requires the Council to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and other methods. **Appendix I** contains the full text of section 35(2).

The RPS is one of the most important planning tools for Taranaki. It sets out how our natural and physical resources should be managed into the future – from the mountain to the sea.

The RPS impacts on how people, businesses and industry use, develop and protect Taranaki's resources and it directs district and regional plans.

Although the RPS does not contain rules, it directs the



Figure 1: Taranaki region and three district councils

1.3 Structure

This report has eight sections.

Section One introduces the report, including its purpose, background, and structure.

Section Two outlines the planning context for undertaking an interim review, including statutory requirements, the criteria for evaluation, and the assessment methodology and approach undertaken to inform the review.

Sections Three and Four examine the ongoing relevance of the RPS.

Section Three presents examines potential 'change' factors or matters, which have emerged since the adoption of the RPS.

Section Four presents stakeholder feedback and views on RPS issues, including whether any changes are appropriate or necessary.

Section Five examines the effectiveness of the RPS in terms of whether the environmental outcomes sought (i.e. objectives) are being achieved.

Section Six examines the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS in terms of whether the Council implemented programmes, actions and activities identified in the RPS (i.e. methods of implementation).

Section Seven assesses the efficiency of the RPS in relation to its cost (in terms of administrative, compliance and broader economic costs) and benefits.

Section Eight presents the report's conclusions on the on-going relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS six years on, including recommended changes going forward.

Appendices are presented at the back of the report. The appendices set out section 35 of the RMA and the legislative requirement to undertake an interim review, the list of stakeholders consulted to date, the structured questions used during the stakeholder meetings, and copies or written responses from stakeholders on the interim review.

2. Interim review of the RPS

2.1 Section 35 of the RMA

Sections 35(2)(b) and (2A) of the RMA (refer **Appendix I**) requires that the Council undertake and make available to the public a review of the results of its monitoring into the efficiency and effectiveness of RPS policies and methods.¹

This report, amongst other things, gives effect to that requirement and summaries the findings of an internal review and targeted consultation on the efficiency and effectiveness of the RPS.

Through this review process, the Council is seeking to ensure that the RPS remains relevant, lawful and appropriate and that it is achieving its purpose in an efficient and effective way. Depending on the conclusions drawn from the review, the Council will then need to determine whether changes to the RPS are required now or can wait until the 10-year review of the RPS.

2.2 Assessment criteria

In deliberating as to the necessity to make immediate changes to the RPS, Council has had regard to the following criteria:

- The *ongoing relevance* of the RPS in terms of section 32 matters. Part of this assessment will need to include consideration of the:
 - timeliness of any change, particularly in view of any proposed changes in legislation and new or emerging issues (refer sections 3 and 4 below); and
 - costs to the Council or resource users.
- The *effectiveness* of RPS policies in achieving its objectives (refer section 5 below).
- The *effectiveness* of the RPS in terms of its delivery of the methods of implementation (refer section 6 below).
- The *efficiency* of the RPS in terms of its benefits and costs (refer section 7 below).

2.3 Assessment methodology

The methodology for assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS is similar to those previously undertaken by the Council for its regional plans. The methodology is also based on best practice guidelines set out in the report *Evaluating Regional Policy Statements and Plans – A Guide for Regional Councils and Unitary Authorities*.²

This report seeks to answer three key questions:

1. Are the significant resource management issues still relevant in 2016 (are there any drivers for change and does the RPS continue to focus on the appropriate *regionally significant issues*)?
2. Is the RPS effective and efficient in achieving its purpose of providing for the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the Taranaki region (is it achieving its objectives, are the policies and methods being implemented)?
3. On the basis of the above, are changes to the RPS required as a matter of urgency (are there any priority areas where additional information and analysis may be required)?

To answer these questions the Council undertook:

1. A desktop review of legislative and government policy changes, state of the environment information, and other relevant information.
2. A series of interactive workshops and meetings with Council staff, major consent holders³ all three district councils and non-governmental organisations and community groups, Department of Conservation, Heritage New Zealand and the Taranaki District Health Board were held in August 2016.
3. Informal meetings and hui with iwi o Taranaki held in July and August 2016.
4. The preparation of this report to set out the Council's preliminary findings and to seek further feedback from stakeholders.

¹ *Reviewing the effectiveness of policy is an important component of resource management, completing the circle of policy development, delivery of that policy through methods, monitoring the outcomes of delivering that policy and taking appropriate actions to deliver on the policy.*

² *Enfocus Limited, July 2008.*

³ *A major consent holder was determined to be a person or company who has a current tailored annual compliance monitoring programme/s of \$10,000 or more.*

As noted above, a desktop review of the state of the environment information and Council databases was undertaken. Assessment of the effectiveness of the policies towards achieving the RPS objectives was largely based upon the Council's *Taranaki as One; Taranaki Tangata Tu Tahi State of the Environment Report 2015*⁴. This report summaries and is underpinned by comprehensive state of the environment monitoring undertaken by the Council.

For some RPS issues, particularly those associated with process or management issues (e.g. use and development), data was more limited. In such cases, the interim review necessarily relied on alternative sources (e.g. district council monitoring) and qualitative assessments, including the views of internal and external stakeholders.⁵

The Council undertook an internal workshop plus three separate stakeholder workshops (district councils, industry and major consent holders, and non-governmental organisations and community groups). These were held in July and August 2016. Separate individual meetings were also held with the Department of Conservation, Heritage New Zealand and the Taranaki District Health Board.

A structured questionnaire was used at interactive stakeholder workshops and meetings. **Appendix II** contains a list of all workshop and meeting participants. A copy of this questionnaire is attached in **Appendix III**. The draft notes from the workshops and meetings were fed back to all participants to ensure accuracy of information. Some participants also took the opportunity to provide written comment following the workshops.

In July and August 2016 a round of informal discussions was held with six out of the eight Iwi O Taranaki (Ngati Mutunga, Te Atiawa, Taranaki, Ngaruahine, Ngati Ruanui and Ngaa Rauru) were also undertaken. Ngati Tama and Ngati Maru were unavailable to meet at that time.

The discussion introduced the intention of the Council to engage on how to incorporate key principles and Maori values in the RPS and whether the current RPS provisions are still relevant in the post settlement environment.

On 24 January 2017, the Council undertook further targeted consultation with the circulation of a draft version of this report that presented and sought feedback on the

Council's preliminary findings on the interim review of the RPS.

The deadline for feedback on the draft report was 7 April 2017, Eight written responses were received (includes written feedback received following workshops) from:

- Fish and Game New Zealand
- Te Kaahui o Rauru
- Federated Farmers
- TrustPower
- Te Korowai o Ngāruahine
- Oil companies
- Climate Justice Taranaki Inc, and
- Enviroschools.

These are presented in **Appendix IV** of this report.

2.4 This report

This report summarises the Council's assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and ongoing relevance of the RPS following an internal evaluation and initial consultation.

The report includes consideration of the scope of the RPS, whether issues are addressed or not addressed, the certainty and clarity of its provisions, the practicability and affordability of the methods of implementation, the equity of the methods in addressing the issue, and the lawfulness of its provisions).

In the event of any deficiencies in the RPS the Council must consider whether the deficiencies are significant or minor. If the deficiencies in the RPS are significant, changes to the RPS may need to be made immediately as a matter of urgency, i.e. sooner than the end of the statutory life of the Plan. If the deficiencies in the RPS are relatively minor then suggested changes can wait until the Council undertakes a full review in 2020.

Conclusions to the interim review are presented in Section 8 of this report. Written feedback from stakeholders is presented in **Appendix IV** of this report.

⁴ Read the report by clicking on the following link:

<https://www.trc.govt.nz/council/plans-and-reports/environmental/state-of-the-environment-report-2015/>

⁵ This assessment has highlighted that the amount and quality of information for particular issues varies quite significantly. Comprehensive monitoring and information was more readily available on issues for which the Council is directly responsible for and/or is linked to a particular natural and physical domain, e.g. land, fresh water, air and the coast.

3. Changing context

A lot has changed since the current RPS was made operative in 2010. This section examines potential change factors in relation to the ongoing relevance of the RPS.

3.1 RMA amendments

Since the RPS was first proposed in 2006 and adopted in 2010, the RMA has been amended a number of times.

The Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Act 2009 represented the single biggest review of the RMA since 1991. The amendments focused predominately on improving the resource consent process and workability of national instruments. However, the amendments also clarified the ability of councils to produce combined planning documents that can meet the requirements of a regional policy statement, regional plan, or district plan (or any combination).

The Government made further changes through the Resource Management Amendment Act 2013 to:

- The resource consent regime.
- Create a streamlined process for Auckland's first unitary plan.
- Set a six-month time limit for processing consents for medium-sized projects.
- Create easier direct referral to the Environment Court for major regional projects.
- set up stronger requirements for councils to base their planning decisions on a robust and thorough evaluation of the benefits and costs.

More recently, the Government has introduced the Resource Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. This Bill contains a package of resource management reform proposals comprises over 40 individual proposals aimed at delivering substantive, system-wide improvements to the resource management system. Key proposals of relevance to the RPS include:

- The development of a national planning template that aim to improve the consistency of RMA plans and policy statements, reduce complexity, and improve the clarity and user-friendliness of plans.
- The inclusion of a new matter of national importance in section 6 of the RMA – the management of significant risks from natural hazards. This change also supports changes to section 106 regarding consideration of risks from all natural hazards in subdivision consents.

- Amending sections 30 and 31 of the RMA to make it a function of regional councils and territorial authorities to ensure sufficient residential and business development capacity to meet long-term demand. This is designed to enable better provision of residential and business development capacity, and therefore improved housing affordability outcomes.
- Removing the explicit function of regional councils and territorial authorities to manage hazardous substances. This is designed to remove duplication between the RMA and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996.
- Places a statutory obligation on councils to invite iwi to form an iwi participation arrangement that will establish the engagement expectations when consulting during the early stages of the Schedule 1 plan making processes. This proposal aims to improve consistency in iwi engagement in plan development.

The Resource Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced to Parliament on 26 November 2015. It had its First Reading on 3 December 2015 and was referred to Local Government and Environment Committee. Submissions closed on 14 March 2016 with the report from the Select Committee due on 10 May 2017.

The above amendments have not so far required Council to amend the current RPS. However, further significant changes to the RMA are anticipated over the next couple of years that will have implications when preparing a new RPS – scheduled to occur in 2020.

3.2 National policy statements and environmental standards

National policy statements (NPSs) and environmental standards (NESs) are issued by the government to provide direction to local government on matters of national significance.

NPSs and NESs that may be of relevance to the RPS are as follows:

3.2.1 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010

The *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010* (NZCPS) came into force on 3 December 2010 and replaced the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994*.

The NZCPS 2010 contains some new policy topics that were not specifically included in the NZCPS 1994, such as:

- Extent and characteristics of the coastal environment (Policy 1).
- Aquaculture (Policy 8).
- Ports (Policy 9).
- Harmful aquatic organisms (Policy 12).
- Surf breaks of national significance (Policy 16).
- Vehicle access (Policy 20).
- Sedimentation (Policy 22).

The NZCPS 2010 identifies seven objectives reflecting the Government's national priorities for the coastal environment. The NZCPS 2010 also contains 29 related policies. Most policies relate to one or more objectives and are not referenced to a particular objective.

The NZCPS 2010 has a number of provisions relating to Māori and their relationship with the coastal environment. This includes Policy 2 and Policy 17 in particular. The NZCPS 2010 provides national direction on how to incorporate Māori into the coastal planning and decision-making process.

While these policy topics are new in the NZCPS 2010 they are not new coastal planning topics. Many of these policies reflect and build on approaches developed through prior planning practice and are already addressed in the current RPS.

3.2.2 National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management

The *National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014* (NPS-FM) directs regional councils to set objectives for the state their communities want for their water bodies in the future and to set limits to meet these objectives.

The NPS-FM replaces the 2011 version. Some of the key requirements of the NPS-FM are to:

- Safeguard fresh water's life-supporting capacity, ecosystem processes, and indigenous species.
- Safeguard the health of people who come into contact with the water through recreation.
- Maintain or improve the overall quality of fresh water within a region.

- Protect the significant values of wetlands and outstanding freshwater bodies.
- Follow a specific process (referred to as the National Objectives Framework or NOF) for identifying the values that tangata whenua and communities have for water, and using a specified set of water quality measures (called attributes) to set objectives.
- Set limits on resource use (e.g. how much water can be taken or how much of a contaminant can be discharged) to meet limits over time and ensure they continue to be met.
- Determine the appropriate set of methods to meet the objectives and limits.
- Take an integrated approach to managing land use, fresh water, and coastal water.
- Involve iwi and hapū in decision-making and management of fresh water.

3.2.3 National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission

The *National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008* (NPS-ET) provides a high-level framework that provides national direction to local government on the management and future planning of the national grid.

It does the following:

- Acknowledges the national significance of the national grid, which has to be considered in local decision making on resource management.
- Gives guidance to local decision makers in the management of the impacts of the transmission network on its environment.
- Recognises the national benefits we all get from electricity transmission, such as better security of supply of electricity.
- Guides the management of the adverse effects of activities from third parties on the grid which helps reduce constraints on the operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of the grid.
- Ensures long-term strategic planning for elements of the national grid.

3.2.4 National Policy Statement on Renewable Energy Generation

The *National Policy Statement on Renewable Energy Generation 2011* (NPS-REG) recognises the importance of renewable energy and will help New Zealand achieve the Government's target of 90 per cent of electricity from renewable sources by 2025. It includes:

- Small and community-scale renewable generation activities (solar, wind, biomass, hydro, geothermal and marine).
- Systems to convey electricity to the distribution network and/or the national grid.
- Electricity storage technologies associated with renewable electricity storage.

The NPS-REG aims to promote a more consistent approach to balancing the competing values associated with the development of New Zealand's renewable energy resources when councils make decisions on resource consent applications. It aims to provide greater certainty to applicants and the wider community. The NPS is only one of a number of factors that a RMA decision-maker must consider when making a decision on renewable generation proposals. The NPS-REG does not promote renewable electricity at any environmental cost.

3.2.5 National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity

The *National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity 2016* (NPS-UDC) took effect 1 December 2016. The purpose of the NPS-UDC is to ensure regional and district plans provide adequately for the development of business and housing. With a projected population growth of 9.3% between 2013 and 2023 the New Plymouth District has been identified as a medium-growth urban area.⁶

Local authorities that have all or part of a medium- or high-growth urban area in their district or region must give effect to policies PB1–PB7, PC1–PC4 and PD1–PD2, in addition to the objectives and policies that apply to all local authorities. They include requirements to carry out a three-yearly housing and business land assessment. Both councils would also be required to monitor on a quarterly basis a range of indicators in relation to housing affordability, resource and building consents and business land vacancy rates.

As stated in Section 3.1 above, the Government also proposes amend sections 30 and 31 of the RMA to make it a function of regional councils and territorial authorities to ensure sufficient residential and business development capacity to meet long-term demand. This amendment and promulgation of the NPS-UDC is likely to be a new matter which will need to be given effect to in the RPS. The current RPS does not have a strong focus on urban growth issues because to date it had not been a major issue.

⁶ The high- and medium-growth urban area definitions in the NPS-UDC are based upon Statistics New Zealand population projections for the 2013 to 2023 period. Revised projections indicate that New Plymouth may be redefined as high-growth Government will notify the local authorities likely to be affected by this revision in early 2017.

3.2.6 Proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity

Clear national guidelines on implementation of section 6(c) of the RMA are a Government priority⁷.

In 2011, the Government consulted on the *Proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity*. The consultation identified a number of issues. The Ministry for the Environment is now aims for late 2018 to develop revised objectives and policies for managing natural and physical resources to maintain indigenous biodiversity.

Proposed NPSs have no legal effect (i.e. councils are only required to give effect to them once they are adopted). Notwithstanding that, potential changes to the RPS may become necessary if the Proposed NPS is promulgated.

3.2.7 National Environmental Standards

NESs can prescribe technical standards, methods or other requirements for environmental matters. Each regional, city or district council must enforce the same standard. In some circumstances, councils can impose stricter standards.

The following standards are in force as regulations:

- *National Environmental Standards for Air Quality 2004.*
- *National Environmental Standard for Sources of Drinking Water 2007.*
- *National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities 2008.*
- *National Environmental Standard for Electricity Transmission Activities 2010.*
- *National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health 2011.*

3.3 Historic heritage review

In 2010, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage led a review of the Historic Places Act 1993 and as a result of that work the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* was enacted in May 2014. The Act made some changes to how Heritage New Zealand operates, and to archaeological provisions. It also formally changed the name of the Historic Places Trust to Heritage New Zealand.

⁷ For more information of the development of this NPS refer to link. <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/more/biodiversity/national-policy-statement-biodiversity/about-national-policy-statement>.

3.4 Treaty of Waitangi settlements

There are eight recognised iwi within the boundaries of the Taranaki region. Seven of these iwi have Treaty of Waitangi settlements (Ngati Tama (2001), Ngati Mutunga (2005), Ngati Ruanui (2001), Ngaa Rauru Kiihahi (2003), Te Atiawa (2016), Ngaruahine (2016), and Taranaki iwi (2016). Ngati Maru have recently commenced their formal settlement negotiations.

The settlements, amongst other things, document iwi o Taranaki's relationship with the natural environment. They detail iwi traditions and through instruments, such as statutory acknowledgements and statements of association, document an ancestral, cultural, historical and spiritual connection to the environment.

When the RPS was proposed in 2006, the focus of iwi was on establishing post settlement capacity and progressing settlements. In 2016, with seven out of the eight iwi o Taranaki effectively through the settlement process, the focus is now on setting strategic directions, with particular emphasis on ensuring Maori values and principles are upfront and central in resource management plans.

Also important to note, as part of Treaty negotiations, Ngāruahine, Te Atiawa, Taranaki iwi, the Crown and the Taranaki Regional Council have worked together to develop a framework for iwi involvement in the decision-making processes of the Council. Through these settlements all eight Taranaki iwi will have the right to nominate three members for appointment to the Council's Consents and Regulatory and Policy and Planning committees. The iwi appointees will have the same status as if those appointees were appointed by the Council under clause 31 of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002 (i.e. they will have full voting rights on the committees).

This mechanism of Council representation also signals a willingness of all eight Taranaki iwi to work collectively together on important resource management issues.

Iwi management plans

The Council is required to take into account any relevant hapū/iwi management plans recognised by an iwi authority. Identified hapū/iwi management plans are:

- *Ngaa Rauru Kiihahi – Puutaiao Management Plan* (post 2008, date not specified in the plan);
- *Ngati Ruanui Environmental Management Plan* (2012); and
- *Draft Ngati Mutunga Iwi Management Plan* (to date this plan is still in draft and has yet to be presented to Council).

3.5 Population growth and urban development

The region's population is growing and changing. According to the 2013 census, 109,609 people live in the Taranaki region. This is an increase of 5.3% since the last census in 2006 (when the RPS was first proposed). In the preceding 2001 and 2006 census period the region's population growth was only 1.2%.

While the region is not experiencing the population growth pressures of other regions such as Auckland and Christchurch, Taranaki is experiencing a continued shift away from smaller rural towns to the New Plymouth urban area. Between 2006 and 2016 the population in the New Plymouth district grew by 7.7%, while Stratford and South Taranaki districts grew by 1.1% and 0.4%, respectively.

New Plymouth urban areas have a projected population growth of 9.3% between 2013 and 2023. In response to the pressures of increasing urban growth, the New Plymouth District Council approved *The Blueprint* (2015).⁸ *The Blueprint* is a high level spatial plan that supports and implements the District Council's vision. It seeks to deliver more integrated social, economic and environmental outcomes for the community and signals a move away from the willing developer approach to a more integrated and strategic approach to providing for urban growth.

3.6 Changes in how policy instruments are written

When the RPS was proposed in 2006, regional policy statements tended to capture all issues comprehensively so that they would provide the basis for regional plans to address those issues in detail.

More recently, regional councils have started to combine their respective RPS and regional plans and/or develop 'one-plans' where the RPS tend to only address the strategic issues, and regional plans (air, coast, land and water) are combined and address the functional issues.

A review of best practice advice and second generation policy instruments have highlighted a number of themes that provide guidance in relation to the form, content and structure of future RPSs and regional plans:

- Regional policy statements and plans should have clearly aligned issues, objectives and policies.

⁸ For more information on the *Blueprint for the New Plymouth District* refer to <http://www.newplymouthnz.com/CouncilDocuments/PlansAndStrategies/NewPlymouthDistrictBlueprint.htm>.

- Regional policy statements and plans should be user friendly. They should not be too lengthy, detailed or unnecessarily complex.
- Provisions in regional policy statements and plans should be based on sound issues identification. The focus should be on identifying a smaller number of genuinely significant issues for the region. Often sub-issues can be 'bundled' under a single key issue. Issues must be resource management issues and must not lie outside the scope of the RMA.
- Regional policy statements and plans should show clear links between issues, objectives, policies, and methods that address those issues.
- Objectives and policies should provide explicit, clear guidance to decision-makers about what is relevant and important.
- Objectives and policies determine what methods of implementation are to be used, not the other way round.
- Procedural issues such as cross-boundary issues and monitoring need to be addressed but do not need to be part of the objectives and policies framework.
- Objectives should state the aim or the purpose or target for the issue being addressed. They can either be open (setting a general direction) or closed (a finite statement) and should add value to the RMA rather than merely repeat the Act.
- Policies are statements of a course or general plan of action and can be either substantive (what is to be done) or procedural (how and by whom) and be inflexible or flexible, broad or narrow. Policies should not simply state methods.
- Avoid duplication (adopt a structure, form and provisions that avoid repetition).
- Be fact based (grounded on accurate information).
- Be set in the local context (clearly addresses local or regional activities, resources and effects etc).

Advice on improving the quality of regional policy documents from this and other reviews will be taken into consideration when drafting the next RPS. The current RPS already combines and groups its resource management issues. However, there may be further opportunities to recognise the linkages between the RPS and the regional plans and promote their alignment to avoid unnecessary duplication of policies and methods detailed across the documents.

3.7 Summary of key changes

As outlined above, there have been a number of potential 'change' factors or matters, which have emerged since the adoption of the RPS. However, a review of these change factors has not identified any new or emerging issues that warrant immediate changes to the RPS.

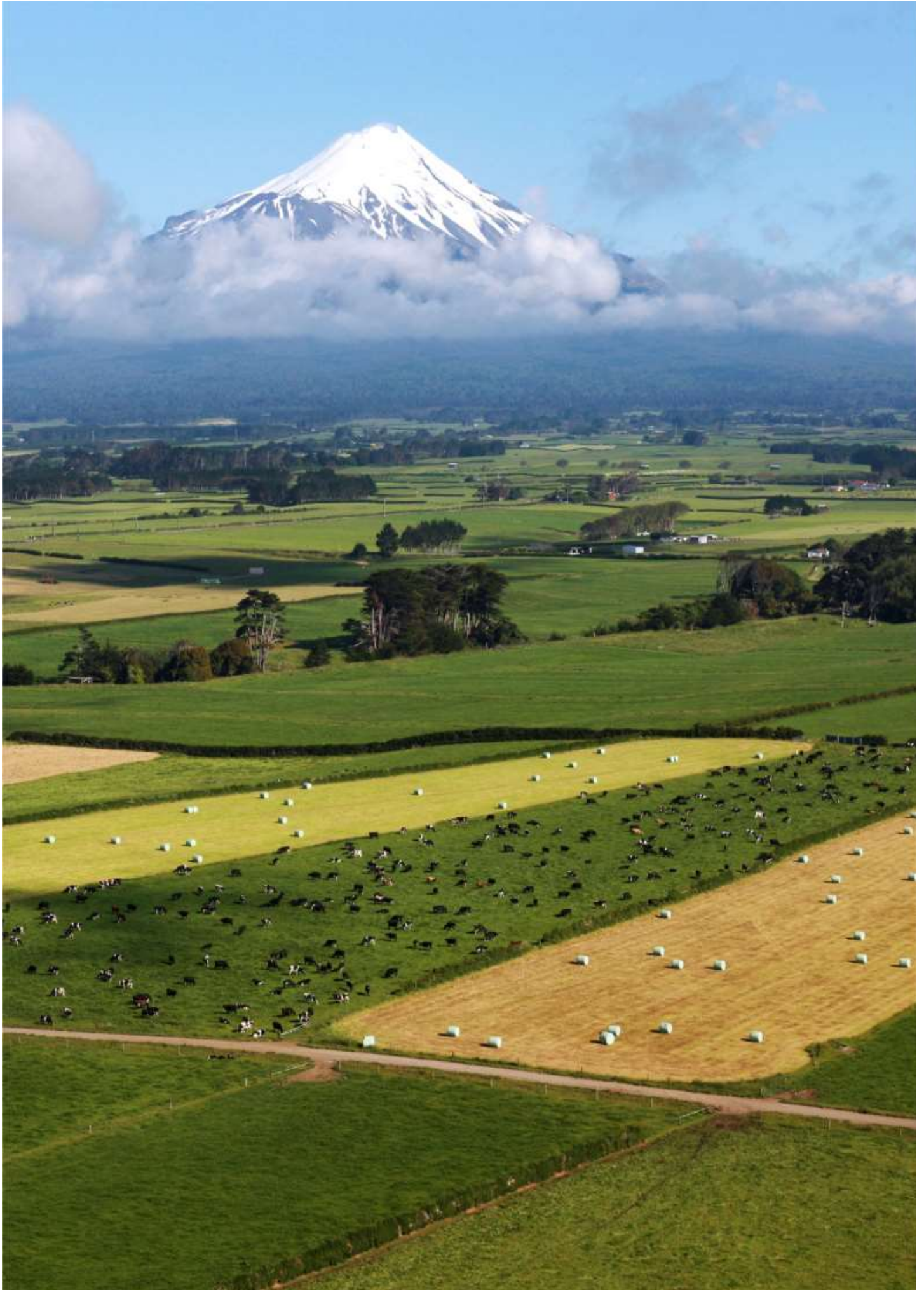
Notwithstanding the above, Council, when preparing the next RPS, will take Government reviews, strategies and initiatives (plus other change factors) into account where they are relevant to the purpose of the RPS.

Of particular note, legislative changes, the promulgation of NPSs and NESs, and building on Council relationships with tangata whenua will be a focus.

A review of emerging best practice in the development of regional policy instruments has also highlighted a number of areas where there are opportunities to promote better alignment in the form, content and structure of future RPSs and regional plans. Of particular interest is an emerging trend to combining RPS and regional plans to promote alignment, reduce unnecessary duplication, and enhance integrated management outcomes.

It is recommended that early consideration be given to exploring the combined RPS/regional plan approach. As part of the 'combined RPS/regional plan' approach, it is further recommended that Council investigate using technology to improve the accessibility of our planning documents and their user friendliness (i.e. Eplanning). Many users find planning documents such as the RPS overly complex and difficult to understand. Eplanning is a relatively new concept that many councils are interested in. It involves using digital and spatial web-based tools to:

- Support people accessing RPS/plan provisions
- Improve navigation and identify relevant provisions
- Make the RPS/plans more accessible to resource users at a range of scales
- Make better use of spatial (3D) imagery and information to improve understanding
- Assist in the preparation and communication of new RPS/plan provisions.



4. Stakeholder feedback on the relevance of the RPS

This section summarises stakeholder feedback on the ongoing relevance and appropriateness of the issues of regional significance identified in the current RPS.

4.1 Determining significance

The RPS's regionally significant issues have been broadly grouped into 26 resource management issues and a further 4 resource management issues of significance to iwi. The RPS contains a larger number of sub-issues that address in more detail some of the broader issues and themes.

The significant resource management issues identified in the current RPS (refer Table 2 overleaf) were developed via comprehensive public processes in 1994 and more recently in 2010. At that time, determining the 'significance' of an issue generally involved the following considerations:

1. *Widespread problems* – A problem which is relevant throughout the region, possibly crossing local authority boundaries.
2. *Scarce resources* – A natural or physical resource that is scarce, rare or unique, and/or under threat. Scarce resources encompass internationally and nationally recognised resources (including resources that are nationally important in accordance with Section 6 of the RMA). They also include natural and physical resources that have particular locational requirements, or that form interlinked networks.
3. *Resource use conflict* – The presence of, or potential for, significant conflicts in resource use.
4. *Cumulative impacts* – The presence of, or potential for, significant cumulative impacts arising from resource use.

As outlined in section 2.3 above, as part of the interim review process, the Council undertook targeted stakeholder consultation involving iwi, district councils, industry and major consent holders, government organisations, and non-governmental organisations and community groups.

A series of workshops and meetings were held to ascertain stakeholders' views in relation to the ongoing relevance of the issues identified in the RPS and whether the significant resource issues in the RPS were still relevant in 2016.

Section 4.2 provides a summary of the key themes and issues highlighted by internal and external stakeholders via the workshops, meetings, and written feedback to an earlier evaluation document.

Table 1: Summary of significant resource management issues in the current RPS

Significant resource management issues	
Resource use and development	1. Recognising the role of resource use and development in the Taranaki region
Land and soil	2. Protecting our soil from accelerated erosion
	3. Maintaining healthy soils
	4. Managing the effects of hazardous substances and contaminated sites
Fresh water	5. Sustainable allocation of surface water resources
	6. Maintaining and enhancing the quality of water in our rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands
	7. Maintaining groundwater flows and quality
	8. Protecting the natural character of our wetlands
	9. Managing land drainage and other diversions of water
	10. Managing effects associated with the use of river and lake beds
	11. Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along rivers and lakes
Air	12. Maintaining our excellent air quality
	13. Responding to the effects of climate change
Coast	14. Protecting the natural character of our coast
	15. Maintaining and enhancing coastal water quality
	16. Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along the coast
Indigenous biodiversity	17. Maintaining and enhancing our indigenous biodiversity
Natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity values	18. Protecting our outstanding and important natural features and landscapes
	19. Protecting our historic heritage
	20. Maintaining and enhancing amenity values
Natural hazards	21. Reducing the risks to the community from natural hazards
Waste management	22. Minimising waste and managing its disposal
Minerals	23. Recognising and providing for appropriate use and development of minerals
Energy	24. Sustainably managing energy
Built environment	25. Promoting sustainable urban development
	26. Providing for regionally significant infrastructure

Table 2: Summary of significant resource management issues to iwi authorities in the current RPS

Significant resource management issues to iwi	
1.	Taking into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi
2.	Recognising kaitiakiatanga
3.	Recognising and providing for the relationship of Maori with ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga
4.	Recognising cultural and spiritual values of tagata whenua in resource management processes

4.2 Feedback on the on-going relevance of issues

4.2.1 Who uses the RPS and how?

Stakeholders were asked whether they have read the RPS, and how they used it. In general, statutory agencies, such as the district councils, Heritage New Zealand, Department of Conservation and Fish and Game had read the RPS. However, in the workshops they noted that their organisations do not tend to use the RPS in statutory processes, unless it provided clearer direction than what was available elsewhere in operative regional and district plans.

Industry and major consent holders tended to just refer to the relevant regional or district plan.

Iwi noted that they tended to rely more on their own policy instruments such as the statutory acknowledgements and statements of association in their respective Treaty settlements.

Within the Council, the RPS is referred to and informs the review of regional plans. In relation to the consenting process, most RPS policies are covered by the respective plans however, for some activities, are referred to where they provide stronger direction, e.g. when processing notified water take applications.⁹

4.2.2 Common themes / issues

Stakeholders and Council staff were also canvassed to ascertain their views on what are the most significant resource management issues facing their group / business / industry in 2016.

Of note, no new issues were identified for inclusion in any revised RPS but a number of existing issues were highlighted across all stakeholder meetings as being of particular concern (and for which further attention or action maybe required).

Integrated management

Section 17 of the RPS sets out processes for dealing with integrated management and cross boundary issues. However, a common theme discussed by all stakeholder groups was the demand for better integration in the management of the environment.

The demand for better integration had three elements.

- First, district councils, industry and many other stakeholders sought that the RPS be more directive so as to provide better direction and alignment across regional and district council plans and activities. Further (written) feedback was received from Te Kaahui o Rauru, the oil companies and Climate Justice Taranaki Inc seeking that a revised RPS be more directive (refer Appendix IV).
- Second, many stakeholders highlighted the need for the RPS to span across all physical domains (water, land, the coastal and air).
- Third, stakeholders, particularly environmental groups, sought a strong emphasis on empowering local communities and iwi to be more involved in the management of our natural resources, including decision making processes (both at a planning and consenting level).

Concerns were also raised about the fragmented way in which some issues and topics are addressed across agencies, such as notifying communities on when it is safe to swim.

A combined RPS and regional plan was seen as one mechanism where the current fragmentation across regional planning instruments could be addressed. Stakeholders were generally supportive of combining the RPS and regional plans so as to reduce duplication and to improve integration and alignment of policies.

Appendix IV of this report presents written feedback subsequently received from, Fish and Game and the Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust that included support for investigating the development of combined RPS and regional plans.

Protecting indigenous biodiversity

Section 9 of the current RPS contains provisions addressing the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity and identifies the following six significant issues:

- Protecting under-represented habitats of terrestrial and aquatic indigenous flora and fauna.
- Reducing the impact of pest animals and plants, particularly where they threaten ecosystems and areas that have regionally significant indigenous biodiversity values.
- Encouraging connectivity between remnant habitats to maintain or enhance indigenous biodiversity values.
- Reducing threats to freshwater and marine habitats, flora and fauna.
- Recognising the community benefits of appropriate use and development of resources when maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity.

⁹ *Pers coms Colin McLellan, Consents Manager, Taranaki Regional Council.*

- Working with others to maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity values.

A common theme across all stakeholders groups was the importance of all indigenous biodiversity – not just the under represented habitats. This includes remnant areas in urban areas.

Widespread concerns relating to the ongoing loss of remaining wetlands were highlighted. Stakeholders further highlighted the importance of pest control and aligning the RPS with other national or regional initiatives, especially in protecting vulnerable indigenous species. In particular, stakeholders mentioned the need to align with the *Predator free NZ by 2050* and *Taranaki Mounga* initiatives (where the Department of Conservation aspires that the Egmont National Park will be the first National Park to be goat free).

The protection of biodiversity on private land remains a significant issue with district councils in Taranaki. District council officers raised the need for better integration in the management of biodiversity between the regional and district councils. Of note, district councils expressed support for the RPS being more directive.¹⁰

Appendix IV of this report presents written feedback received from Fish and Game, Te Kaahui o Rauru, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine highlighting their concerns regarding the state of indigenous biodiversity in the region.

Maintaining the quality of our land, freshwater, coastal and air resources

Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the current RPS contain provisions relating to maintaining the quality of our land, freshwater, coastal and air resources. Thirty-three sub-issues in total are grouped around the following themes:

Land and soil (6)

- Protecting our soil from accelerated erosion (1)
- Maintaining healthy soils (3)
- Managing the effects of hazardous substances and contaminated sites (2).

Freshwater (19)

- Sustainable allocation of surface water resources (4)
- Maintaining and enhancing the quality of water in our rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands (3)

- Maintaining groundwater flows and quality at sustainable levels (2)
- Protection the natural character of our wetlands (2)
- Managing land drainage and other diversions of water (3)
- Managing effects associated with the use of river and lake beds (3)
- Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along rivers and lakes (2).

Coastal (6)

- Protecting the natural character of our coast (2)
- Maintaining and enhancing coastal water quality (2)
- Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along the coastal environment (2).

Air (2)

- Managing adverse effects on air quality arising from point sources of emissions
- Managing reverse sensitivity issues in relation to air emissions and which are created by incompatible land uses establishing next to industries or rural productions operations.

Again across all stakeholder groups there was a common aspiration to maintain our clean water (both coastal and freshwater) and air and maintain the quality of our soils. Concerns around impacts on coastal processes, natural character and ecosystems, including the deep water, were highlighted by some stakeholders believing the issues not well expressed in the current RPS.

The protection of surf breaks, while included as a policy in the current RPS, was highlighted as a significant resources management issue by recreational groups at the environmental group workshop.

District council officers commented that the NZCPS 2010 requires a higher level of protection for 'threatened' and 'at risk' coastal species, and requires the identification of the coastal environment and outstanding coastal landscapes and natural features.

The workshops confirmed that current issues around public access to the coast, the impacts of increasing coastal erosion, and the functional need for some industry such as Port Taranaki to be located in the coastal environment, remain relevant in 2016.

In terms of fresh water, the implementation of the NPS-FM has clearly sharpened the need for more precise issue definition relating to freshwater quality and quantity.

The workshops for environmental groups and industry groups highlighted concerns about nutrient management in Taranaki. Measures promoting the disposal of dairy farm effluent to land (rather than fresh water), while supported

¹⁰ Noting that district councils must give effect to a RPS, the current RPS was deliberately not prescriptive in setting out what district councils must do. However, there was strong and widespread support across stakeholder groups, including district councils, to be more directive in any revised RPS to promote integration and alignment across councils.

by all stakeholders, need to be carefully considered to avoid impact on other parts of the receiving environments (e.g. groundwater and air). Industry raised concerns about national responses to nutrient management issues, while some environmental groups sought the setting of in-stream limits.

Stakeholders also discussed issues relating to the swimability of our freshwater and coastal waters. The discussion tended to focus on clarification as to what was swimmable, how realistic is it for water to be swimmable 365 days of the year and how the public knows whether it is safe to swim.

Issues around the impacts of forestry harvesting in relation to potentially accelerating soil erosion and increasing sediment loads in rivers and coastal waters were raised in both the industry and environmental group workshops. Districts councils were concerned about the impacts of forestry trucks on rural roads. Stakeholders also raised concerns about soil contamination due to use of agrichemicals and hazardous substances.

The workshops highlighted few concerns around air quality. Most issues around air focused on the reverse sensitively considerations, especially where urban growth encroaches on rural land. This was particularly, relevant to the poultry, piggery and dairy industries. Air quality concerns were raised at the environmental group's workshop about the potential impacts oil and gas activities.

Further written feedback was received from Fish and Game, Te Kaahui o Rauru, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine, oil companies and Climate Justice Taranaki Inc highlighting their views or concerns regarding the quality of the region's land, freshwater, coastal and air resources and/or the management framework (refer Appendix IV).

Natural hazards

Section 11 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to natural hazards. Three sub-issues in total are grouped around the following themes:

- Increasing public awareness of and planning for natural hazards.
- Modifying natural hazards processes and taking into account potential changes in the frequency and intensity of natural hazards in the future.
- Reducing the costs of natural hazard events, emergencies and disasters.

As highlighted at the workshops, if the proposed amendments to the RMA go ahead the management of significant risks from natural hazards will become a matter of national importance. The focus on "significant risks" requires Councils to have an understanding of which hazards are significant to their region, including what the communities' perception of risk of each significant hazard is, and what is their level of acceptable risk.

Most natural hazard risks are well understood and documented through different planning processes including those associated with civil defence emergency management. However, as noted at the workshops, increased risks associated from climate change need to be taken into consideration.

Climate change projections depend on future greenhouse gas emissions, which are uncertain. However, the Ministry for the Environment in its June 2016 report *Climate Change Projections for New Zealand* states for the Taranaki region that there could be increased risk to coastal roads and infrastructure from coastal erosion and inundation, increased storms and sea-level rise, threatening vulnerable beaches and low-lying areas. Also more frequent and intense heavy rainfall events are likely to increase the risk of erosion and landslides. Flooding is likely to become more frequent and severe.¹¹

With this context in mind, the main hazards raised by stakeholders were the increased risk of flooding and coastal erosion. District Council officers requested that any new RPS policies and methods provide for flexibility in relation to the localized impacts of sea level rise where the impacts are uncertain.

The environmental groups workshop noted concerns about the impacts of increased flood events on in-stream and coastal ecosystems due to increased sediment loads.

Appendix IV presents written feedback was received from Te Kaahui o Rauru, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine, and the oil companies on natural hazard matters.

Climate change

Section 7 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to natural hazards. One issue has been identified:

- Planning for and managing adverse effects on the environment, arising from climate change, particularly associated with rising sea levels and more variable extreme weather patterns.

Currently the issue of climate change is included in the chapter with air quality. It was suggested that including an issue on the effects of climate change in the chapter on natural hazards might be a more logical fit. Environmental groups were also concerned at other non-hazard related effects of climate change including increased animal and plant pests and changes to pest pathways and its impact on biodiversity values and agricultural production.

Appendix IV of this report presents written feedback on climate change subsequently received from Climate Justice Taranaki.

¹¹ For more information on how climate change may affect Taranaki click on the following link: <http://waterefficiency.org.nz/climate-change/how-climate-change-affects-nz/how-might-climate-change-affect-my-region/taranaki>.

Waste management

Section 12 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to waste management. Two sub-issues in total are grouped around the following themes:

- Minimising the volumes of waste generated and requiring disposal.
- Providing for the efficient and effective disposal of waste while avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse environmental effects associated with waste disposal.

Industry highlighted waste management as a significant issue, especially the disposal of waste which was not acceptable to landfill. Industry requested that the RPS discuss the possibility of encouraging the establishment of a regional waste facility for waste unable to go to landfill.

Environmental groups raised issues of the impacts of litter, especially plastic, in the marine environment and the need to increase recycling and upcycling in the region.

Further written feedback was received from Te Korowai o Ngāruahine seeking that the RPS promote behavioural change with regards to waste management (refer Appendix IV).

Maori values, principles and involvement in decision making

Section 16 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to issues of significance to iwi authorities. The RPS acknowledges that all of its resource management issues of significance are of relevance to iwi but the following four issues in particular are identified as being particularly significant:

- Taking into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- Recognising kaitiakiatanga.
- Recognising and providing for the relationship of Maori with ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga.
- Recognising cultural and spiritual values of tagata whenua in resource management processes.

All stakeholders identified the importance of recognising and providing for Maori values. They also highlighted the importance of processes to involve iwi in decision making processes.

The Council is having on-going discussions and engagement with all eight Taranaki iwi on how to best reflect their principles and values, including the Treaty settlements, in the RPS and statutory plans. The outcomes of that engagement will be incorporated into a revised RPS.

Appendix IV of this report presents written feedback received from Te Kaahui o Rauru and Te Korowai o Ngāruahine on incorporating Te Ao Maori and mātauranga Maori into resource management processes, building Maori capacity, and promoting effective Maori engagement.

Enabling economic development while protecting the environment

Section 4 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to use and development of resources. One issue is identified:

- Recognising the role of resource use and development in the Taranaki region.

Industry and district councils were supportive of RPS issues recognizing the importance of resource use and acknowledging economic drivers, including oil and gas and primary production, in providing for the sustainable use of the management of resources in the region.

District councils raised issues around the need to protect rural amenity, while recognising the functional need for poultry, oil and gas and some extractive industries to be based in rural areas.

Reverse sensitivity was highlighted by both the industry and district council groups as being an ongoing issue (refer discussion below).

Some environmental groups were concerned about that potential adverse effects of oil and gas exploration, production, and that waste disposal activities were not adequately addressed in the RPS. There was a suggestion that a national instrument such as a NPS is required to manage and regulate the effects of the oil and gas industry in the region.

Industry groups were particularly supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework. Industry wanted the RPS to continue to provide for and recognise the role of their activities but also recognized the need to provide for sustainable use of resources.

Energy companies felt more recognition should be given in the RPS to renewable electricity generation and the protection of regionally significant infrastructure, including gas and electricity network infrastructure.

Appendix IV presents written feedback from Federated Farmers, oil and gas companies, and TrustPower largely in support of the RPS's current provisions.

4.2.3 Specific issues / themes

Urban environment

Section 15 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to the urban [built] environment. There are four sub-issues grouped around the following themes:

- Promoting sustainable urban development (1).
- Providing for regionally significant infrastructure (3).

Industry groups were very supportive of current RPS issues on managing infrastructure. Although as mentioned earlier, energy companies requested more specific mention of the need to protection regionally significant infrastructure in relation to energy distribution. Increased traffic on rural roads due to logging activities was also of concern to district councils and community groups.

Both industry groups and district councils raised concerns about managing issues of reverse sensitivity where residential and business activities encroach into rural areas. It was noted that poultry and dairying industries, in particular, were potentially needing to constrain their activities to meet off-site odour requirements.

The New Plymouth District sought stronger guidance / direction in the RPS about strategic urban development and what constitutes good urban design and establishing strong city centres.

The New Plymouth District Council made the following comment:

"The Regional Policy Statement does not provide direction in some key areas where it has responsibility under the RMA. This reduces the mandate that TA's have to address some of the strategic urban development issues in the region. In particular these are, as relevant to the NP district:

- *ensuring a cohesive approach to urban growth that requires the efficient use of land and infrastructure and achieves strategic outcomes;*
- *providing a range of affordable housing choices for the communities different social and economic needs;*
- *locating growth so it is accessible and connected to infrastructure;*
- *ensuring urban form reduces impacts on the environment (low impact) and allows for connectivity and provides for a range of transport modes;*
- *ensuring activities and development does not undermine the prime role and function of the regions economic centres (ie: central city and town centres);*
- *ensuring appropriate management of stormwater and in particular management of urban tributaries; and*
- *ensuring the rural area is used for predominately rural activities and rural industry".*

The NPS-UDC signals a new emphasis for regional policy statements to address the issue of housing supply and affordability, as well as sustainable urban design. Urban development issues were less relevant for South Taranaki and Stratford, where the population growth is occurring at a much slower rate (approximately 1%).

Historic heritage

Section 10 of the current RPS includes three sub-issues relating to historic heritage:

- Identifying and raising awareness of Taranaki's historic heritage to promote its protection.
- Managing the adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development activities on Taranaki's historic heritage.
- Promoting the active management of the region's historical heritage.

Although the Taranaki region has a large number of archaeological sites, Heritage New Zealand were the only stakeholder group to specifically raise the issue of the protection of historic heritage. However, other stakeholders did mention the issue of the identification of sites of significance to iwi, including wāhi tapu.

Heritage New Zealand's key concerns were around promoting the consistent identification and protection of historic heritage across the region. They also highlighted that RPSs have a key role in educating the community and developers on how to protect archaeological sites, as well as the processes you need to go through if you are going to work on or modifying sites.

Heritage New Zealand noted that RPSs, through appropriate methods, can provide incentives to reuse historic buildings and provide opportunities for heritage tourism.

Human health and the protection of public drinking water

The Taranaki District Health Board (TDHB) highlighted the importance of recognising human health in all aspects of environmental management.

The TDHB has a 'Health in All Policies' approach, which seeks synergies and avoids harmful health impacts, in order to improve societal goals, population health and health equity. An example given, was how Maori involvement in physically monitoring water quality through the development of a Cultural Health Index, has also been shown to have positive health outcomes, in terms of increased physical activity.

The TDHB requested that the 'Health in All Policies' approach be considered when reviewing the RPS and emphasized the need for the regional and district councils and the TDHB to take a more integrated approach.

The TDHB also requested a stronger emphasis be placed in the RPS on the security of supply and protection from contamination of public and community drinking water supplies. It was noted that with climate change there may be an increased risk of droughts. It was suggested that in times of water shortage, the maintenance of domestic and community water supply needs should be the first priority and this should be clearly stated in the RPS.

Citizen science

Environmental groups and the Taranaki District Health Board highlighted the importance of citizen science, where the community and in particular local hapu, were involved in the monitoring of the environment.

4.2.4 Summary of stakeholder views on RPS issues and directions

In comparing the current 30 RPS significant issues to those raised by stakeholders in 2016, the majority of the issues remain current and relevant.

No new issues were identified by stakeholders although, subject to a full review, the emphasis on some issues may need to be changed or fine-tuned to ensure the RPS issues continue to be relevant.

Stakeholders also highlighted issues where, since the adoption of the RPS in 2010, there have been significant changes to the legislative framework (e.g. the RMA, NPSs and NESs). It was noted that Government directives and policy interventions such as the development and changes to NPSs have changed the emphasis on some of these issues.



5. Are the objectives and policies effective?

The RPS contains 33 objectives and 92 policies. This section examines the effectiveness of the RPS in terms of whether the objectives and policies are achieving the outcomes sought and at an acceptable rate.

Where possible, this section presents state of the environment monitoring results relevant to the RPS although qualitative assessments are sometimes necessary.¹² The effectiveness or otherwise of the RPS five years on in terms of achieving or working towards its objectives is evaluated and assessed as:

- **Achieved** – objective is being achieved across the broad range of environmental indicators.
- **Generally being achieved** – objective is largely
- **Partially being achieved** – monitoring results and this assessment has identified mixed positive and negative results across the range of environmental indicators. Negative results indicate significant risk that elements of the RPS objective may not be achieved.
- **Not achieved** - objective is not being achieved across the broad range of environmental indicators.

being achieved. Monitoring results and this assessment indicates generally positive trends and outcomes across most (but not all) environmental indicators.



Port Taranaki.

¹² Not all of the RPS's significant resource management issues relate to a specific environmental domain or issue (e.g. land, water, air, biodiversity). Some, such as use and development, minerals and energy apply across a range of administrative and environmental domains. Such issues are more likely to be assessed through qualitative assessments and/or databases other than state of the environment reporting.

5.1 Use and development of resources

What the objective says

Current RPS objective for use and development of resources is:

- *Recognise the role of resource use and development in the Taranaki region.*

What this assessment shows

The RPS objective was adopted to recognise the role of resource use and development in Taranaki.

Resource use and development provides benefits to people and communities in Taranaki and to New Zealand as a whole. The objective is about generally allowing people and communities to provide for their economic, social and cultural wellbeing subject to activities being undertaken in a way which promotes the sustainable management purpose of the RMA.¹³

The RPS objective for resource use and development is **being achieved** based upon the following observations:¹⁴

- All four operative regional plans (which are required to give effect to the RPS) include policies and rules that provide for appropriate use and development of natural and physical resources.
- Through these plans, use and development activities causing little or no adverse effects are generally allowed for without the need for a resource consent subject to meeting the standards, terms, and conditions set out in the relevant regional plan. Other resource use and development activities are recognised and provided for subject to obtaining a resource consent.
- Taranaki has the highest gross domestic product (GDP) in New Zealand. The region contributes 4% of New Zealand's GDP despite only having 2.5% of the country's population.¹⁵

As noted in section 4.2.2 above, industry groups were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework and believe it largely recognises the importance of resource use and development.



Taranaki boasts one of the strongest regional economies in the country, which can largely be attributed to the strength of the agricultural and oil and gas industries

¹³ *The effectiveness of the RPS in managing adverse effects associated with use and development are separately addressed in the sections and findings relating to land, fresh water, air and coast.*

¹⁴ *This assessment must be necessarily based upon qualitative assessments or sources other than state of the environmental monitoring.*

¹⁵ *New Zealand Government: Regional Economic Activity Report 2015.*

5.2 Land and soil

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for land and soil are:

- *To maintain and enhance the soil resource of the Taranaki region by avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of accelerated erosion on soil resources.*
- *To maintain soil health in the Taranaki region by maintaining soil nutrients at appropriate levels and avoiding or minimising soil compaction and soil contamination caused by inappropriate land management practices.*
- *To avoid, remedy, or mitigate adverse environmental effects arising from the storage, use, transportation and disposal of hazardous substances in the Taranaki region, including adverse environmental effects arising from existing contaminated sites.*

What this assessment shows

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives for managing land and soil are **being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- 92% of land within the Taranaki region is sustainably managed.
- Even within the more erosion prone eastern hill country, rates of sustainable land use are high at 87%. Despite some sporadic scrub clearance since 2007, there has been little change in overall sustainable land use since this time.
- Because much of its hill country is protected by woody vegetation, Taranaki has only a very small

proportion of the total North Island land area susceptible to mass movement erosion.

- Of the most at-risk land, 65% of privately owned land has a Council-prepared farm plan containing recommendations for sustainable land use on a whole-farm basis.
- Results of soil monitoring since 1995 show Taranaki has very few long-term issues with soil health.
- The latest monitoring completed in 2012 showed that 81% of samples met target ranges for soil productivity and health.
- There has been a decrease in macro-porosity since 1995 indicating an increase in soil compaction, but this can generally be reversed with appropriate land management.
- The vast majority of HAIL sites (Hazardous Activities and Industries List) investigated for potential contamination issues show no evidence of contamination. Over the life of this and the previous RPS, there has been a substantial effort to identify such sites and, where necessary, undertake remediation.
- There has been a small increase in the number of verified HAIL sites (Hazardous Activities and Industries List) awaiting further assessment but the number is still low. The increase in verified HAIL sites since 2009 is the result of an increase in clandestine drug laboratories (P-labs) discovered by the New Zealand Police, and subsequently entered on to the Council's Register of Selected Land Use database.



92% of land within the Taranaki region is sustainably managed.

5.3 Fresh water

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for fresh water are:

- *To sustainably manage the taking, use, damming or diversion of fresh water in the Taranaki region to enable people and communities to meet their needs for water while safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of water and related ecosystems and avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects on the environment arising from that use.*
- *To protect the natural character of water bodies from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*
- *To maintain and enhance surface water quality in Taranaki's rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands by avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects of point source discharges to water.*
- *To sustainably manage the use of groundwater in the Taranaki region by:*
 - (a) *enabling people and communities to take and use groundwater to meet their needs while avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects from that use; and*
 - (b) *avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects on groundwater quality from over abstraction, intensive agricultural land uses, the discharge of contaminants, and poor well and bore construction.*
- *To improve knowledge of groundwater resources in Taranaki to promote the sustainable management of groundwater resources.*
- *To protect the natural character of Taranaki's wetlands from inappropriate subdivision, use and development and ensure that any adverse effects of activities are avoided, remedied or mitigated.*
- *To recognise and provide for the land production and management benefits of appropriate and associated diversions of water from land in the Taranaki region while avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects on the environment.*
- *To enable appropriate use of and disturbance within river and lake beds in Taranaki while avoiding any adverse effects of activities on the environment.*
- *To maintain and enhance appropriate public access to and along rivers and lakes in the Taranaki region, while avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects that may arise from that access.*

What this assessment shows

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing fresh water are **generally being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- Over the past 18 years, ecological health of Taranaki waterways has improved at a number of sites, especially in the middle and lower reaches of rivers and streams, with no significant deterioration at any site.
- Improving ecological trends at 14 freshwater sites have become 'highly significant' since 2007.
- Water quality is 'Good' to 'Very good' in the upper reaches of catchments and 'Fair' in lower reaches.
- Periphyton (or algae) levels rarely exceed Ministry for the Environment guidelines.
- Overall physicochemical water quality is good. There has been 'improvement' or 'no significant change' in nitrogen levels in the past 19 years.
- Water quality at popular swimming spots is significantly better than a decade ago. In the 2013/2014 summer, 91% of samples were within Ministry for the Environment guidelines for swimming, with water fowl responsible for almost all of the few exceedances.
- The Riparian Management Programme is the largest environmental enhancement planting scheme on privately-owned land in New Zealand. Some 99.5% of dairy farms have riparian plans: 14,000 kilometres of streambank is covered by fencing and planting plans, 80% of streambanks covered by riparian plans are fenced, and 65% of streambanks recommended for vegetation are protected by both established and more recent plantings.¹⁶
- There is a high level of environmental compliance with farm dairy resource consents but the future focus will require dairy discharges to land wherever practicable and all riparian fencing and planting to be completed by mid-2020.
- Water allocated for use in the region accounts for only 4% of the total allocation, and the majority of this is from several larger river catchments.
- A small proportion of catchments are fully allocated. Between 2008 and 2013 the number of catchments where more than 30% of mean annual low flow has been allocated decreased from 19 to 16. Most large allocations are associated with national and

¹⁶ As at 30 June 2016, 84% of riparian plan streambanks now protected with fencing and 70% protected with riparian vegetation. Refer 2015/2016 Annual Report.

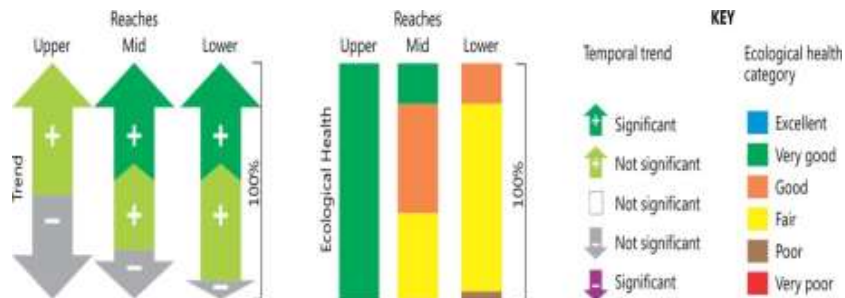
regionally significant activities such as town supply, hydroelectricity generation and industrial takes.

- There is good quality groundwater across all sites monitored and overall nitrate concentrations in groundwater have remained stable between 2002 and 2012. In the latest monitoring 96% of samples were within the Ministry of Health Drinking-water Standards for New Zealand. No pesticides have been detected in groundwater samples since 1998.

Notwithstanding the generally positive freshwater trends above, there continues to be a small and ongoing incremental loss associated with wetlands. Between 2007 and 2012 there has been a 1.3% loss of wetland area in Taranaki (although the annual rate of wetland loss has reduced by 60% compared with the preceding monitoring period between 2001 and 2007). Shortly, the Council will be releasing a Requirements document that sets out what is required by resource users to meet changing community expectations and evolving industry practices. The Council anticipates improvements in environmental practice in a number of areas, including farm dairy effluent discharges, forestry harvesting, oil and gas activities and activities in wetlands.



Latest Council monitoring shows that the ecological health of our rivers is the best yet measured. A summary of ecological health trends at monitored sites from 1995 to 2013 is presented below.



5.4 Air and climate change

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for air and climate change are:

- *To maintain the existing high standard of ambient air quality in the Taranaki region, to improve air quality in those instances or areas where air quality is adversely affected, and to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on people and the environment resulting from discharges to air.*
- *To avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects on the Taranaki environment arising from climate change.*

What this assessment shows

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing air quality are **being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- The overall quality of air in Taranaki is excellent due to lots of wind light traffic and scattered industry. National air quality standards have never been exceeded in Taranaki.
- Increased levels of poultry farming and hydrocarbon exploration and production have resulted in increased numbers of resource consents for air discharges. However, effective regulation and monitoring means there has been a negligible impact on air quality in the region.

In relation to the objective for climate change, no state of the environment monitoring data is available. It is the Government's position that drivers of climate change require an international/national response. Recent Government directives clearly expect councils to plan for managing the effects of climate change, e.g. the effects of more droughts, extreme weather events, and rising sea levels on resource use, people and infrastructure.

The issue of climate change is currently grouped in the RPS with those relating to air quality. Upon review, and in discussions with stakeholders, there is general agreement that climate change issues would be better addressed with natural hazard management. Feedback from stakeholders, particularly district councils, was that this was one area where the effectiveness of the RPS would be enhanced by its policies providing more policy direction and support.



Overall quality of air in Taranaki is excellent. National air quality standards have never been exceeded in Taranaki

5.5 Coastal environment

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for the coastal environment are:

- *To protect the natural character of the coastal environment in the Taranaki region from inappropriate subdivision, use, development and occupation by avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment.*
- *To provide for appropriate, subdivision, use, development and occupation of the coastal environment in the Taranaki Region.*
- *To maintain and enhance coastal water quality in the Taranaki region by avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of discharges of contaminants to the coastal marine area.*
- *To maintain and enhance public access to and along the coastal environment in the Taranaki region, while avoiding remedying or mitigating adverse effects that may arise from that access.*

What this assessment shows

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing the coastal environment are **being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- The main influence on coastal water quality is from rivers and streams discharging to the coast.
- In the past six years, 95% of sites sampled at popular swimming spots were within Ministry for the Environment guidelines for swimming.
- Sand accumulation through natural processes has a major effect on intertidal rocky shore ecology.
- Survey results from 2008 to 2014 showed concentrations of metals and faecal coliform in shellfish to be well within the Australia and New Zealand Food Standard guidelines.
- All faecal coliform monitoring results between 2009 and 2014 were within national guidelines.
- As at 30 June 2013/2014, the total number of active coastal consents has decreased from 280 in 2012/2013 to 238.

Additional work undertaken as part of the review of the Coastal Plan has also confirmed Taranaki's coastal natural character has been maintained. Significant areas of the coast and offshore water have been set aside as marine reserves while other parts of the coast line have been identified as having outstanding natural character, landscapes and features.

Overall, Taranaki's coastal environment is characterised as having generally high natural character. The rugged nature of Taranaki's coastal environment means that much of the area has retained its distinctive natural character. The 300 kilometre coastline is exposed to the west, with high energy wave and wind conditions. Dominated by cliffs and boulder reefs, the coastline also includes river mouths, estuaries, and Taranaki's famous black sands. Activities authorised by resource consents in the coastal marine area have had negligible effects on the overall natural character of the coast. Most coastal permits are for coastal protection works.

The Taranaki's coastal environment offers extensive and important recreational experiences associated with fishing, diving, swimming, surfing, wind surfing, walking and boating. Public access to the coast is primarily protected through district plans. Generally the public is considered to have very good access to most parts of the coast but there are a number of district initiatives looking at promoting that access further, including the New Plymouth coastal walkway, and south Taranaki's proposed walkway that links to and along the coast.



The Taranaki coast continues to be valued, both in its natural character and as a place where people play, gather food and relax.

5.6 Indigenous biodiversity

What the objective says

Current RPS objective for indigenous biodiversity is:

- *To maintain and enhance the indigenous biodiversity of the Taranaki region, with a priority on ecosystems, habitats and areas that have significant indigenous biodiversity values.*

What this assessment shows

Council's biodiversity function is unique in the RMA in that regional and district council functions relating to biodiversity include an objective (maintenance) within the function itself. This is an ambitious ask for two related reasons:

- First, maintaining biodiversity in the face of the threats faced will likely require more than managing the negative externalities of resource use and will require active intervention by councils, other agencies or both.
- Second, whether biodiversity is maintained will depend on a range of parties and actions outside of a local authority's control (including for example, how well the Department of Conservation manages its estate and species recovery programmes).¹⁷

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing indigenous biodiversity are **partially being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- Approximately 40% of Taranaki is covered by native bush or forest.
- Approximately 21% of Taranaki's total land area has some form of legal protection.
- Approximately 52% of its land area – particularly on the ring plain and coastal terraces – is classified as acutely or chronically threatened (i.e. <10% or 20% of original indigenous vegetation remaining in that area).
- Between 2008 and 2013 Taranaki experienced a net loss of around 3,700 hectares of indigenous forest and shrub land. Most of the lost vegetation was converted to grassland.
- In Taranaki about 8.1% or 3,291 hectares of wetlands habitat remains. There has been a small (1.3%) loss of wetland area between 2007 and 2012.
- In 2011, almost 12,000 hectares or 76% of sand dunes in Taranaki are used for agriculture or

horticulture. Less than 2,000 hectares (12%) are still considered indigenous or partially modified.

- As at 2013, there are 344 QEII covenants covering 9,723 hectares in Taranaki.

In summary, there is a small but nevertheless ongoing loss in the extent of indigenous forest, scrubland and wetlands. On the other hand there has been significant community engagement and effort in promoting the condition of remnant sites.

QEII covenants have become increasingly popular with Taranaki QEII's representing 7.8% of all QEII protected land area across New Zealand (which is a relatively high percentage given Taranaki makes up only 2.7% of New Zealand's total land area). Furthermore, Council monitoring confirms that local restoration, pest and weed control efforts mean that more than half of monitored forest sites were assessed as having 'good' to 'very good' condition.



Loss of habitat and the effects of invasive plants and animals are the greatest threats to the region's remaining biodiversity.

¹⁷ *Enfocus, 2014.*

5.7 Natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity values

What the objectives say

Resource management issues relating to natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity values have been grouped together in the current RPS.

The RPS objective for natural features and landscapes is:

- *To protect the outstanding natural features and landscapes of the Taranaki region from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, and to appropriately manage other natural areas, features and landscapes of value to the region.*

The RPS objective for historic heritage is:

- *To protect the historic heritage values in the Taranaki region from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, and where practical enhance those values.*

The RPS objective for amenity values is:

- *To recognise the positive contributions of appropriate use and development in terms of providing for the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values in the Taranaki region, while avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of inappropriate use and development on amenity values.*

What this assessment shows

The issues and objectives for natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity values relate to matters of national importance under the RMA. Pursuant to the RMA, both the Council and district councils must "...recognise and provide for" outstanding natural features and landscapes and historic heritage (s.6 RMA) and "...have particular regard to" amenity values (s.7 RMA).

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing significant natural features, historic heritage and amenity values are **generally being achieved**. Key findings include:

- No significant landscapes are identified by the district councils as currently under threat from any developments activities. Some land use activities, notably in association with coastal and rural subdivisions, may pose localised issues.
- There are 1,140 heritage buildings and items identified by Taranaki's district councils. Although this is a decrease since 2009, the number protected in district plans has risen from 193 in 2009 to 212 in 2014 – an increase of 19.

- The number of buildings, structures or items listed with Heritage New Zealand has increased by 10 from 150 in 2009 to 160 in 2014.
- No Category A structures have been demolished in New Plymouth since 2009.
- Earthquake strengthening has become a significant issue for heritage buildings since the 2010 Christchurch earthquakes. For some areas, such as South Taranaki and Stratford, earthquake strengthening is not always a viable option and the costs of strengthening has resulted in many heritage buildings becoming unoccupied.
- The Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme database includes 1,899 archaeological sites in Taranaki. The greatest number of sites, 976 is found in South Taranaki, followed by 717 in the New Plymouth District and 108 in the Stratford District.
- District council surveys confirm a high level of satisfaction by residents in relation to the amenity values in their area.
- All councils are actively involved in providing, developing or upgrading community facilities within their district.

Notwithstanding the above, one of the challenges of managing significant natural features, historic heritage and amenity values is that they are often hard to define. There can also be a lack of information and awareness about important sites or values. Of note, feedback from stakeholders, particularly district councils, was that this was one area where the effectiveness of the RPS would be enhanced by its policies providing more policy direction and support.



In all three district councils, one of the top three aspects residents liked most about where they live was the proximity to Mount Taranaki.

5.8 Natural hazards

What the objective says

Current RPS objective for natural hazards is:

- *To avoid or mitigate natural hazards within the Taranaki region by minimizing the net costs or risks of natural hazards to people, property and the environment of the region.*

What this assessment shows

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing natural hazards are **being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- In Taranaki significant potential hazards include volcanic activity, earthquakes, high winds, drought and erosion and landslips, although to some extent, vulnerability to natural hazards depends on where in the region residents live.
- Taranaki's councils are readying themselves for future challenges from extreme climatic and geological events.
- Councils in the region have prepared RMA plans that contain controls to reduce hazard risks, participate in civil defence and emergency management (CDEM) and are continuously reviewing current hazard management information.
- Taranaki Civil Defence Emergency Management Group plans and prepares for emergencies.
- Taranaki is not considered a high risk area for earthquakes.
- Flood control schemes for Lower Waitara and Waiwhakaiho, Waitotara and Stony rivers are in place.
- Significant upgrades of the Waiwhakaiho and Waitara flood protection schemes have been completed.

As previously noted, the Council (and district councils) are continuously reviewing current hazard management information. The State of the Environment Report noted that, as a result of climate change, rainfall is predicted to decrease in summer and increase in winter. This may result in an increase in both the severity and frequency of flooding. Also of note, there is a 50:50 chance of Mount Taranaki erupting in the next 23 years. This is double the former annual probability estimates.



Waitara is built on a flood plain. Recent upgrades to the Council's Waitara Flood Protection Scheme offer the highest level of protection from flooding for the township.

5.9 Waste management

What the objective says

Current RPS objective for waste management is:

- *To minimise the quantity of waste being produced and disposed of within the Taranaki region and to ensure that the disposal of wastes avoids or mitigates adverse effects on the environment.*

What this assessment shows

Achievement of this objective is dependant upon actions by both the Council and the local district councils. The four councils have adopted a collaborative approach to promote regional waste minimisation.

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing waste **generally being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- Environmental issues associated with solid waste disposal (such as odour, seagulls and pollution leaching to groundwater) have largely been addressed.
- The entire Taranaki region is served by one well-regulated landfill (Colson Road).
- District councils in the region follow current best practice in waste management by adopting the principles of minimisation, recovery and recycling and the trend is for this to continue in future.
- Kerbside recycling in the region has steadily increased over the past five years.
- The amount of waste being disposed of to the regional landfill (Colson Road) has remained relatively constant over the past six years. However, more than half of the waste going to landfill could be recycled or composted.
- Despite the region leading New Zealand in economic growth, waste disposal in Taranaki is not increasing as rapidly as it is nationally.

In summary, there are a significant number of actions being undertaken with generally positive trends in terms of minimising the amount of waste that ends up in a landfill. However, the quantities of waste needing to be disposed continue to increase (though at a smaller rate than the national average).



Recycling at Yarrow's Stadium, New Plymouth, All Black's test 2010.

5.10 Minerals

What the objective says

Current RPS objective for minerals is:

- *To provide for use and development of the region's mineral resources while avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects on the environment.*

What this assessment shows

The RPS objective provides for the appropriate use and development of the region's minerals resources. Minerals include aggregate (such as rocks, gravel, and sand), coal, and petroleum minerals (such as oil, gas and condensate).

As noted in the RPS, use and development of mineral resources may be of regional and national importance. It provides benefits to people and communities in Taranaki and to New Zealand as a whole.¹⁸

The RPS objective for mineral is **being achieved** based upon the following observations:¹⁹

- All four operative regional plans (which are required to give effect to the RPS) include policies and rules that explicitly recognise and provide for appropriate use and development, including mineral resources.
- Council compliance monitoring and enforcement programmes in place to address any adverse environmental effects associated with the industry.
- All three district councils have provisions in their plans to ensure mineral extraction activities avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse environmental effects.
- The views of industry groups, which were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework and believe it largely recognises the importance of resource use and development.

Notwithstanding the above, dissenting views include some environmental groups, which were particularly concerned about adverse effects associated with oil and gas activities (e.g. climate change) while district councils sought better alignment between regional and district plan provisions (refer section 4.2.2 and Appendix IV).



Taranaki is home to all of New Zealand's oil and natural gas production and provides 90% of the industry's nationwide employment.

¹⁸ *The effectiveness of the RPS in managing adverse effects associated with mineral use and development are separately addressed in the sections and findings relating to land, fresh water, air and coast.*

¹⁹ *This assessment must be necessarily based upon qualitative assessments or sources other than state of the environmental monitoring.*

5.11 Energy

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for energy are:

- *To promote the exploration, development, production, transmission and distribution of energy to meet the energy supply needs of the region and New Zealand in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the environment.*
- *To promote the use and development of renewable sources of energy in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the environment.*
- *To increase efficiency in the exploration, development use, production, transmission and distribution of energy.*



Lake Rotorangi, hydro-generation storage lake created by the Patea Dam.

What this assessment shows

The RPS objectives were adopted to ensure Taranaki has an adequate supply of renewable and non renewable energy to meet the needs of people and communities in Taranaki and New Zealand and to encourage energy efficiency.²⁰

It is officers' view that the RPS objective for energy is **generally being achieved** based upon the following observations:²¹

- All four operative regional plans (which are required to give effect to the RPS) include policies and rules that explicitly recognise and provide for appropriate use and development, including renewable and non-renewable energy resources.
- Council compliance monitoring and enforcement programmes in place to address any adverse environmental effects associated with the industry.
- All three district councils have provisions in their plans addressing the exploration, development, production, transmission and distribution of energy in a manner avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse environmental effects.
- The views of industry which were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework.
- RPS gives effect to national policy directions – the *National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008* and the *National Policy Statement on Renewable Energy Generation 2011*.

Notwithstanding the above, dissenting views include some environmental groups, which were particularly concerned about adverse effects associated with oil and gas activities (e.g. climate change) and district councils sought better alignment between regional and district plans (refer section 4.2.2 and Appendix IV).

²⁰ *The effectiveness of the RPS in managing adverse effects associated with energy use and development are separately addressed in the sections and findings relating to land, fresh water, air and coast.*

²¹ *This assessment must be necessarily based upon qualitative assessments or sources other than state of the environmental monitoring.*

5.12 Built environment

What the objectives say

Currently resource management issues relating to the built environment have been grouped together in the RPS.

The RPS objective for urban development is:

- *To promote sustainable urban development in the Taranaki region.*

The objective for regionally significant infrastructure is:

- *To provide for the continued safe and efficient operation of the region's network utilities and other infrastructure of regional significance (including where this is of regional importance), while avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects on the environment.*

What this assessment shows

The RPS objectives were adopted to ensure Taranaki recognises and provides for sustainable urban development plus network facilities and other regionally significant infrastructure. Meeting the objectives contribute to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of people and communities.²²

It is officers' view that the RPS objectives for the built environment are **generally being achieved** based upon the following observations:

- All four operative regional plans (which are required to give effect to the RPS) include policies and rules that explicitly recognise and provide for appropriate use and development, including those relating to the built environment.
- RPS has informed the review of the current freshwater, soil and coastal plans have increased provision and recognition of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure
- All three district councils have provisions in their plans addressing the impacts of land use on the built environment.
- The views of industry which were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework.
- In relation to regionally significant infrastructure, the RPS gives effect to national policy directions – the NPS-ET and the NPS-REG.

²² *The effectiveness of the RPS in managing adverse effects associated with regionally significant infrastructure are separately addressed in the sections and findings relating to land, fresh water, air and coast.*

Notwithstanding the above, both industry groups and district councils raised concerns about residential and business activities encroaching into rural areas and creating reverse sensitivities issues. This is impacting on industries such as poultry and dairying where they potentially have to constrain their activities to meet odour requirements.

District councils also sought further direction in the RPS to:

- require councils to adopt sustainable urban design
- require district councils to address the issue of housing supply and affordability;
- require district councils to locate growth so it is accessible and connected to infrastructure;
- ensure urban form reduces impacts on the environment (e.g. stormwater), allows for connectivity and provides for a range of transport modes;
- ensure the efficient use of land and infrastructure, including ensuring that rural areas are used for predominately rural activities and rural industry.

While the pressure of urban growth are not experienced universally across the Taranaki region, a projected 9-10% population growth between 2013 and 2023 in the New Plymouth District may be an emerging issue for Taranaki.



New Plymouth urban form overlooking Port Taranaki and the coast

5.13 Issues of significance to iwi

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for tangata whenua are:

- *To take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in the exercise of functions and powers under the Resource Management Act.*
- *To have particular regard to the concept of kaitiakitanga in relation to managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources in the Taranaki region, in a way that accommodates the views of individual iwi and hapu.*
- *To recognise and provide for the cultural and traditional relationship of Māori with their ancestral lands, water, air, coastal environment, wāhi tapu and other sites and taonga within the Taranaki region.*
- *Management of natural and physical resources in the Taranaki region will be carried out in a manner that takes into account the cultural and spiritual values of Iwi o Taranaki and in a manner which respects and accommodates tikanga Māori.*

What this assessment shows

The RMA currently requires the RPS to include a separate section on Issues of significance to iwi.

Tangata whenua of the region have particular interests and concerns relating to the natural environment. The objectives are about explicitly recognising and providing for their interests and concerns through regional and district council processes and plans. This includes taking into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, recognising their role as kaitiakitanga, and recognising and providing for the relationship of Maori with ancestral lands, water, sites, wahi tapu and other taonga, and recognising cultural and spiritual values of tangata whenua in resource management processes.²³

The RPS objective for resource use and development is **generally being achieved** based upon the following observations:²⁴

- The current RPS includes and documents a *declaration of understanding* between iwi o taranaki and the Council to document a mutual understanding on the principles of the Treaty of

Waitangi and the *Code of Conduct* that is an expression of the Council's commitment to take into account Treaty principles in the exercise of its resource management functions.

- All four operative regional plans (which are required to give effect to the RPS) include policies and rules that recognises resource management issues of significance to iwi
- Statutory acknowledgements included in regional and district plans
- Resource consent processes are in place to engage and consult iwi
- Historic heritage of importance to iwi, where it is known, is protected through rules and policies in regional and district plans
- As part of the Treaty of Waitangi settlements, iwi representation on Council's regulatory and planning committees will occur.

Notwithstanding that, as stated in section 3.4 of this report, the political context in which councils and iwi operate in a post settlement environment means that the RPS needs to be updated and/or reframed to better incorporate Maori values and principles. This issue has been raised by iwi through many forums and iwi feedback on this review. Further work on incorporating Te Ao Maori and mātauranga Maori into resource management processes, building Maori capacity, and promoting effective Maori engagement needs to be well resourced and may occur over a long time period, so key learnings and understandings can be incorporated into regional and district planning processes.

5.14 Summary – are outcomes being achieved?

In summary, the RPS has been generally effective in achieving its resource management objectives. State of the environment monitoring and reporting confirms that the majority of objectives are being achieved or are largely being achieved.

In relation to the maintenance of the quality of our air, water, coastal and health of our soil resources, state of the environment monitoring indicates that Taranaki is tracking well in terms of data trends. In terms of water quality, data suggests that the water quality is improving, or at the least maintaining (no significant change).

Of note this assessment did not identify any objectives that were not being achieved. However, one RPS objectives relating to managing natural and physical resources to maintain indigenous biodiversity was only partially being achieved.

²³ *The effectiveness of the RPS in managing adverse effects impacting on resource issues of significance to iwi are separately addressed in the sections and findings relating to land, fresh water, air, coast, biodiversity, natural features and landscapes, historic heritage, and amenity values.*

²⁴ *This assessment must be necessarily based upon qualitative assessments or sources other than state of the environmental monitoring.*

State of the environment data showed significant community effort in promoting the condition and formal protection of remnant sites. However, across Taranaki, there has been a small but on-going loss in the areal extent of both wetlands and indigenous forest and shrub land. Maintaining indigenous biodiversity in Taranaki therefore remains a challenge requiring further effort by Taranaki's four councils.

This assessment has highlighted a number of areas to improve and build on the current RPS. This might include the RPS being more directive on a number of environmental issues, particularly those that require increased focus and effort. Of particular note, it was felt that the RPS could be updated to be more directive and progress initiatives and mechanisms to better incorporate Maori values and principle, give better effect to Treaty settlement obligations, and better work in partnership with iwi o Taranaki.

Table 3: Summary of the effectiveness of the RPS in achieving its objectives

RPS objectives relating to:		Are the objectives being achieved?	Comments
1.	Resource use and development	Achieved	Taranaki has the highest gross domestic product (GDP) in New Zealand with generally positive environmental trends
2.	Land and soil	Achieved	92% of land within the Taranaki region is sustainably managed. No significant soil health issues
3.	Fresh water	Generally being achieved	Latest Council monitoring shows improving ecological health of our rivers. Small but on going loss of wetlands however
4.	Air	Achieved	National air quality standards have never been exceeded in Taranaki
5.	Coast	Achieved	Values being maintained. Reduction in number of coastal permits
6.	Indigenous biodiversity	Partially being achieved	Increased community effort in promoting the condition of remnant sites. Small ongoing loss in the extent of indigenous forest, scrubland and wetlands still occurring
7.	Natural features & landscapes, historic heritage, & amenity values	Generally being achieved	Regional and district plans recognise and provide for these value but further policy direction and support sought
8.	Natural hazards	Achieved	Regional and district councils continuously reviewing hazard management planning, preparedness and response
9.	Waste management	Generally being achieved	Small but continuing increase in the quantities of waste needing to be disposed of in the region
10.	Minerals	Achieved	The views of industry groups, which were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework and believe it largely recognises the importance of resource use and development
11.	Energy	Generally being achieved	Comments as per above
12.	Built environment)	Generally being achieved	Generally provided for through district planning. However, issues associated with residential and business activities encroaching into rural areas and creating reverse sensitivities issues. Further policy direction and support sought by district councils
13.	Resource management issues of significance to iwi	Generally being achieved	Generally provided for through regional and district planning. However, improvements sought from tangata whenua to better incorporate Maori values and principles into regional and district planning processes. Further policy direction and support sought.

6. Are the methods being implemented?

This section identifies RPS methods to achieve its objectives and implement its policies and assesses to what extent the Council has delivered on its commitments.

The RPS contains 332 methods. For the purposes of this review, methods of implementation have been grouped according to the following nine broad themes:

1. Regional plans and the application of regional rules to allow and regulate activities.
2. District plans and the application of district rules to allow and regulate activities.
3. Information, education and advice to promote sustainable management practices.
4. Property planning and extension services, including the riparian and sustainable hill country programmes.
5. Working with others contributing to RPS objectives.
6. Economic instruments.
7. Enforcement provisions of the RMA.
8. Monitoring and investigations.
9. Advocacy.

Assessment of whether RPS methods have been implemented is based upon Council's reporting of the Long Term Plan and state of the environment monitoring.

6.1 Regional plans

The RPS identifies the preparation, and review of regional plans in its methods of implementation for all 30 issues identified in the RPS.

RPS issues are addressed in one or more of the four regional plans prepared by the Council. The Council has a complete suite of operative plans, these being:

- *Regional Air Quality Plan for Taranaki*
- *Regional Freshwater Plan for Taranaki*
- *Regional Soil Plan for Taranaki*
- *Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki*

Regional plans, unlike regional policy statements, include regional rules that are used to regulate or allow activities that have potential to result in significant adverse environmental effects on freshwater, air, coastal and soil resources. They also provide certainty to resource users.

For activities having no or very little environmental effect, the regional plans have rules 'permitting' the activity without the requirement (and cost) to obtain a resource

consent. Permitted activities are still required to meet certain conditions dealing with the prevention or mitigation of adverse effects.

In circumstances where the conditions of the permitted rule cannot be met, a resource consent is required. For activities having more than minor adverse effects, a resource consent is required.

Since 1 January 2010, when the current RPS became operative, the second generation *Air Quality Plan for Taranaki* was made operative July 2011 and the Council has commenced reviews of its coastal, freshwater and soil plans (these reviews are still in progress). Over that time, 2,770 consents²⁵ were processed, issued, monitored and reported upon under these plans and in accordance with the RPS provisions.

This interim review has however highlighted that many stakeholders find the Council's planning documents complex and difficult to understand. These comments would not be unique to this council or this region. However, going forward (and particularly if we move towards having a combined RPS/regional plans), it would be useful to investigate using digital and spatial technology to improve the accessibility of our planning documents and their user friendliness (i.e. Eplanning).

6.2 District plans

The New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki district councils are responsible for managing land use. Through their land use responsibilities, district councils play an important role for a range of RPS issues including the protection of Taranaki's heritage, natural features and landscape, biodiversity and amenity values.

The RPS for the purposes of integrated management identifies that, for a number of issues, district councils **may** consider the inclusion of provisions in district plans to manage adverse effects of land use activities and management practices. However, unlike some regional policy statements elsewhere in New Zealand, it does not direct the district councils.

All three district councils have operative district plans. As previously noted, a number of stakeholders, including district councils, sought that a revised RPS be more directive to inform district plan reviews and to promote alignment across the region.

²⁵ Record of consents processed between 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2016, as derived from Consents database.

6.3 Information, education and advice

The provision of advice and information to promote awareness and/or sustainable practices is identified as a method in 23 of the RPS issues.

Since the adoption of the RPS, the Council has regularly developed, maintained and delivered comprehensive information, education and advisory programmes on a broad range of issues. Highlights include:

- Ongoing preparation, maintenance and distribution of a large number of guidelines, information sheets, and media releases on a broad range of subjects covered by the RPS.
- Upgraded website and social media to improve public accessibility to Council information and guidance.
- Each year, the Council receiving and responding to numerous requests from the public for information on resource management issues. For example, in 2015/2016, the Council provided information which assisted with the processing of 382 resource consent applications and 243 inquiries on sustainable land management and riparian management. All requests for general information and assistance are responded to within ten working days.
- Ongoing maintenance and distribution of information to resource users and the general public through other avenues such as social media, the website, seminars and field days.
- Ongoing maintenance of a network of 44 monitoring stations that continuous record rainfall, wind, water level, water temperature, air temperature and soil moisture and temperature. The data is publicly available on the Council's website and is updated as regularly as every 30 minutes.
- School programme actively targeting and working with teachers and school children to raise environmental awareness and encourage the sustainable use of the region's resources.
- In 2013 the Council established the Rainforest School at Pukeiti that presents 15 activity options for teachers and students that explore concepts such as sustainability and conservation.
- Annual Environmental Awards that recognise and showcase the efforts of individuals, groups and organisations to protect and enhance the environment.
- Project LiteClub, Para Kore and other waste minimisation programmes targeting sports clubs, marae and businesses to promote waste minimisation practices.

6.4 Property planning and extension services

The RPS identifies in relation to six issues that the Council will deliver property planning and other services as part of its non-regulatory (voluntary) riparian and sustainable hill country programmes.

Since 2010, the Council has prepared and achieved good coverage of property plans (figures 2 and 3 overleaf) and has maintained ongoing liaison with plan holders to assist with the implementation of plan recommendations.

As at 30 June 2016, there were 2,587 riparian management plans recommending the planting of 5,760 km and fencing of 6,580 km of stream banks. At June 2016, 85% of riparian plan streams are now voluntarily protected by fencing and 70% by vegetation where recommended.

As at 30 June 2016, there were a total of 359 comprehensive farm plans and 624 agroforestry plans have been prepared by the Council. The area of hill country covered by sustainable land management plans was 203,279 hectares. This represents 28% of the region and most of the hill country 'at risk' from erosion.

In addition to the delivery of comprehensive property planning services, the Council operates a scheme involving the supply to property plan holders of low cost native plants and poplar and willow plants for riparian and soil stability purposes. Including 2009/2010 (when the RPS became operative) the Council has supplied over 2.8 million native plants and poplars and willows to landholders over the life of the RPS.

The provision of planting material at cost was highlighted in the State of the Environment Report (2015) as a key component in the success of the Council's riparian and sustainable hill country programmes.

The riparian and sustainable hill country programmes also contribute to the accelerated erosion and freshwater objectives of the RPS.

Contributing to its biodiversity outcomes is an extension programme being delivered under the Biosecurity Act 1993 – including the Self-help Possum Control Programme (Figure 4 overleaf).

Through the Self-help Possum Control Programme most rateable rural land (including remnant bush and wetlands) on the ring plain and coastal terraces in the region is under programmed possum control with possums being maintained at very low levels.

As at 30 June 2016, the Self-help Possum Control Programme covers over 4,000 properties covering 240,200 hectares – 32% of the region. It also provides important protection to the Egmont National Park.

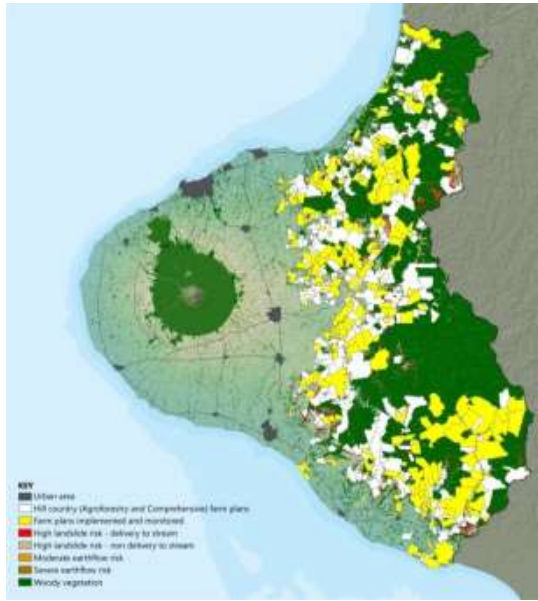


Figure 2: Coverage of comprehensive and agroforestry plans



Figure 3: Coverage of riparian plans and their implementation



Figure 4: Coverage of Self-help Possum Control Programme

6.5 Working with others

Working with others broadly captures a suite of methods of implementation across all 30 issues identified in the RPS that involve liaising, assisting and supporting others contributing to RPS objectives.

Since the adoption of the RPS, the Council has regularly supported the efforts of other organisations, industries and resource users to achieve the policies and objectives set out in the RPS across a broad range of issues.

Highlights include:

- Liaising, advocating and having input into the development and implementation of Government policies and standards, including legislative reform, national policy statements and standards.
- Delivery of the South Taranaki and Regional Erosion Support Scheme involving the Council working with the Government (who contributed over \$1 million in funding) to build on the Council's programmes and promote soil conservation practices in the Waitotara catchment and other erodible land in the region.
- In 2010, following a Council investigation, it worked with the Government and South Taranaki District Council to remediate and 'clean up' the old Patea Freezing Works site, which had been identified as contaminated land.
- In 2009/2010, the Taranaki Solid Waste Committee was established that involves the Council and district councils collaborating on waste management issues and programmes of significance to the region.
- In July 2012 and November 2013, the Council, three district councils, brand owners and the Ministry for the Environment undertook / contributed to hazardous and special waste collections from rural areas.
- In 2012, the Council led the establishment of Wild for Taranaki²⁶ whereby signatories of the Taranaki Biodiversity Forum Accord (including DOC, district councils, QEII and other major conservation and community groups) agreed to work together to promote better biodiversity outcomes for Taranaki.
- Continued support and collaboration with district councils in relation to waste minimisation, transportation and civil defence responsibilities,
- Continued support and collaboration with Government departments including implementation of National Pest Plant Accord, Biosecurity Capacity

Network, marine oil spill responses, and civil defence emergencies.

- In 2011, for the purposes of improved integrated management, agreement to a transfer of powers under section 33 of the RMA with Stratford and New Plymouth district councils that they enforce rules relating to backyard burning in defined urban areas.
- Provision of advice and information into industry standards and guidelines.
- Supporting community groups, iwi, science providers and others on citizen science projects, including a *Curious Minds* project which aims to capture local knowledge on four coastal threatened species in Taranaki (orca, reef heron, little blue penguin and New Zealand fur seal) and SHMAK training for hapu and iwi representatives on monitoring the ecological health of local waterways.
- Supporting industry initiatives promoting freshwater outcomes such as the *Sustainable Dairying Accord* (and its predecessor, the *Dairying and Clean Streams Accord*).

In addition, the Council has actively assisted individual land owners and community groups to achieve riparian, sustainable land management (refer section 6.4 above) and biodiversity outcomes. Through Key Native Ecosystems (KNE) programme, the Council has provided property planning services, financial assistance, and/or other assistance (e.g. enhancement plantings, weed and pest control) to plan holders to maintain and enhance biodiversity values.

As at 1 July 2016, the Council's Inventory of KNEs includes 218 sites, 172 of which are partially or completely privately owned. At that time 101 KNEs were subject to landowner management with Biodiversity Plans and ongoing Council support. The Council is targeting sites where the greatest amount of biodiversity protection could be achieved, alongside willing landowners, in the most cost effective manner.

6.6 Economic instruments

This method seeks to consider the use of economic instruments by the Council for land, freshwater, coastal and biodiversity purposes.

Presently, the Council provides quality riparian and soil conservation plant materials at low cost to property plan holders (refer section 6.4 above). This service reduces the cost to the land occupier of adopting sustainable resource management practices.

In the hill country, there are incentives under the South Taranaki and Regional Erosion Support Scheme to fence and plant erodible land (refer section 6.5 above).

²⁶ Charitable trust dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the region's ecosystems and landscapes

The Council further provides environmental enhancement funding. Including 2009/2010 (when the RPS became operative) and up until 30 June 2016, the Council has provided almost \$3.5 million of environmental enhancement funding to protect the environment. Typically these monies have been used to maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity values associated with KNEs and wetlands. The Council also allocated monies to administer and service the Taranaki Tree Trust and more recently Wild for Taranaki

Financial contributions are increasingly required in association with consents for stream piping and realignments to mitigate in-stream habitat loss.

On occasion, the Council has considered other forms of economic instruments, particularly in relation to emergency events. Following the June 2015 storm event, which resulted in significant landslides, damage to farm infrastructure, and downstream flooding the Council delivered a storm response package worth almost \$400,000 to those most affected.

6.7 Enforcement

The Council provides a 24-hour, seven days a week environmental incident response service for the Taranaki region. Environmental incidents include incidents of non-compliance with the conditions of a resource consent, the rules of a regional plan, or Part 3 duties and restrictions of the RPS.

Since 2009/2010 (the financial year of adopting the RPS), there have been 2,685 public enquiries or complaints received by the Council in relation to land, fresh water, air and coastal incidents. It is estimated that the Council receives in the order of 380 complaints each year on resource management matters covered by its jurisdiction.

All complaints are investigated and appropriate action taken. The Council's response varies according to the circumstances. For example, in some cases, investigations will confirm that the activity is a permitted activity and no further action (besides possibly advice and information) is required. On other occasions, investigations will confirm that the activities require the land occupier to obtain a resource consent under one of its regional plans. On another occasions, activities result in the Council serving an abatement notice on the resource user.

Since 2010, the Council has prosecuted 32 individuals and/or businesses for serious non-compliance with its plans or the RMA. All prosecutions were successful.

Appropriate enforcement, underpinned by strong compliance monitoring, is considered essential.

6.8 Monitoring and investigations

This method outlines the Council's commitment to monitor the state of the land, fresh water, air and coastal resources in the Taranaki region. As outlined in Section 5 above, the Council has implemented comprehensive state of the environment monitoring programmes. Additional research and investigations are commissioned as required.

The monitoring results have been reported in the Council's state of the environment reports and have been used for this review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS.

6.9 Advocacy

This method outlines the Council's commitment to advocacy and liaison with other agencies.

Since the adoption of the Plan, the Council has advocated to a large number of agencies on a broad range of topics covered by the RPS.

Between 1 January 2010 and 30 June 2016, the Council has made 138 submissions on a plethora of resource management matters, including national policy, legislation and guidelines and district plans.²⁷

6.10 Summary – is the RPS delivering on its methods?

The RPS sets out methods for implementing its objectives and policies. As shown in Table 4 below, the Council is implementing all the methods of implementation set out in the RPS.

²⁷ Taranaki Regional Council list of submissions. Document number 87748.

Table 4: Summary of progress: implementing RPS methods of implementation

What did we promise to deliver?	Where are we at?	Conclusion
Preparation of regional plans and the application of regional rules	Plans prepared. Rules applied to allow and regulate activities Coastal, freshwater and soil plans currently being reviewed	Commitment is being delivered
Preparation of district plans and the application of district rules	Plans prepared. Rules applied to allow and regulate activities	Commitment is being delivered
Provision of information and advice to promote sustainable management practices	Responded to public requests for information Provide ongoing advice to plan holders Prepared and distribute guidelines and pamphlets	Commitment is being delivered
Implement significant extension programmes, including the Sustainable Land Management Programme	Prepared 359 comprehensive and agroforestry farm plans covering 28% of the region (and most of the 'at risk' hill country) Prepared 2,587 riparian plans. 85% of riparian plan streams now protected by fencing and 70% by vegetation Provided 2.8 million low-cost riparian and soil conservation plants to plan holders 32% of the region covered by the Self-help Possum Control Programme where possums being maintained at low numbers	Commitment is being delivered
Working with others	Delivery of South Taranaki and Regional Erosion Support Scheme Member of and support for the Taranaki Biodiversity Forum Accord Delivery of KNE and Regionally Significant Wetland programmes, involving the protection of indigenous biodiversity values	Commitment is being delivered
Economic instruments	Provision of riparian and pole plants at low cost \$3.5 million of Environment Enhancement Grant funding since 2010 for environmental projects Serviced and supported the Taranaki Tree Trust and Wild for Taranaki	Commitment is being delivered
Enforcement of the RMA	Responded to about 380 incidents per annum Prosecuted serious non-compliance as appropriate (32 prosecutions since 2010)	Commitment is being delivered
Monitoring and investigations	Implemented comprehensive state of the environment monitoring programmes Additional research and investigations commissioned as required	Commitment is being delivered
Advocacy	Undertook advocacy and prepared submissions (138 submissions since 2010)	Commitment is being delivered

7. Efficiency of the RPS

Reviewing the efficiency of the RPS, at its simplest, is a measure of whether outcomes sought have been achieved at a reasonable cost. That is, does the delivery of the RPS represent value for money?

This section assesses the RPS's methods of implementations in relation to:

- The cost of the RPS in terms of administrative, compliance and broader economic costs; and
- The benefits of the RPS.

7.1 Costs of the RPS

Costs associated with the administration and implementation of the RPS are those incurred by the Council (i.e. administration costs) and the wider community (i.e. compliance costs and broader economic costs).

7.1.1 Administration costs

Administration costs are the costs incurred by Council to implement the methods of the RPS.

Council has evaluated and rated the administration costs associated with RPS as low. The RPS does not contain rules so there are no regulatory costs associated with the consideration and issuing of consents, compliance monitoring and enforcement (these costs are more properly considered as part of the implementation of regional plans).

The non regulatory methods of the RPS represent a significant investment by the Council. They include programmes such as the riparian, hill country and KNE programmes. However, these costs are low in comparison with the net environmental benefits and in comparison with other management options. Administrative costs associated with the non regulatory methods are publicly considered on an annual basis through the LTP process and on other occasions through the review of the RPS and regional plans.

Other administration costs incurred by the Council include policy and planning costs associated with the preparation, monitoring and review of the RPS (including state of the environment reporting), responding to public enquiries on its provisions, and general advocacy.

7.1.2 Compliance costs

Compliance costs are the costs incurred by resource users to comply with RPS provisions (e.g. costs associated with applying for consents and undertaking physical works to comply with consent conditions and/or RPS provisions).

While the RPS does not contain rules, section 104 (1) [Consideration of applications] of the RMA does require consent authorities to have regard to any relevant provisions of the RPS when considering a resource consent application and any associated submissions. However, as the regional plans give effect to the RPS there are no added compliance costs associated with meeting RPS provisions.

Similarly there should be no added compliance costs resulting from the imposition of costs on resource users through requirements to modify their practices and equipment. Any additional costs would have been incurred through regional plans and the consenting process and do not represent an additional cost.

7.1.3 Broader economic costs

Broader economic costs refer to costs associated with a RPS constraining production and innovation, or resulting in the sub-optimal allocation of resources.

As previously noted, the largely non regulatory approach involves working with land owners to implement sustainable land management practices. Regulatory constraints imposed through the RPS are limited to those imposed by regional and district plans.

Few resource use activities are therefore potentially affected or constrained. Furthermore, standards, terms and conditions set out in the regional rules and resource consents are generally consistent with industry standards and best practice.

The RPS evaluation to date has not identified any issues where the Plan has unnecessarily constrained production and innovation, constrained resource use, or resulted in the sub-optimal use of resources.

Of note resource users, as part of this review, did not identify any issues around compliance costs and indeed noted that they were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework (refer section 4.2 above).

7.1.4 Summary of the economic costs of implementing the RPS

A summary of the economic costs of implementing the RPS is set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Assessment of the costs of implementing the RPS

Type of costs	Measures	Evaluation			Comments
		Low	Moderate	High	
Administrative cost (costs incurred by Council to administer the Plan & implement non-regulatory methods)	Added costs incurred by Council to deliver regulatory methods	√			RPS does not contain rules. Regional plans give effect to RPS however minimal added administrative costs. Most costs are associated with delivery of non regulatory methods and with developing, monitoring and reviewing the RPS
	Costs incurred by Council to deliver non regulatory methods		√		
	Planning costs incurred by Council to develop, monitor and review RPS	√			
Compliance costs (costs incurred by resource users to comply with RPS provisions)	Added consenting and other costs charged to resource users	√			Regional plans give effect to the RPS therefore no added compliance costs associated with meeting RPS provisions
Other economic costs (broader costs associated with RPS constraining production & innovation, or resulting in the sub-optimal allocation of resources)	Constraints limiting resource users' flexibility to achieve environmental results anticipated	√			No issues so far identified. RPS provisions generally consistent with industry best practice & should not unnecessarily constrain production, new entrants or resource use flexibility
	Production constraints placed upon targeted sectors	√			
	Constraints limiting new entrants to a sector / industry, or limiting resource use flexibility	√			
	Constraints through a lack of certainty to resource users about what they can do & how they manage resources	√			
Overall economic cost of RPS provisions					LOW

7.2 Benefits of the RPS

The benefits of the RPS are the environmental outcomes outlined in Section 5 above. These benefits are considered to be significant.

Unsustainable resource use can have (and historically has had) significant adverse environmental and economic costs through loss of soil and productive capacity of the land, impacts on water quality, degradation of amenity, cultural, biodiversity and historical values, increased natural hazard risk and damage to property and infrastructure. However, over the last decade, state of the environment monitoring confirms generally positive trends.

In addition to the largely positive environmental outcomes of the RPS, the RPS has enabled appropriate use and development of land, freshwater, air and coastal resources. That is the RPS does not unnecessarily restrict activities. Feedback from industry and resource users was generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework.

The benefits of the RPS also include increased certainty and clarity to resource users. The coastal, freshwater and soil plans predate the current RPS. As appropriate RPS provisions direct and or provide additional support of the policy intent of the older documents during the consenting process.

7.3 Benefits and costs of the RPS

Monetising all benefits and costs is impracticable. While Council costs with implementing programmes can be quantified (although not necessarily in monetary terms), it is less easy to quantify community and land occupier costs. It is less easy again to quantify the monetary value of the environmental outcomes achieved. Assessing the RPS has necessarily relied on a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

Table 6 summarises the results of the Council's assessment of the benefits and costs of the RPS. In brief, the RPS has been assessed as being very efficient with the benefits being substantially greater than the cost. Through this document, Council will be seeking the views of stakeholders on their views on the efficiency of the RPS and whether they believe the benefits of the RPS outweigh its costs.

Table 6: Summary of the benefits and costs of the RPS

Benefits	Costs
(Summary from cost effectiveness assessment)	(Summary from cost estimation)
<p>Environment (outcome) benefit</p> <p>87% of hill country being sustainably managed</p> <p>84% of riparian plan stream banks fenced and 70% protected with riparian vegetation</p> <p>Improving ecological trends at 14 freshwater sites have become 'highly significant' since 2007</p> <p>No air quality issues</p> <p>In the past six years, 95% of sites sampled at popular swimming spots were within Ministry for the Environment guidelines for swimming</p> <p>Small overall decrease in areal extent of wetlands and indigenous forests</p>	<p>Administrative costs</p> <p>Non recoverable administrative costs incurred by the Council in administering the RPS principally relate to policy and planning costs associated with the preparation, monitoring and review of the RPS (including state of the environment reporting)</p>
	<p>Compliance costs</p> <p>RPS does not include rules. Compliance costs largely incurred through regional and district plans. No added compliance costs associated with meeting RPS provisions</p>
<p>Other benefits</p> <p>Protection of air, soil, freshwater and coastal resources and associated values, while also avoiding, remedying and mitigating adverse effects associated with resource use</p>	<p>Economic costs</p> <p>Few constraints on resource users in terms of RPS constraining production and innovation, or resulting in the sub-optimal allocation of resource</p>
<p>Summary</p> <p>Benefits of RPS assessed as high. Environmental monitoring shows positive progress on further enhancing already good environment. Some areas for improvement noted, particularly in relation to indigenous biodiversity and tangata whenua</p>	<p>Summary</p> <p>Costs and constraints associated with RPS administration and implementation have been assessed as low with the exception of costs associated with implementing the non regulatory methods such as the riparian and sustainable hill country programmes, which have been assessed as moderate</p>
Conclusion	
The RPS has a positive ratio of benefit to cost	
This conclusion is based on Council's assessment that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RPS is largely meeting or is on track to meet its targets. This assessment has not identified any objectives that were not being achieved. In relation to the maintenance of the quality of our air, water, coastal and health of our soil resources, state of the environment monitoring indicates that Taranaki is tracking well in terms of data trends. In terms of water quality, data suggests that the water quality is improving, or at the least maintaining (no significant change). However, two areas for improvement noted where two RPS objectives relating to indigenous biodiversity and tangata whenua are only partially being achieved. The RPS does not contain rules. Accordingly the administrative costs associated with the consenting and enforcement regime are nil with minimal costs on resource users. While the costs of implementing non regulatory methods such as the riparian and sustainable hill country programmes and Environmental Enhancement Grant funding are not insignificant nevertheless the costs are relatively minor in comparison to the environmental outcomes being achieved. 	
The efficiency of the RPS is regarded as:	
High (the benefit is substantially greater than the cost)	

8. Conclusion and recommendations

The RPS was made operative in 2010. The RPS is standing the test of time well and is assisting the Council in carrying out its resource management responsibilities. The RPS has been both effective and efficient and no issues have been identified that would warrant an urgent review.

This conclusion is based on Council's assessment that:

- The RPS is largely on track to meet its objectives. In relation to the maintenance of the quality of our air, water, coastal and health of our soil resources, state of the environment monitoring indicates that Taranaki is tracking well in terms of data trends. In terms of water quality, data suggests that the water quality is improving, or at the least being maintained (no significant change).
- Two areas in the RPS were highlighted for increased focus. First, there continues to be a small but on-going loss in the areal extent of both wetlands and indigenous forest and shrub land in Taranaki. Second, both regional and district plans (and associated resource consenting processes) recognise resource management issues of significance to iwi. However, the political context in which councils and iwi operate in a post settlement environment has completely changed and there is an opportunity to review planning systems and processes to account for this.
- Methods for implementing RPS objectives and policies have been implemented.
- Administrative costs are low with minimal costs on resource users. Achieving the RPS's objectives is based on a combination of regulatory and non regulatory methods. The costs of implementing methods are annually reviewed and tested via the long term planning process and though not insignificant nevertheless the costs are not large in comparison to the environmental outcomes being achieved.
- No change factors have been identified warranting immediate change to the RPS.

Notwithstanding the above, six years on, this review has identified a number of change factors that will need to be taken into account as part of the full review of the RPS scheduled to take place in 2020. These change factors include RMA amendments, the promulgation of NPSs and NESs, and developing best practice in relation to how policy instruments are written.

Further to the above, the internal review and stakeholder engagement has highlighted a number of themes and opportunities to improve and build on the current RPS and

which should be taken into account as part of the next review.

Of particular note was stakeholder feedback for the RPS for improved integrated management and for the RPS to be more directive, particularly in relation to district council issues, functions and responsibilities. All stakeholders were supportive of the concept of the Council developing a combined RPS and regional plan. It is suggested that the Council investigate this concept further.

Recommendations going forward

As part of the full review of the RPS, it is recommended that Council investigate:

1. Developing a combined RPS and regional plans

A combined RPS and regional plans for air, the coast, freshwater and soil was seen as one mechanism where the current fragmentation across regional planning instruments could be addressed. Stakeholders were generally supportive of this concept. Developing a combined RPS and regional plans would reduce duplication and to improve integration and alignment of policies.

Of note the Council is likely to commence a full review of its Coastal Plan in 2017/2018 and full reviews of the RPS and other plans are scheduled to occur in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 financial years.

2. Developing an Eplan

Eplanning is a relatively new concept. Going forward (and particularly if we move towards having a combined RPS/regional plans), it would be useful to investigate using digital and spatial technology to improve the accessibility of our planning documents and their user friendliness. The benefits of an Eplan is that it provides an online platform and web-based tools that allows users to easily identify and interpret relevant provisions. Planning documents are inevitably large, complex and often difficult to understand. Through an Eplan the Council is aiming to improve the readability, accessibility and usability of its planning documents.

3. Reviewing RPS provisions to be more directive

At the moment the RPS has deliberately provided district councils with the discretion as to what methods are appropriate for their area. However, stakeholders, including district council officers, have requested that the RPS be more directive. There is an opportunity to reframe policies and methods to require district councils to adopt a certain approach/methods in response to particular issues,

e.g. biodiversity, tangata whenua, natural character and outstanding natural features and landscapes, natural hazards and waste management. This would promote policy alignment and administrative efficiencies across the region.

4. *Reframing RPS provisions to promote integrate management*

There was an agreement from all stakeholders for the RPS to take a more integrated and strategic approach to regional planning in Taranaki. This may involve combining the planning documents (see (1) above) and/or the RPS being more directive (see (3) above). It also involves reframing the RPS issues and objectives to focus on the wider environment by having a smaller number of high level issues. For example, there may be opportunities to combine the land and soil, freshwater, air and coastal issues and possibly those relating to the built environment, energy and minerals. Council could also consider re-framing issues relating to values (e.g. use and development, natural features and outstanding landscapes and amenity, biodiversity, heritage and cultural values) and 'process' matters (e.g. iwi engagement).

5. *Reviewing Coastal and Freshwater chapters in the RPS*

There is significant central government change occurring in these areas. Continue to maintain a watching brief on Government policy and, as appropriate, update RPS provisions to ensure alignment and that they give effect to national policy, including the NZCPS and NPS-FM. Also, in September 2016, the Council released its *Draft Coastal Plan for Taranaki*²⁸ on 1 September 2016 and shortly will be commencing a full review of that Plan. The strategic issues in the current RPS (and associated policies) should be updated to ensure they are consistent with a revised Coastal Plan.

6. *Reviewing Biodiversity chapter in the RPS.*

The loss of indigenous biodiversity in the Taranaki region is still on-going. It is suggested that RPS provisions including methods need to be reviewed in terms of their adequacy (effectiveness and efficiency) in avoiding further loss. This includes whether the RPS is directive enough.

7. *Reviewing the Climate Change chapter in the RPS.*

The issues of climate change and natural hazard management seem a more logical grouping, than the current climate change and air quality grouping.

There is significant central government change occurring in this area with the proposed amendments to the RMA. These matters should become clearer by the end of 2016. It is suggested Council maintain a watching brief on these issues and work closely with district councils and relevant experts to understand the implications for the Taranaki region and ensure they include the concept of 'risk' and 'acceptable risk'.

8. *Reviewing urban/built environment chapter of the RPS*

More direction on the built environment, particularly urban development in the New Plymouth District, was sought from district councils. While unclear from a structural point of view, whether the built environment should be a separate issue, or incorporated in the high level issue on integrated management, the issue of urban growth and development in the New Plymouth district needs more attention, especially to address the issues of reverse sensitivity on the urban/rural fringe. It is suggested that the Regional Council work closely with the New Plymouth District Council in the drafting of this issue, to ensure that the RPS gives the district the direction it needs to fulfil its functions and implementation of the *Blueprint for the New Plymouth District*.

9. *Working with iwi to better incorporate Maori values and principles*

The RMA currently requires the RPS to include a separate section on Issues of significance to iwi.

As highlighted by Treaty settlement obligations and mechanisms, and stakeholder comments, there is a need for on going discussion between the Council and all eight iwi O Taranaki about how to better incorporate Maori values and principles, and reframe the issues of significant to iwi so they reflect the Treaty settlements

10. *Reviewing chapters/issues on waste, heritage, and resource use and development*

The issues on waste and heritage are still significant for the Taranaki region in 2016, but could be sharpened to provide a more regional approach.

The current issues on recognising and providing for the appropriate development of minerals and sustainably managing energy could also to be combined with the issue on resource use and development. Overall, this issue on resource use and development needs to recognise the importance of economic drivers as well as the need to provide for good environmental outcomes.

²⁸ For more information on the *Draft Coastal Plan for Taranaki* click on the following link: <https://www.trc.govt.nz/council/plans-and-reports/strategy-policy-and-plans/regional-coastal-plan/coastal-plan-review/draft-coastal-plan/>.

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Appendix I: Section 35 of the RMA

35. Duty to gather information, monitor, and keep records
- (1) Every local authority shall gather such information, and undertake or commission such research, as is necessary to carry out effectively its functions under this Act or regulations under this Act.
 - (2) Every local authority shall monitor—
 - (a) the state of the whole or any part of the environment of its region or district—
 - (i) to the extent that is appropriate to enable the local authority to effectively carry out its functions under this Act; and
 - (ii) in addition, by reference to any indicators or other matters prescribed by regulations made under this Act, and in accordance with the regulations; and
 - (b) the efficiency and effectiveness of policies, rules, or other methods in its policy statement or its plan; and
 - (c) the exercise of any functions, powers, or duties delegated or transferred by it; and
 - (d) the exercise of the resource consents that have effect in its region or district, as the case may be; and
 - (e) in the case of a regional council, the exercise of a protected customary right in its region, including any controls imposed on the exercise of that right under Part 3 of the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011—and take appropriate action (having regard to the methods available to it under this Act) where this is shown to be necessary.
 - (2A) Every local authority must, at intervals of not more than 5 years, compile and make available to the public a review of the results of its monitoring under subsection (2) (b).

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Appendix II: List of external stakeholder participants

District Councils

New Plymouth District Council
Stratford District Council
South Taranaki District Council

Government departments

Department of Conservation
Heritage New Zealand
Taranaki District Health Board

Non government organisations/ community groups

Enviroschools
Taranaki Fish and Game
Taranaki Kiwi Trust
Waitara Alive
New Plymouth Boardriders
Surfing Taranaki
Taranaki Energy Watch
Wild for Taranaki
Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society
Climate Justice Taranaki

Industry/ major stakeholder groups

Federated Farmers
Greymouth Petroleum
Remediation (NZ) Ltd
Dairy NZ
Shell Todd Oil Services Ltd
Contact Energy
Trustpower
Tag Oil
Dairy NZ
Methanex
Fulton Hogan

Venture Taranaki
Dow Agro Sciences
PG Wrightson
Balance
Lepper piggeries
Tegel
Open Country
Silver Fern Farms
Powerco Ltd

Appendix III: Structured questions used for stakeholder meetings

- What are the significant resource management issues facing your group/business/industry in 2016?
- Does the current RPS provide support for the future directions for your group/business/industry?
- Do you refer to the RPS in resource management processes (applying for resource consents)? Does it help or hinder?
- Do you see the need for any changes? What changes?
- Would you prefer the RPS to be more flexible or more directive?

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Appendix IV: Stakeholder responses to the interim review of the RPS

Fish and Game New Zealand

Te Kaahui o Rauru

Federated Farmers

TrustPower

Te Korowai o Ngāruahine

Oil companies

Climate Justice Taranaki Inc, and

Enviroschools.

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File Ref: 2.3.5
7th April 2017

Chris Spurdle
Planning Manager
Taranaki Regional Council
Private Bag 713
STRATFORD

Dear Chris

Interim review of the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010 - Evaluation of appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the interim review of the RPS for Taranaki (2010).

From a Fish & Game perspective, the TRC ran a very thorough process in developing the RPS (2010) and there was input from a wide range of stakeholders, at least partly in response to a change in legislation requiring local authorities to "give effect" to the RPS when preparing or changing regional or district plans.

In our view, the issues identified in the RPS (2010) remain relevant and while there have been changes in legislation etc. since the RPS became operative, we agree that there is no immediate need to make changes to the RPS. We also agree that the TRC should investigate developing a combined RPS and regional plans when the RPS comes up for its full review in 2020.

In terms of the effectiveness of the RPS, we consider it has not been as effective as it could have been in addressing issues such as the loss of wetlands and the cumulative effects of the piping and modification of small streams, largely because of the delay in reviewing the Taranaki Regional Freshwater Plan (2001) and implementing more stringent rules to address these issues. Having said that, we acknowledge the resources the TRC has put into its non-regulatory approach to wetland protection and also its use of financial contributions as a way of at least partially off-setting the adverse effects of stream modification.

Likewise, in respect of water allocation, the absence of a reviewed regional plan to give effect to the RPS (2010) means the TRC has been unable to formally set allocable volumes and define full allocation (WAL METH 2(a)) for rivers and streams (excluding those listed in Policies 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 of the operative freshwater plan). In many respects, it's fortunate there haven't been any new applications to take large amounts of water from Taranaki waterways.

In terms of the RPS's effectiveness in maintaining and enhancing the quality of water in our rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands, we agree that TRC monitoring indicates that water quality is generally being maintained and in some cases improved. We acknowledge and appreciate the large amount of good work that has gone on by farmers in fencing and planting their riparian margins and the resources the TRC has

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats

Taranaki Region

1H Taupo Quay, PO Box 4152, Wanganui, New Zealand. Telephone (06) 345 4908 Facsimile (06) 345 4908 e-mail: fg-wan@clear.net.nz
www.fishandgame.org.nz

put into facilitating this. We also acknowledge, that even in the absence of a reviewed freshwater plan, the TRC has been moving farmers towards the land disposal of farm dairy-shed effluent during discharge re-consenting, which can only benefit water quality.

However, we remain concerned about the rate of decline in water quality that still occurs down the length of ringplain catchments. For example, in the most recent TRC state of the environment biological monitoring report (2016-33) the MCI was reported to have declined by 51 points between upper and lower sites in the Waiwhakaiho catchment in the December 2015 sampling, from 130 near Egmont National Park (indicating "clean water"), to 79 in the river near Lake Rotomanu (bordering on "probable severe pollution").

Likewise, the latest available state of the environment periphyton monitoring report (2016-34) indicates that a number of lower catchment sites (e.g. KPA000700 & WGA000460) have breached the NPS-FM national bottom line for chlorophyll a (200mg chl-a/m²). While the TRC has not yet adopted the monthly sampling protocol needed to accurately determine periphyton attribute state, these results confirm our long-held view that periphyton proliferation in the middle and lower reaches of ringplain rivers and streams (and the consequent impacts on the macroinvertebrate fauna) is one of the key remaining water quality issues in the region. To address this issue may well require additional measures, over and above that contemplated in the RPS (2010), such as the establishment of in-stream objectives for concentrations of DIN and DRP to manage for the periphyton attribute.

The RPS (2010) identifies the issue (Section 6.6) "*managing effects associated with the use of and disturbances to river and lake beds*" and in particular, RLB ISS 3 "*providing for appropriate fish passage along Taranaki waterways*", with the commentary stating "*some structures such as dams, weirs and culverts can severely restrict fish migration, thereby reducing the abundance and diversity of fish species residing in upstream reaches and adversely affecting ecological and fishery values of the water body*". In our view, this issue remains a very relevant one and our concern (as articulated in our 2nd April 2015 submission to the TRC's 2015/2025 Long-Term Plan) is that progress on the provision of effective fish passage over structures and the removal of unused weirs has slowed in recent years and that this is an area where the RPS has not been as effective as it could have been.

The RPS (2010) also identifies "*maintaining and enhancing public access to and along rivers and lakes*" as an issue (Section 6.7). In our view, this section still accurately reflects the existing situation, where the existing legal access "*represents but a small proportion of the total length of Taranaki waterways, and public access remains disjointed and there is still relatively little formal access outside of urban areas*". It is acknowledged that implementation of the Objective and Policies is largely within the jurisdiction of the three district councils (i.e. WPA Methods 7-12), but it is difficult to assess how effective the RPS has been in maintaining and enhancing public access because information on where and how much additional access has been created since the RPS became operative is not readily available. Perhaps this could be collated by the TRC and made available for the 10-year review (or at more frequent intervals, as per WPA Meth 14).

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A Stancliff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Allen Stancliff
Fish & Game Officer

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7 April 2017

Taranaki Regional Council
STRATFORD

Email: chris.spurdle@trc.govt.nz

Teena koe

Submission on Regional Policy Statement interim review

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the interim review of the Taranaki Regional Policy Statement (RPS). As a critical planning tool for Taranaki that shapes the management of our natural and physical resources, it is valuable to identify how to strengthen the effective engagement of Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi as tangata whenua and kaitiaki.

In this letter, we provide some high level feedback to the review document and would be happy to discuss further. We recognise the value of an interim review in that it gives us time to work together to identify improvements and build a supporting business case in partnership with you for implementing in the future.

Capability Building

There is a need for building capability within both iwi and the council. This needs to embrace and reflect back a Maaori, and a specifically Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi, world view. Key elements to be included are improving the accessibility of information shared and building knowledge. This can be a two-way process, where science-based information is presented in a way that can be consumed by Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi, as well as council staff building their understanding of Ngaa Raurutanga. Specific methods to encourage this mutually-beneficial development could be identified to guide consistent commitment across territorial authorities, e.g. use of MOUs that understand the level of unpaid commitment delivered by iwi and hapuu, and agree appropriate fee schedules for paid contributions to be agreed between the parties.

Process Engagement

Currently, processes around resource consent applications prioritise notification and formalised consultation rather than true engagement. Information presented with a narrow focus doesn't reflect the more holistic approach that tangata whenua seek, particularly when dealing with impacts on freshwater. This means a wider and fuller context is sought. A commitment to changing this engagement to improve effectiveness is sought. Methods to set expectation on how to undertake this are suggested, e.g. face-to-face presentations at marae putting applications into a wider environmental management context.

Resourcing

Previous conversations have been held regarding the possibility of iwi and hapuu being resourced to participate more effectively in resource consent processes, supporting the council to meet its statutory obligations. The delivery of this has been constrained but there are increasing examples of this practice occurring around New Zealand, and we have identified suggested methods under *Process Engagement* above. A second aspect of resourcing is building the council's understanding of tikanga and use of te reo, to help strengthen engagement. Both these could be made more explicit in RPS directions, setting an expectation that territorial authority employees who engage with the public are skilled in understanding both a Maaori world view and have knowledge of Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi and other Taranaki iwi.

Minerals and Energy

Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi holds concerns regarding continued dependence on invasive extractive industries, particularly those contributing to climate change. While submissions are made in relation to specific proposals or via wider-ranging documents like the draft Coastal Policy Statement, there is a desire to be more influential about this unsustainable direction. We note the "importance of resource use and development" highlighted in the RPS, without a balancing commitment to support more sustainable economic development, like neighbouring Horizons' work with Te Pae Tawhiti within the Accelerate25 programme. We would like to see investment in supporting sustainable Maaori economic development in Taranaki.

Statutory Acknowledgements

The Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi settlement legislation identifies statutory acknowledgement areas and other special places, as identified in the RPS. There may be a need for further practical cross-referencing or identification of these places to ensure their importance is recognised. We are also interested in whether and how the council is analysing the range of post-settlement legislative commitments in Taranaki and how they connect or possibly conflict.

Directive Content

Overall, we agree with the conclusion that the RPS would benefit from more directive content. It has a risk of being so high level, it becomes redundant. This is particularly apparent regarding the commitments to tangata whenua, which largely replicate legislative statements without adding methods to guide implementation. There needs to be a clear direction that current practice is not achieving the levels of engagement and partnership envisioned and this needs to change – it is an urgent need. One specific weakness is the use of the term "accommodates" in relation to iwi and hapuu views under the RPS objective around traditional relationships.

Some of the needed directive content will come through specific methods identified to help give effect to kaitiakitanga. Where these need research to understand best practice and options, now is the time to resource this effort so greater understanding is available for the final review in five years' time.

Freshwater

The huge growth in public expectations around freshwater management could be more directly addressed. The Te Mana o Te Wai programme, including support and involvement of TRC in Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi's Te Wai Koiora programme, has strengthened connections and capability in kaitiakitanga for freshwater. The latest Freshwater Improvement Fund also presents new opportunities to grow this. While these are examples of deliverables, the overall context for undertaking practical work together should be reinforced by the RPS. There is opportunity to strengthen this through the description of methods to encourage specific practical partnerships building capability and kaitiakitanga.

Biodiversity

The loss of biodiversity and wetlands, although small, is significant. The lack of achievement of these goals within the RPS should not be understated. Wetlands in particular are highly vulnerable. Cross-reference to building capability as kaitiaki could be made in these sections. Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi is directly responsible for only a small portion of land and waters within its rohe and needs support of territorial authorities to be a positive influence on the maintenance and enhancement of these places. Specific

methods that demonstrate how tangata whenua may deliver environmental management for and with territorial authorities will show how this can be practically delivered.

Eplan

Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi would benefit from increased access to well-designed digital management of land and resource planning tools. However, it is important to note there may always remain some sensitivities about sharing details of particular sites. There have been previous discussions between TRC and Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi about supporting use of environmental data, including through GIS systems. In addition to re-progressing our discussions around this, Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi is keen to see commitment to understanding our perspective in relation to more electronic processing of applications and other engagement, taking into account the practical engagement of hapuu and marae.

Natural Hazards

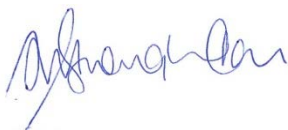
In the Whanganui region, significant effort has gone into identifying and explaining tsunami risk areas and escape routes. It would be good to see this replicated in Taranaki, particularly around coastal river mouth areas where many marae are located.

In conclusion, we would like to share some examples of what a successful RPS in action would look like to us to help explain the improvements we are seeking from TRC:

- Relationship agreements in practice, not in files
- Proactive contact outside consultation periods or in relation to specific applications
- Seeing our perspective as tangata whenua incorporated into communications
- Receiving information that is holistic and easily-consumed, explaining a wider story rather than deconstructing elements to a meaningless level
- Education and training in processes made available
- Increasing staff awareness and understanding, rippling through all territorial authorities
- Seeing more long-term projects between councils and iwi, particularly around freshwater, wetlands and biodiversity.

We look forward to continuing to work with the council to build a stronger relationship and deeper understanding of Ngaa Raurutanga, so we can all fulfil our obligations to care for the land, water and coast.

Noho ora mai



Anne-Marie Broughton
Kaiwhakahaere

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Mr Chris Spurdle
Policy Manager
Taranaki Regional Council
Private Bag 713
Stratford

By Email: chris.spurdle@trc.govt.nz

Rāhina, 03 Paengawhāwhā, 2017

Tēnā koe Chris,

Review of the Regional Policy Statement

1. On behalf of Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust (TKONT) thank you for providing us with the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Interim Review of the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki – Evaluation of Appropriateness, Efficiency and Effectiveness*. We note that this interim review sets the course for the full statutory review which is due to commence in 2020. Thank you for providing us with an early opportunity to engage with this process.
2. As the post-settlement governance entity for Ngāruahine, TKONT makes comments and submissions to any relevant policy matters within our rohe. This does not prevent the affected Ngāruahine hāpu submitting on their behalf, nor should it be in any way viewed as affecting the mana motuhake of the hapū. Ngāruahine's interest in this matter is because the policy is an important statutory framework that regulates how the region responds to environmental protection and control across Taranaki.

Principles for investigation (p.i)

3. We agree with the six identified issues. With reference to number 6 – working with iwi, we also suggest that we look beyond treaty settlements and ensure that principles of Te Ao Māori are incorporated into the Regional Policy Statement (RPS).

Purpose of the RPS is still relevant (p.1)

4. In terms of the key changes that have emerged since the adoption of the RPS, TKONT is pleased to see that the Council's relationship with tangata whenua is identified and recognised as a focus. We suggest that the Council should prepare to prioritise the changes that may arise from the Proposed Policy Statement on Indigenous biodiversity. TKONT is particularly encouraged to see a commitment to e-planning. As regular users of



the Council's policy and planning tools we support all efforts that can improve our access to and navigation of this information.

Whether the RPS is achieving its purpose and the issues remain relevant

5. Table one identified the significant resource management issues in the current RPS. Whilst the majority are self-explanatory we are not quite sure what is meant by the following statements:
 - a. Recognising the role of resource development and use in the Taranaki region (1).
 - b. Protecting the natural character of our wetlands (8). The issue is beyond this, the issue is about protecting the existence of current wetlands and growing the number of wetlands.
 - c. Sustainably managing energy (24).
 - d. Promoting sustainable urban development (25).
6. In relation to the significant resource management issues to iwi, TKONT agrees with the list in table two, however we would also include the following:
 - a. Embedding Te Ao Māori and mātauranga Māori into resource management processes and plans.
 - b. Responding to the Treaty Settlement statements, principles and commitments as they relate to the environment.
 - c. Recognising for Iwi Environmental Management Plans.
7. In regards to section 4.2.1 the review document states that iwi tend to rely on their own policy instruments such as the statutory acknowledgements and statements of association. Whilst iwi do rely on the Treaty Settlements, we also rely on the RPS and other Planning Frameworks as a vehicle to leverage our advocacy for the environment. For TKONT we would like to move to a place where the respective documents and processes mutually support one another.
8. It is interesting to note that stakeholders called for better integration across boundaries to provide for better alignment. Whilst at one level there is an efficiency to this approach, the differences across the districts may not easily lend themselves to a 'one size fits all' approach. The urban environment of New Plymouth is markedly different to the rural and industrial environment of South Taranaki and in particular the Ngāruahine rohe.
9. We agree that the RPS should cover all of the physical domains, and we support the notion that community should be more actively involved in the management of resources. For iwi, this involves several processes, including but not limited to the iwi



representatives sitting around the Council table and the iwi being actively involved in providing comments on and input into policy matters within the rohe. Iwi can perform this role effectively because of the kaitiakitanga obligations that exist towards the environment as a whole, as opposed to there being a vested interest or bias.

Indigenous biodiversity

10. TKONT agrees with the assertions made about indigenous biodiversity. As a region we should be prioritising and promoting all indigenous biodiversity. As the Council is already aware, TKONT is very concerned about the continued loss and degradation of our wetlands, native forests and other native flora. This is a key area where we would like to see prescription that directs action to reverse some of the negative trends that we see in these areas.
11. We agree with the statements made about pest control and this is another area where the RPS should be more directive. Predator Free NZ cannot be achieved without the private land owners (who form the majority) actively addressing this issue on the land that they operate.

Maintaining the quality of land, freshwater, coastal and air resources

12. Within section 4.2.2 there is a comment that submitters were united in their view that clean water should be maintained. TKONT agrees with this statement, however we suggest that the emphasis in the RPS should be improving the cleanliness of water. As the Council knows, we are challenged by some of the assertions that are made about water quality across the region; we believe that there are further improvements that need to be made.
13. In regards to the comment made by District Council Officers that the RPS is “more prescriptive in terms of threatened and at risk species...” we are unsure what comment is actually being made here. Is the level of prescription viewed as positive? Is this prescriptive seen as an inhibiting factor? It would be helpful to receive some clarification about this.
14. It is clear that nutrient discharges into the receiving environments is an area where there are perhaps the most divergent views. TKONT strongly agrees that attention must be given to the effect that the discharges has on the receiving environments. We are in support of setting in-stream limits and argue strongly for the inclusion of this component into the new RPS. Unless we begin to impose tougher environmental standards on ourselves, we will not be able to reverse the negative trends in freshwater quality that we are currently confronted with.



15. With regards to the debate about swimmable rivers. TKONT is very concerned that this definition is deemed to apply to a very small number of rivers. TKONT would like to have a local debate about which rivers the Taranaki community believe should be of swimmable quality. We are confident that the community would be able to clearly identify the rivers and streams to which this standard should apply. The key point is that determination should be local. We agree that rivers will not be swimmable for 365 days a year, but a community conversation should take place about the locations, duration and seasons in which we expect our rivers and streams to be swimmable.
16. We agree with the concerns raised about soil erosion that arises from the forestry industry and we also agree about the concerns that were raised about reverse sensitivity. It is reasonable to assert the negative effects that often arise from odour in the rural community are improving, due to improved technology, and those people who move to a rural community should be mindful of the environment where they are moving to. We do not believe that any person should have to tolerate offensive or objectionable odour, but rural odours are to be expected and a degree of tolerance is necessary.

Natural Hazards

17. TKONT agrees that the determination of natural hazards should be a matter of national importance, noting that the local community must determine and agree on what those significant natural hazards are. The increased risks that arise from climate change are a concern for Taranaki and flooding and slips are two major concerns because of the impact they have on property, people and livestock, and how these issues can isolate communities. Whilst not connected to climate change there will also be an increased risk of flooding because of the intensive developments that are taking place in the urban environments and the RPS should take account of this issue. The district councils focus on intensive CBD and housing developments need to be matched with significant investment in stormwater management and flood control. Because the District Plans are autonomous of each other, the RPS is the vehicle to guide effective management of these risks.

Waste management

18. Ever increasing levels of waste are a major concern. The waste that is associated with consumerism is having a major effect on the environment. The regional landfill is already developing the required infrastructure, what is needed is policy instruments that encourages behavioural change at the point of supply and demand.

Māori values, principles and involvement in decision making



19. TKONT is heartened by the recognition that all of the resource management issues of significance are relevant to iwi. Our question relates to a better understanding about the determination of 'issues of significance'. There is likely to be resource management issues that perhaps the regional council do not perceive as significant, but iwi do. TKONT would like to be engaged in a conversation about this.

20. TKONT feels that we have already come a long way with the Regional Council regarding our involvement in resource management issues. We are looking forward to further developing and enhancing this relationship as part of the RPS process.

Enabling economic development while protecting environment

21. Whilst TKONT acknowledges the feedback raised by industry, the RPS provides the opportunity to ensure that the economic environment is grounded in strong principles of precaution, sustainability and environmental protection. TKONT want to see an RPS where the balance is tipped to the favour and benefit of the environment, only then we will see economic development that is truly forward thinking in the solutions and processes that are employed. If industry believes that the Regional Council is a soft touch, and that degrees of environmental degradation are tolerated, we can never expect to realise the environmental gains that Taranaki deserves. TKONT suggests that one of the strongest allies that the Council has to pursue this, is its treaty partners.

Effectiveness of the RPS objective and policies

22. The RPS review report states that the use and development of resources (5.1) is about allowing communities to provide for their economic, social and cultural wellbeing in accordance with the RMA. TKONT suggests that this objective should be broadened to provide for environmental wellbeing. When considering the TDHB request that health should be enshrined in all policies, this cannot be achieved unless environment wellbeing is also provided for. Whilst the perspective is that this objective is being met – a comment we do not necessarily disagree with, the challenge is perhaps that the objective is not strong enough in favour of protecting the environment.

23. With regards to land and soil (5.2), TKONT wishes to see more certainty and clarity around appropriate soil nutrient levels. It is our preference for clear standards to be established. This not only provides certainty for the environment but also for land users.

24. TKONT would appreciate having a better understanding about how the sustainable management of land is measured – particularly as the review document states that 92%



has met such a standard. We are also keen to better understand the statement 'of the most at risk land, 65% of privately owned land has a Council prepared farm plan containing recommendations'. What about public land? And, how effective is the implementation of the recommendations in the plans?

25. In regards to fresh water (5.3), there is perhaps value in clarifying some of the language. Objective one details that the taking, using, damming and diversion of fresh water enables people and communities to meet their needs. Further specificity would be useful, with business and industry also included in this definition as it is they who make the applications for water use in its various forms.
26. As part of the review, TKONT does wish to see close attention paid to this objective. We will be looking for stronger statements about the reduction of surface water abstractions from our river catchments, increasing the number of wetlands and raising the quality of freshwater across the board. TKONT would also be seeking strong statements within the revised RPS about riparian planting. We would like to see a focus on native planting, extended planting where it already exists and greater numbers of streambanks planted. It is also no longer acceptable to cite the number of dairy farms that have riparian plans – we are now looking for statements that say '99.5% of dairy farms are fully fenced and riparian planted'. We would also like to see minimum standards being set for the level and type of planting that is required. We also want to see a shift to lower nitrate standards, we recognise that they have remained stable; we now want to see a trend downwards.
27. The objectives that relate to the coastal environment are largely sound, however objective one and two do feel somewhat similar. We would also like to see a greater emphasis on the avoidance of contaminant discharges into the marine environment
28. It is also useful for the next generation RPS to recognise the Tukatai Moana Act and the interests that coastal māori have in the foreshore and seabed.
29. Having a focus on significant indigenous biodiversity (5.6) whilst important should not be the sole focus for the RPS. As stated in an earlier section of the review document, there should be a broader attention given to indigenous biodiversity across the board. This objective has a strong correlation to the protection of native forests and woodlands, species recovery, covenants, wetlands, riparian planting and pest control. One area where the RPS can exert a greater level of influence is greater controls on the conversion of land. When land is converted to grassland, this is for economic purpose, and with each conversion the loss of indigenous biodiversity increases. So whilst the review document reports on the small losses, the cumulative impact of each small loss cannot be underestimated.



30. TKONT is broadly supportive of the objectives as they relate to natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity values (5.7). As noted in the review, we are mindful of the impact that increasing number of sub divisions are having on these local values and suggest that the RPS can take a stronger stance on this issue, ensuring that this is a matter that is given due consideration as part of the decision making processes.
31. We note that comment that earthquake strengthening is not always a viable option in South Taranaki and Stratford – it would be useful to understand why this is the case in these two districts, but not New Plymouth. From an iwi perspective TKONT is concerned about the earthquake status of its marae, noting that these are valuable civil defence assets in the heart of community. The plan comments that there is often a lack of information about sites. It is important that more engagement and consultation takes place with iwi, hapū and other members of the community who have knowledge about the important sites and heritage values within the areas.
32. When there is talk about natural hazards (5.8) there appears to be a presumption that these are beyond our control to influence. TKONT suggests that the natural hazards that we encounter are a result of the effects of human activity, so whilst we may not be able to reverse the trends in the short term, it is important that the RPS and other planning guidance and tools does all that it can to protect people and the environment, which may mean placing environmental protection over economics and profit.
33. TKONT is worried by the trend of increasing levels of waste needing to be disposed of at landfill, despite higher levels of recycling (5.9). TKONT would like to see a strong stance in the RPS which addresses this. The polluter pays model would work effectively, if there is a financial penalty placed upon waste disposal at a commercial level, the producers will be more considered about the type of packing that is used and the volumes of waste that are disposed of.
34. The regional policy statement is in a strong position to promote the use of renewable energies over the exploitation of minerals (5.10 and 5.11). If the policy environment placed the same level of emphasis and support on renewable technologies and industries, Taranaki has a better chance of reversing some of the environmental harms that we see across the region – which include water abstractions, water quality and waste management and disposal. Taranaki's reliance of mineral resources above an investigation of other renewal opportunities is short sighted for the economy and the environment.
35. TKONT agrees with the assertions in the plan that residential and business activities are encroaching into the rural areas, which are not only creating reverse sensitivity issues,



they are also affecting the environmental landscape, and the civic and amenity values that give the rural environment its identity and character. The RPS has the potential to guide the district councils and ensure that the planning environment protects and enhances the rural character of Taranaki.

36. Iwi have a strong intergenerational interest in the protection and enhancement of our environment. The interests of iwi are unique: they are intergenerational; they are obligations that are inherited from the past and passed into the future. Kaitiakitanga is much more than an interest in protecting the environment; it is a spiritual, cultural and social obligation to people and planet. When the environmental interests of iwi are recognised and provided for, the interests of the whole community will benefit. When the RPS is updated, TKONT would like to see a stronger recognition of a commitment to actively involving iwi in sustainable management and conservation processes. We would also like to see an RPS which recognises that the eco system cannot be delineated along boundaries and classifications, the RPS should recognise the interconnectedness of all environmental actions and the cumulative effects and impacts of each resource management issue that is consented and or undertaken.
37. TKONT would like to engage in a conversation with the Regional Council about the values that iwi would like to see represented and woven throughout the RPS. This is an important part of the process, which will take time to work through. Whilst the RMA requires issues of significance to iwi to be documented separately, the Taranaki Regional Council have the opportunity to develop a regional policy statement that combines Te Ao Māori alongside the western paradigms.
38. The RPS objectives (5.13) as worded remain relevant, but there is an opportunity to enhance these. The landscape has changed since the RPS was drafted, with nearly all Taranaki iwi having settled their Treaty of Waitangi negotiations. The RPS should make explicit reference to the statutory acknowledgments and protection principles within them. TKONT would also like to see the RPS provide guidance about how mātauranga Māori will be embedded into the decision making and monitoring processes. The RPS could provide guidance about how Iwi Environmental Plans will be recognised and provided for.

RPS Methods

39. A range of methods will always be needed to encourage, promote and direct action. TKONT is supportive of the nine method areas and suggests that together they offer a comprehensive suite of action. Iwi suite of opportunity.



40. TKONT is interested to read that some Regional Policy Statements direct district councils, but Taranaki's does not (6.2). We would be interested to learn more about what issues regional councils offer a directive on, and whether this is something that Taranaki should consider. It is interesting to note that district council themselves would like more direction.
41. For many years the Regional Council has offered support and guidance to land owners as a means to encourage them to undertaken riparian planting and fencing (6.4). It is laudable to see plans in place, but TKONT would now like to see more direction and prescription about the implementation of these plans. The supply of low cost plants is a very important initiative that has encouraged many landowners to undertake their planting; however for those who have not voluntarily undertaken this work, we would now like to see further prescription.
42. Cooperation and collaboration is the key to environmental improvement and enhancement (6.5). The Regional Council, through the RPS and beyond is in a strong position to facilitate such partnerships. TKONT is committed to working in partnership with the Regional Council, the district councils and consent holders to achieve the best possible outcomes for the environment. Since its inception in 2014, TKONT has seen a positive trend with our relationships and collaborative efforts; however we believe that it is now time to push the boundaries even further, only then will Taranaki realise the environmental changes that it deserves.
43. TRC works alongside the regional councils on many issues such as waste, biodiversity, civil defence, traffic and transportation and more, the potential for impact and change could be further strengthened if iwi were also partners around theses table. This is a conversation that TKONT would like to pursue.
44. The potential to use economic instruments more effectively is a matter that is worthy of investigation as part of the new RPS (6.6). The use of positive tools such as advice, guidance and low cost plants are important economic enablers, however TKONT would like to see greater use of financial contributions to not only offset environmental impacts, but also to enhance the environment in areas where it is depleting i.e. loss of wetlands and native habitats. TKONT also suggests that the region needs to have a conversation about waste management and disposal. A punitive economic environment for the waste polluters may encourage less non-recyclable waste. If this was coupled with a reward based system for those who are actively reducing their waste, we could support an environment where as much waste as possible is recyclable and reusable.

Efficiency of the RPS



45. It is very hard to comment on the section that comments on the cost of the RPS, because the section does not provide any transparent financial data. TKONT does not doubt that the RPS delivers value for money, but we would appreciate understanding how the assumptions in this section have been made, particularly as 7.3 states that monetising the RPS is impractical, but concludes that there is a positive ratio of benefit to cost. Further information is needed in order for us to be able to consider the consultation question, whether the RPS has been efficient in terms of its benefits being greater than its costs.

Conclusions and recommendations

46. TKONT has reviewed the recommendations section and is supportive of the proposals; however the timeframes for the various investigations are unclear. There is clearly opportunity to develop a combined RPS and regional plans; however it is not clear how this alignment will take place as several of these plans are currently under development (1). The e-plan represents an output that should be implemented for the RPS and regional plans (2). As we have alluded to in this comment, there are opportunities to investigate a greater level of prescription in the new RPS (3). The promotion of integrated management is an approach that is supported by TKONT (4). The review proposals in recommendations five to eight and ten appear siloed and not necessary if the other recommendations are adopted. Finally TKONT would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council about the integration of Māori values and principles throughout the plan.

47. We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this preliminary review. In conclusion we do agree that the RPS is relevant and largely effective, whilst offering opportunities for refinement and improvement into the future. TKONT looks forward to working with this Council on the next generation plan. If you have any questions or queries about the comments please contact me or David More at policy@ngaruahine.iwi.nz.

Naku iti noa, nā

Louise Tester (PhD)

Kairangahau Matua (Social Initiatives and Policy Manager)

Hi Chris

Just following up from the phone call last week. To confirm, we're happy that the interim report on the RPS review captures our feedback. And we agree that the RPS is achieving its purpose, is effective and efficient. There are essentially no new issues, or definitely no issues that would require urgent changes to the RPS before the 2020 deadline. We also find the RPS useable / readable (having a high threshold for paperwork!).

Lisa

DR LISA HARPER

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31 August 2016

Dear Denise

**RE: REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT INTERIM REVIEW
FEEDBACK BY THE OIL COMPANIES**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to provide comment on the Taranaki Regional Council (*the Council*) interim review of the Regional Policy Statement (*RPS*) for Taranaki.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Z Energy Limited, BP Oil New Zealand Limited and Mobil Oil NZ Limited (*the Oil Companies*) receive, store and distribute refined petroleum products.

The Oil Companies' core business relates to the operation and management of their individual service station networks, commercial refuelling facilities and bulk storage (Terminal) facilities at marinas, ports and airports. Hydrocarbons are the principal substance managed by the Oil Companies.

The RPS is an important document for the Oil Companies as it is often referred to by them in submissions on statutory planning documents and resource consent applications. For these reasons the framework provided by the RPS needs to be directive whilst also providing the flexibility necessary to minimise the need for resource consent applications for land uses and activities where the likely adverse effects are known, and can be effectively managed.

The Oil Companies' objectives for engaging in this process are to offer constructive suggestions that support the Council in the process of identifying the significant resource management issues facing the region and in reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of the objectives, policies and methods in the operative RPS in managing those issues.

The Oil Companies' focus is to ensure that future policies within the RPS provide the necessary strategic framework to enable the effective and efficient management of their asset base, including infrastructure, within Taranaki. The Oil Companies see themselves as part of the communities in which they operate, and value the ongoing relationships they have with regional and territorial authorities.

2.0 FEEDBACK

The Oil Companies agree with the comment that *'a lot of things have changed in the six years since the RPS was developed in 2010'*. The Oil Companies are generally supportive of the current RPS. The current document is, however, a base document that provides a bare minimum of policy.

Accordingly, the Oil Companies seek the implementation of additional comprehensive policy within the RPS when it is reviewed. Policy that manages development in a manner that does not unreasonably and/or unnecessarily restrict the Oil Companies' storage, distribution, development and maintenance activities and oil distribution industry standardised procedures.

There are eight main areas where consideration within the RPS review is necessary to ensure an effective strategic policy framework is put in place to support the Oil Companies current and future operations within Taranaki. These areas comprise significant resource management issues and include:

1. Regionally Significant Infrastructure, Bulk Fuel Storage Depots and Fuel Distribution.
2. Reverse sensitivity.
3. Directive Nature of RPS.
4. Civil Defence – The Oil Companies role as a *'Lifeline Utility'*.
5. Codes of Practice and Industry Standards.
6. Hazardous Substances, Contaminated land, potentially contaminated land.
7. Operational Issues.

The rationale for the Oil Companies comment on each of these matters is set out in the following sections.

2.1 Regionally Significant Infrastructure, Bulk Fuel Storage and Fuel Distribution

Within Taranaki there are a number of bulk fuel storage depots, including the Port and at Omata. From the bulk storage facilities the Oil Companies supply truck stops and various retail outlets, which they either own and/or operate throughout Taranaki, and parts of the adjoining Manawatu-Whanganui region.

Under the Resource Management Act (RMA) bulk storage facilities and pipelines are a significant physical resource that should be sustainably managed. Any adverse effects on that infrastructure should, therefore be avoided, remedied or mitigated and appropriate policy to facilitate and maintain this should be included in the RPS when reviewed.

The mention of *'the Omata tank farm'* and *'a network of pipelines to transport the product throughout Taranaki and the North Island'* in section 15.2 relating to the Oil and Gas Industry is supported. The existing fuel storage facilities at the Port should also be directly referenced within this section.

The review needs to ensure that the RPS provides a comprehensive explanation of the Oil Companies distribution infrastructure. It is noted that section *'2.7.7 Infrastructure'* of the current RPS refers to pipelines and this is supported. Whilst section *'4.1 Use and development of resources'* refers to infrastructure, no mention is made to fuel storage facilities. Discussion of infrastructure in the RPS review should also refer to fuel storage facilities

The current RPS provisions go some way towards providing for the effective management of regionally significant infrastructure including bulk fuel storage, however it is considered that the RPS review should consider amendments to include policies, methods and explanations providing for the effective management of regionally significant infrastructure including bulk fuel storage and supply infrastructure.

2.2 Reverse Sensitivity

Section *'15.2 Providing for Regionally Significant Infrastructure'* and *'Issues INF ISS 1 and 2'* relating to the adverse effects of land use on the provision and safe and efficient operation of regionally significant infrastructure is supported. Policy 2 that manages adverse effects on the safety, efficiency, operation, maintenance and upgrading of physical infrastructure of regional importance is also supported.

The provisions, in particular the methods, need to be expanded to provide more direction in terms of management of reverse sensitivity effects from subdivision, use and development on fuel storage areas as existing regionally significant infrastructure, and for land uses which may be affected by sensitive

activities including residential development. The use, operation and upgrade of regionally significant infrastructure and the development of service stations and truck stops on a region wide basis is beneficial and generally appropriate.

In Auckland the Wiri Oil Services Terminal (WOSL) is protected through an overlay around it which is depicted in the Unitary Plan (the PAUP). This gives recognition of potential risks and ensures compatibility of land use planning by preventing sensitive activities from establishing. The Oil Industry is seeking similar provisions for terminals in other locations. Having a regional policy framework that facilitates such an approach is important – the RPS provisions in the Unitary Plan collectively do this through the Infrastructure, Transport and Energy provisions in particular, and it also helps that the infrastructure is in an appropriate zone to start with¹.

From a risk perspective certain activities are incompatible with regionally significant infrastructure. Having residential uses adjacent, or nearby, to bulk fuel storage facilities is inappropriate and there should be policy and methods that recognise this issue.

Policies and methods therefore need to be put in place to ensure that regionally significant infrastructure together with existing land uses that may be affected by sensitive land uses, and other land uses located within both rural and urban environments, that may affect the continued operation and maintenance of that infrastructure is controlled in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates the adverse effects generated by reverse sensitivity and recognises potential health and safety risks.

Appropriate guidance to protect certain existing land uses from new, incompatible use and development occurring under, over or adjacent to it, by locating and designing any new use and development to avoid, remedy or mitigate reverse sensitivity effects, is a significant issue that needs addressing more fully within the RPS. This could be done by incorporating within methods 7 and 18, or the development of new methods, to recognise that all affected regionally significant infrastructure providers need to be consulted. Method 9 would also benefit from recognising the need for maintenance and upgrading together with continued operation of regionally significant infrastructure.

It is noted that the Environmental results anticipated includes the outcome '*that continued operation of regionally significant infrastructure*'. It is considered that the provisions should be clearly providing for the continued operation and upgrading of regionally significant infrastructure to meet demand. This would have the benefit of recognising on a regional basis the need to provide for maintenance and upgrading together with continued operation of regionally significant infrastructure.

¹ Refer to the PAUP District Wide provisions (decision version) under E.29 to review the emergency management area provisions that apply to WOSL.

2.3 Directive Nature of RPS

As a general comment it is noted that the RPS is not very directive in relation to the methods that Territorial Authorities need to pursue. The Oil Companies would like consideration to be given to the RPS being more, in relation to the Territorial Authorities, from a “may wish to consider” approach to one with the use of more mandatory language (e.g., as used in the Environment Canterbury RPS) where they differentiate methods out on the basis of “TA’s will..” and “TA’s should”.

2.4 Civil Defence – The Oil Companies as a ‘Lifeline Utility’

The Oil Companies in their bulk storage facilities and Service Station sites located throughout the region are ready and able to provide a strategic function at any time in the regions emergency response plan.

Fuel tanks provide a necessary fuel reserve that is easily utilised in emergency situations. Fuel stored at Service Stations can be utilised to fuel generators to provide emergency power generation in emergencies and unforeseen circumstances when electricity connection is not available. It is essential to be able to use the fuel source in an emergency, often for extended periods of time. For example there are key service stations in the region that have been wired up to enable connection to a generator to get fuel from the tanks in the event of an emergency (e.g. sustained outage). Such facilities provide a strategic role and function under the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Fuel Plan.

It is recognised that lifeline utilities are specifically referred to in Section 11 Natural Hazard HAZ method 16 which requires natural hazards to be taken into account by territorial authorities when planning for the provision of lifeline utilities. HAZ Method 21 in relation to territorial authorities maintaining a civil defence emergency response capability is also supported.

There is a need to provide a greater level of directive policy within the RPS to facilitate and recognise the role of critical infrastructure/lifeline utilities and the existing provisions therefore require expansion. However this should not mean that all hazards are required to be avoided for such infrastructure.

The Christchurch earthquakes have proven how resilient oil industry infrastructure was to that event. Service stations can also be inundated from flooding without issue. Experience has shown that critical infrastructure (e.g. service stations in areas of liquefaction or transmission towers in riverbeds) are able to be located within some hazard areas. It is therefore important that policy and methods relating to such infrastructure recognises the degree of resilience provided by the specific infrastructure and that policy is targeted appropriately.

2.5 Codes of Practice and Industry standards

The current RPS in Sections 3.4 and '5.2 *Maintaining Healthy Soils*, encourages the use of industry self-regulation as a means of reducing bureaucratic intervention. Likewise the advocacy and promotion of codes of practice in methods 8 and 9 of section '6.2 *maintaining and enhancing the quality of our water in our rivers and streams, lakes and wetlands*' is also supported.

The Oil Companies undertake their activities in accordance with MfE national standards, guidelines and protocols including:

- National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to protect Human Health (NESCS 2011).
- Environmental Guidelines for water discharges from petroleum industry sites in New Zealand (December 1998).
- Guidelines for assessing and managing petroleum hydrocarbon contaminated sites in New Zealand (revised 2011).
- Checklist for the removal and replacement of petroleum underground storage tanks and underground equipment (October 2011).
- Draft Sampling protocols for and analytical methods for determining petroleum products in soil and water (May 1999).
- Contaminated land management guidelines No. 1: Reporting on Contaminated sites in New Zealand (revised 2011).
- Above ground bulk tank containment systems (June 1995)

The use of industry guidelines and monitoring programmes as a means of avoiding remedying or mitigating adverse effects of certain land uses is supported and the Oil Companies wish to see this maintained in the RPS review.

2.6 Hazard Substances, Contaminated/potentially Contaminated Land Sites

The Oil Companies are generally supportive of the RPS provisions in relation to contaminated land and hazardous substance in section 5.3.

There is a need to ensure that any review of the RPS provisions recognises the Governments intent to remove the management of hazardous substances from the RMA. However, there will still remain a land use component that will need to be managed in terms of bulk fuel storage and sensitive activities and therefore reverse sensitivity issues. (Refer section 2.2 above).

The term '*contaminated land*' should be utilised instead of '*sites*' as determining an entire '*site*' contaminated is unnecessary when it may only be a small part of the site as a whole that is contaminated. It should be noted that Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing

and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulations 2011 (NES) refers to 'piece of land' and not to a 'site'.

HZC Policy 4 and 5 is supported, however there is a concern that the overall framework needs to be improved. It does not deal adequately with passive discharges – those legacy discharges that have given rise to contaminated land and ongoing discharges from those as the level of contaminants degrade over time. Policy 6 appears to be more appropriately focused on hazardous substances management than existing discharges from historic contaminated land. An automatic requirement for remediation of any unauthorised discharge (of which most passive discharges from such land could be considered) is an issue and is not how contaminated land is managed in other jurisdictions.

A more appropriate framework to consider in relation to passive discharges is that in the Environment Canterbury RPS. Their framework provides a more appropriate approach to managing contaminated land (e.g. it sets out the basis upon which existing contamination may remain in the ground). It is suggested that Taranaki Regional Council look to incorporating the Environment Canterbury approach within a revised RPS.

2.8 Operational Issues

There is a need, in lower order plans, to have rules in place that provide for activities such as retanking of underground storage tanks at service stations and truck stop sites, which can necessitate earthwork consents at a district and regional level, together with a take and discharge consent to water and/or soil if dewatering is required during the retanking activity. Such activities generally only occur once in the life of any statutory plan and are temporary in nature generally lasting only one to two weeks. While obtaining these consents do not generally entail much difficulty the time and costs involved are often out of proportion to the benefits. Temporary water takes for construction has not been well provided for in other jurisdictions when addressing water allocation (e.g. consideration of such matters in GWR Policy 2 would assist). Such concerns apply to other infrastructure and for any temporary construction works requiring dewatering

What is needed in the RPS are provisions seeking to provide for short term construction activities (takes and discharges) to occur with a minimum of regulatory involvement. This could be done through various policies, or methods depending on the focus at region or district. Specifically providing for and recognising temporary dewatering and associated take and discharges for construction activities to be managed through good management practices that ensure discharges do not result in more than minor adverse effects, without regulatory (i.e. resource consent) involvement. The Oil Companies therefore wish to see consideration given to this within the RPS review.

3.0 Conclusion

On behalf of the Oil Companies thank you once again for providing the opportunity to provide feedback on the Council's interim review of the RPS. The Oil Companies would be pleased to assist in the development and wording of provisions at a later stage in the process.

For any further information you may require or to discuss the issues referred to above please contact the undersigned on 09 917 4315 nperera@burtonconsultants.co.nz.

Yours faithfully,
BURTON PLANNING CONSULTANTS LIMITED



Nadine Perera
Principal Planner

Climate Justice Taranaki Inc. Preliminary Comments for the Interim Review of the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010 5 September 2016

Climate Justice Taranaki Inc. (CJT) welcome the opportunity of providing written comments for the Interim Review of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) for Taranaki 2010. CJT understand this is a non-statutory process to check the effectiveness and efficiency of the Policy Statement, prior to its formal review in 2020.

At the RPS interim review workshop on 8 August 2016, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community groups were given four questions to guide discussions. We will focus our comments relating to these questions:

1. What is your organisation's/ group's top five significant resource management issues in 2016 and beyond?

CJT's over-arching concern is climate change and the associated social justice issues and their root causes. Under this broad concern are several interlinked resource management issues that are especially important to us:

- Energy
- Land and soil (sustainable agriculture)
- Freshwater
- Kaitiakitanga and sustainable communities
- Indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems

2. Does the current RPS provide support for the future direction of your organisation/ group?

While the RPS is unable to address our over-arching concern – root causes of climate change and the associated social justice issues – its framework does incorporate the key resource management issues that are important to us. However, we feel that there is a lot of rhetoric in the RPS and some rather different perspectives and emphases from those that CJT hold. The level of support that the RPS could provide CJT would depend a great deal on how well the RPS is implemented and how it evolves as 2020 approaches.

3. Do you see the need for any changes? What changes?

There are plenty of changes CJT would like to propose, but we are unsure whether this is the time to provide the details, and whether it would be effective without some open dialogues with Council and other NGOs. As we were unable to attend the first workshop, we would like to know if Council has plans for any follow-up workshops where we could have more in-depth discussions?

Below, we list just a few preliminary observations to be elaborated when we have the opportunity in future:

- Since 2010, a number of major research reports concerning climate change, sea level rise, state of our environment, freshwater, and oil and gas operations in New Zealand, have been published, notably by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment and NIWA. The RPS need to be revised/updated to reflect the findings and implications of these reports.

- The Climate Change section (7.2) gives a fair introduction to the cause and effects of climate change, albeit brief. Given its overarching importance and linkages to so many resource management issues, we feel this section warrants a more prominent position in the RPS. The linkages/implications on the different resource management issues need to be presented in each of these sections (notably land and soil; natural hazards; energy).
- Chapter 5 on Land and Soil focusses a great deal on erosion and healthy soils which are crucial for Taranaki – a province heavily dependent on agriculture, and in view of climate change impacts, notably extreme rainfall. The Sustainable Land Management Programme is a worth-while initiative especially if landowners are given adequate support in implementing the farm-specific agroforestry and conservation plans. Transition to biological farming, organics and crop diversification also deserve serious support.
- We are unsure of the section 5.2 on Maintaining Health Soils, in particular the conclusion that *“there are no significant levels of fertiliser or agrichemical residues in Taranaki soils that pose a risk to human or animal health.”* We believe incorporating soil health and nutrient budgeting within onfarm management systems needs to go beyond advocacy (HSO METH 3), onto rules and support. These are essential for ensuring / restoring soil health as well as maintaining / improving water quality.
- We have serious issues concerning section 5.3 on Managing the Effects of Hazardous Substances and Contaminated Sites. We question why oil/gas exploration, production and waste disposal activities are not mentioned when these activities use and dispose of a wide range of hazardous substances on/into land. CJT have written detailed analyses and submissions on oil/gas waste disposal, notably landfarming, that can be accessed on our website.
- Re Chapter 6 on Fresh water, we have issues on statements like *“Taranaki’s water bodies have generally good to excellent water quality...”* We believe more robust science is needed in designing and implementing Taranaki’s freshwater quality monitoring, and the compliance monitoring programmes concerning contaminant discharges. Critically, it is time to take the precautionary approach seriously to protect the life-supporting capacity of freshwater; i.e. to *prevent* rather than manage the effects of human activities. With the dire status of our wetlands, much greater proactive actions are needed to protect the remaining wetlands and restore damaged/lost wetland ecosystems, rather than allowing (and mitigating the effects from) any further degradation and land drainage. Also relating to this chapter are our comments on the Draft Taranaki Water and Land Plan which we are happy to elaborate or discuss with Council and fellow NGOs.
- In the Air Quality section (7.1), the effects of emissions from petro-chemical industries (e.g. oil/gas wellsites and production stations, Methanex and Ballance Agri-Nutrient Urea Plant) appear very much understated, given their widespread occurrence and high intensity in some areas, leading to substantial cumulative effects. CJT wish to see more robust monitoring on these emissions and research on their potential impacts on the environment and people; as well as the scientific grounds for not identifying airsheds as defined by the NES for Air Quality.
- Chapter 13 on Minerals largely deals with fossil fuel extraction, although it includes also non-fuel minerals. We have some serious issues about this chapter, stemming from the fact that mineral resources cannot be extracted and consumed sustainably because of their largely un-renewable

nature. Overall, this chapter overstates the importance/benefits of mineral resources to economics, social and even cultural wellbeing of people and community in Taranaki, while understating the losses and harm to communities, especially those living amongst sites of mineral extraction and processing. Research by the University of Otago has shown that some of these areas are also the most deprived economically and socially, on the national scale. The impacts of mineral extractions on the mauri and wairua of the land and their cultural relationships with tangata whenua are also ignored.

- Chapter 13 also places a great deal of emphasis on “reverse sensitivity issues” where “*the ability to extract and utilise the minerals may become compromised by sensitive land uses locating near mineral extraction and processing activities or along access routes*”, without mentioning the actual and potential harm and compromise that some local communities suffer from nearby oil/gas activities (e.g. health and safety risks, property devaluation, opportunities for organic certification, etc.). This is an obvious bias especially when the explanation for Energy Policy 3 (p.113) specifically points out the “*effects on people and communities*” from renewable energy development.

- Chapter 14 on Energy deals largely with renewable energy, although it also includes non-renewable sources and issues concerning efficiency in network utilities, etc. As such, CJT see this chapter as one of the most important, given its potential contribution to lessening climate change effects, and the specific provisions in the RMA (Section 7) for Councils to have particular regards on “*the benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy*” and “*the efficiency of the end use of energy*”. We would like to see more thoughts and support given to small/community-scale renewable electricity generation (Refer to NPS on Renewable Electricity Generation 2011), energy from waste (from farms, forestry and landfills), and public transport and freight based largely on renewable energy.

4. Should it be more directive or more flexible?

CJT believe that in some areas, a more directive approach may be helpful while in other areas, a more flexible approach may be more appropriate. There is a need to recognise and fill the knowledge gaps on some of the issues, notably the individual and cumulative effects of contaminant discharge, connectivity between surface and groundwater resources, and the inter-linkages between land/soil, freshwater and coastal water management. Overall, greater emphases and details on the methods of implementing the policy, and monitoring its effectiveness, would render the RPS more useful and practical.

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Kia ora Denise

Many thanks for pulling this together and including Taranaki EnviroSchools in this review.

Please see my additional notes for inclusion in this review:

Throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand, the national EnviroSchools programme is delivered through Regional Councils in 14 of the 16 regions. Taranaki and the West Coast of the South Island are the sole exceptions at this point in time.

EnviroSchools supports and empowers young people to become the change makers needed moving into the future. The positive actions and outcomes are not limited to solely being based around the above but permeate further into strengthening communities through connections to people and place. Please see our [website](#) for further details.

The intensive and [results proven](#) EnviroSchools programme is a complementary addition to TRC's current waste minimisation and environmental education project based roles and brings a deeper practice of long term sustainable outcomes of behaviour change in our young people.

The reason the EnviroSchools programme is run through Regional Councils is because it supports the goals of Councils in numerous areas. These are identified below specifically relating to the TRC's Regional Policy Statement:

- Land & soil
 - 5.2 Maintaining healthy soils
- Fresh Water
 - 6.2 Maintaining and enhancing the quality of water in our rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands
 - 6.4 Protecting the natural character of wetlands
 - 6.6 Managing effects associated with the use of and disturbances to river and lake beds
 - 6.7 Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along rivers and lakes
- Air & Climate Change
 - 7.2 Responding to the effects of climate change
- Coastal Environment
 - 8.1 Protecting the natural character of our coast
 - 8.2 Maintaining and enhancing coastal water quality
 - 8.3 Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along the coastal environment
- Indigenous Biodiversity
 - 9.1 Maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity
- Natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity value
 - 10.2 Protecting our historic heritage
- Waste Management
 - 12.1 Minimising waste and managing its disposal
- Energy
 - Sustainably managing energy
- The Built Environment
 - 15.1 Promoting sustainable urban development
- Local Iwi & Hapu
 - 16. Support Māori Perspectives in all thoughts, plans, actions & intentions

The success of the Enviroschools programme is based on a facilitated model and is only limited by funding. It is recommended that TRC financially support the delivery of Enviroschools in this region to better enhance the positive outcomes of its (TRC's) own goals and KPI's in all of the areas (noted above) that this holistic environmental education programme can do. This is our recommendation on how to support our organisation and TRC with its RPS.

Nga mihi, Lauree Jones, Regional Coordinator,

022 014 7462

My general hours are Mon – Thurs 10 – 3. I'm available at other times by arrangement.

FB: Taranaki Enviroschools

enviroschoolstaranaki.blogspot.com

www.enviroschools.org.nz

www.sustainabletaranaki.org.nz

Agenda Memorandum

Date 25 July 2017

**Memorandum to
Chairperson and Members
Policy and Planning Committee**



Subject: Submission on charging to monitor permitted activities in the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry

Approved by: A D McLay, Director – Resource Management
B G Chamberlain, Chief Executive

Document: 1864384

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce a submission on the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) discussion paper *Council charging to monitor permitted activities in the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry* (the discussion paper).

Submissions closed on 16 June 2017. A copy of the submission is attached to this memorandum.

Executive summary

- The Government is in the process of finalising the *National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry* (NES-PF). The NES-PF will require foresters to meet best-practice forestry standards in carrying out their operations.
- In May 2017, in response to sector concerns on the NES-PF, MPI released a proposal to allow councils to charge for monitoring permitted activities under the Standard.
- The attached submission strongly supports the proposal to allow councils to charge for monitoring activities under the NES-PF.
- The submission notes that the effectiveness of permitted forestry activity conditions to control potential adverse effects is dependent upon councils monitoring and enforcing best practice.
- The subjectivity inherent in some of the NES-PF permitted forestry activity conditions means likely additional costs on the Council when it comes to undertaking compliance and enforcement action particularly in relation to slash and debris management, activities in and around sensitive habitats, enforcing the quality of sediment and erosion control plans, and/or following up foresters with a poor history of compliance.
- The submission argues that providing councils with the ability to charge for the monitoring of permitted forestry activities is necessary and commensurate with the

principle of users pays. It will provide an incentive to foresters to operate to high standards and levels of compliance to minimise the monitoring requirements and associated costs.

- The closing date for submissions was 16 June 2017.

Recommendations

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives the memorandum *Submission on charging to monitor permitted activities in the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry*
2. adopts the submission.

Background

In 2015 the Government released a discussion document on a proposed *National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry* (NES-PF), which is a regulation made under the *Resource Management Act 1991* (RMA) that councils must give effect to.

The NES-PF proposes rules for eight plantation forestry activities that can have an environmental impact:

- afforestation
- pruning and thinning-to-waste
- earthworks
- river crossings
- forestry quarrying
- harvesting
- mechanical land preparation
- replanting.

Members will recall that the development of the NES-PF has been in progress for some time. Through the NES-PF the Government is seeking to set a standard for good practice in forestry. Under the NES-PF most forestry activities are permitted (without a resource consent) subject to foresters complying with a range of conditions attached to the activity to control potential adverse effects.

Where foresters cannot comply with permitted activity conditions they must seek resource consent for the activity.

Councils have compliance and enforcement responsibility under the RMA, including for NESs. Until recently, the RMA only allowed councils to recover costs for monitoring activities regulated by resource consents, but not for monitoring permitted activities. However, recent amendments to the RMA in April 2017¹ now allow councils to recover the costs of monitoring activities that are permitted subject to this being explicitly provided for in an NES.

¹ The Resource Legislation Amendment Act 2017 included an enabling provision for allowing an NES to specify that councils could charge to monitor activities permitted in the NES (new section 43A(8) of the RMA).

Members may recall that at the Policy and Planning Committee of 3 September 2015 it endorsed a submission that, amongst other things, noted its concerns about the imposition of added monitoring costs on the region associated with permitted forestry activities. The relief sought by Council included amending the RMA to allow costs to be charged for permitted activity monitoring.

In May 2017, in response to sector concerns around added and unfair monitoring costs, MPI released a discussion paper that included a proposal to use the recently amended RMA to allow councils to charge for monitoring permitted activities under the NES-PF. Of note, this was a new proposal, not originally canvassed in previous consultation documents, and further consultation was considered appropriate.

The closing date for submissions on the discussion paper was 16 June 2017. Owing to the tight timeframe for making a submission, a draft was notable to be circulated to Members prior to the closing date. However, the matters covered in the submission concerning user pays are established Council policy.

The proposal and submission

A copy of the discussion paper can be found on the MPI website <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/consultations/proposal-to-allow-councils-to-charge-for-monitoring-permitted-activities-under-the-nes-pf/>.

A recent amendment to the RMA allows for a NES to include a provision which allows councils, if they choose, to charge a fee to monitor specified activities permitted under the Standard. Accordingly, through the discussion paper, the Government sought comment on the proposal to include a provision allowing councils to charge fees for monitoring permitted activities in the NES-PF.

Table 1 below identifies permitted activities under the NES-PF for which monitoring charges potentially apply.

Table 1: Permitted activities for which councils could fix charges for monitoring

Permitted forestry activity		Permitted activity condition requirements
Main forestry activity	Afforestation Planting and growing new forestry on land not recently used for this purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To control wilding conifers – protect significant natural areas and outstanding natural features and landscapes – setbacks.
	Pruning and thinning to waste Selective trimming or felling of trees with waste remaining on site	Measures relating to managing slash
	Earthworks Ground disturbance in the plantation forest to move or remove soil and rock for constructing forestry roads, tracks and landings, and upgrading and maintenance work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To manage and control discharges of sediment – manage how fill and spoil is deposited – control erosion – manage run-off – protect setbacks.
	River Crossings Structures in the plantation forest, and the approaches to them, that allow vehicles or machinery to cross water bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The design, placement and maintenance of river crossing structures – manage contaminant discharges from the construction, maintenance or removal of river crossings – the effects of structures on downstream users and for the passage of fish – manage erosion and sediment discharge during use.
	Forestry Quarrying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Manage visual effects

Permitted forestry activity	Permitted activity condition requirements	
Extraction, processing and stockpiling of material within a plantation forest that is required to form roads, tracks or landings within forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – protect setbacks – manage fill or spoil – manage sediment discharges, stormwater and erosion. 	
Harvesting Felling and extracting trees for sale or production and the processing or loading of logs for delivery to processing plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Manage and control sediment – plan for harvesting – protect setbacks – manage disturbance near waterbodies and the coastal marine area – manage slash and debris. 	
Mechanical land preparation Modifying land within a plantation forest to prepare for planting trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Specify methods that can be used – manage and control sediment – protect setbacks. 	
Replanting Planting and growing forestry after harvesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Protect setbacks – control wilding conifers. 	
General matters	Slash traps Traps in water bodies preventing slash being mobilised by water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Design, placement and maintenance of slash traps – manage effects on downstream users and for the passage of fish – manage contaminant discharges from the construction, maintenance or removal of slash traps – manage sediment discharges.
	Vegetation clearance and disturbance including of indigenous vegetation during forestry activities	Measures include various conditions intended to limit vegetation clearance to incidental damage, clearance for maintenance purposes, and a size of land area as a threshold.
	Discharges, disturbance and diversion of water during forestry activities	Measures to protect spawning fish, and the steps or threshold for discharges, disturbances and diversion occurring during the main forestry activities managed under the NES-PF.
	Noise	Noise limits associated with plantation forestry activities.
	Dust	Preventing dust associated with plantation forestry activities being noxious, objectionable or offensive outside that forest.
	Indigenous bird nesting	Measures requiring that procedures be in place to recognise, confirm and protect classes of threatened bird species when present.
	Fuel storage and refuelling	Measures to prevent fuel used or stored for plantation forestry activities from entering waterbodies, or land where it can enter water.

Given Council’s previous input into and interest into the development and implementation of the NES-PF, officers prepared the attached submission.

The submission strongly supports the proposal to allow councils to charge for monitoring activities under the NES-PF. The submission notes that the proposal addresses many of the concerns regional councils had with regards to the increased costs of permitted activity monitoring.

The submission notes that while permitted activities for forestry are subject to a raft of conditions that must be complied with, the effectiveness of those conditions to control potential adverse effects is dependent upon councils monitoring and enforcing best practice.

As emphasised in the submission, the subjectivity inherent in some of the permitted activity conditions is likely to impose additional costs on the Council when it comes to responding to any complaints and in undertaking compliance and enforcement action. The submission highlights examples of subjective discretion that take them beyond what is generally required as conditions of a permitted activity and will result in more time and cost for Council staff in assessing compliance, especially if forest owners disagree with the Council assessment. An example includes ‘slash and debris management’ and the removal of unstable slash when it is safe and practicable to do so. Other examples include permitted

forestry activities in and around sensitive/vulnerable areas such as wetlands, or where the quality of sediment and erosion control plans submitted to councils is poor, and/or foresters with a poor history of compliance.

The submission argues that providing councils with the ability to charge for the monitoring of permitted forestry activities:

- is necessary and commensurate with the principle of users pays whereby costs for monitoring effects associated with resource use are borne by the user
- will provide an incentive to foresters to operate to high standards and levels of compliance to minimise the monitoring requirements and associated costs
- removes the risk that the wider community will incur an added and unnecessary rates burden, thus freeing up rate resources for other services and activities that deliver a broader public good.

The submission further seeks the development and timely release of timely guidance on implementing the NPS-PF, including how charges will be levied and the activities that will be subject to charging.

The NES-PF process from here

MPI are continuing to work on the final development of the NES-PF. The MPI website identifies the following timetable for the NES-PF:

Development of guidance material and tools:	October 2016 to May 2017
Gazettal of regulation:	Mid-2017
Commencement:	Late 2017 to early 2018

Should the proposals to allow councils to charge for the monitoring of permitted forestry activities go through, the Council will need to review its monitoring and charging regime for forestry activities. This will be impossible for 2017/18 as the charges have already been set.

Decision-making considerations

Part 6 (Planning, decision-making and accountability) of the *Local Government Act 2002* has been considered and documented in the preparation of this agenda item. The recommendations made in this item comply with the decision-making obligations of the *Act*.

Financial considerations—LTP/Annual plan

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the Council's adopted Long-Term Plan and estimates. Any financial information included in this memorandum has been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

Policy considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the policy documents and positions adopted by this Council under various legislative frameworks including, but not restricted to, the *Local Government Act 2002*, the *Resource Management Act 1991* and the *Biosecurity Act 1993*.

Legal considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations comply with the appropriate statutory requirements imposed upon the Council.

Attachment

Document 1871385: *Submission on the proposal to allow councils to charge for monitoring permitted activities under the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry.*

8 June 2017

Document: 1871385

Spatial, Forestry and Land Management
Regulation and Assurance Branch
Ministry for Primary Industries
PO Box 2526
Wellington 6011
New Zealand

NES-PFconsultation@mpi.govt.nz

Submission on the Proposal to allow councils to charge for monitoring permitted activities under the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry

Introduction

1. The Taranaki Regional Council (the Council) thanks the Ministry for Primary Industries for the opportunity to make a submission on the proposal to allow councils to charge for monitoring activities under the *National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry* (NES-PF).
2. The Council makes this submission in recognition of its:
 - resource management responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991 (the RMA) and general advocacy responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2002, and
 - regional advocacy responsibilities whereby the Council represents the Taranaki region on matters of regional interest and concern.

Support enabling power for Councils to charge to monitor permitted activities being included in the NES-PF

3. The Council strongly supports the proposal to allow councils to charge for monitoring activities under the NES-PF.
4. As noted in the discussion document, councils have compliance and enforcement responsibilities under the RMA. Recent amendments to the RMA now allow a council to recover the costs of monitoring activities that are permitted by an NES.
5. The NES-FP seeks to improve efficiency in the forestry sector and has done so by 'permitting' a large number of forestry activities (i.e. they do not require a resource consent) subject to meeting relevant conditions. Eight different production forestry activities have been identified and all are permitted in Green, Yellow and Orange

Zones, with the exception of earthworks in the Orange Zone on land that is over 25 degrees in slope. Even in the Red Zone, which has a very high susceptibility to erosion, there are a large number of permitted activities.

6. While the permitted activities are subject to a raft of conditions that must be complied with, the effectiveness of those conditions to control potential adverse effects is dependent upon councils monitoring and enforcing best practice. The lack of certainty in some of the permitted activity conditions is likely to impose additional costs on the Council when it comes to responding to any complaints and in undertaking compliance and enforcement. For example, in the harvesting rules one of the permitted activity conditions for 'slash and debris management' is that wherever it is safe and practicable to do so potentially unstable slash that has the potential to mobilise under flood flows must be removed. These matters involve a degree of subjective discretion that take them beyond what is generally required as conditions of a permitted activity and will result in more time and cost for Council staff in assessing compliance, especially if forest owners disagree with the Council assessment. Other examples where additional costs may be imposed upon councils through requirements to monitor permitted activities is where activities are occurring in and around sensitive/vulnerable areas such as wetlands, or where the quality of sediment and erosion control plans submitted to councils is poor, and/or foresters with a poor history of compliance.
7. Given the scale of the activity and potential for environmental effects it is appropriate that the ability for reasonable compliance monitoring be available and that this be funded by the industry. With the NES there are reduced consent costs so the permitted activity monitoring would be the predominant regulatory cost for the industry, which represents an effective and efficient regulatory outcome for industry and the community.

Recommendation

8. The Council seeks that the enabling power allowing councils to charge for monitoring permitted activities be included in the NES-PF.

User pays versus general rates

9. Providing councils with the ability to charge for the monitoring of permitted forestry activities is necessary and commensurate with the principle of users pays. It is important to levy costs on users who are causing or impacting an adverse change of the environment as a result of their activity. The levying of a charge will provide an incentive to foresters to operate to high standards and levels of compliance to minimise the monitoring requirements and associated costs.
10. The application of a user payers models removes an unnecessary rates burden from the wider community, thus freeing up rates resources for services and activities that deliver a broad public good.
11. The unacceptable alternative is that the additional monitoring and compliance costs become a rates funded service. However, a failure to allow councils the option to levy costs on foresters places undue pressure on resource allocation and may result in

permitted activities with substantive conditions and risks not being monitored as regularly or robustly as is desirable. The Council suggests that rates funding is more appropriate when the public good outweighs the private good or interest, which in this case it does not.

12. An argument against the user pays proposal may be that the activities are permitted and already subject to stringent conditions, thus the foresters should not be subject to an additional unnecessary burden. However, the Council considers that the benefits outweigh the risk and the enabling power should be granted to Councils.

Recommendation

13. The Council notes that the benefits of allowing councils to charge for monitoring permitted activities outweighs the costs.

Types of conditions that Council could set monitoring charges for

14. The Council supports enabling the charging for monitoring permitted activity requirements identified in Table 1 of the paper. The Council further agrees that administrative conditions be excluded for notification provisions and reporting on design and location of slash traps.
15. The Council notes that it implements a number of regional rules for a suite of permitted, controlled and discretionary activities that include notification and reporting requirements. It is not the Council's charging practice to recovery costs associated with the receipt of information. Accordingly it agrees that the acts of notification and reporting by the foresters are matters that should not be charged for.

Recommendation

16. The Council seeks that the enabling power allowing councils to charge for monitoring activities be included in the NES-PF.

Other matters – guidance material

17. The Council suggests that foresters and Councils could usefully receive guidance about implementing the NPS-PF, including how charges will be levied and the activities that will be subject to charging. This would be consistent with recent Government practices relating to the preparation of guidance for national policy statements and standards. The Council urges that such guidance be prepared in consultation with councils and industry and that it is ready by the time the NES-PF is gazetted.

Recommendation

18. The Council supports the development and timely release of timely guidance on implementing the NPS-PF, including how charges will be levied and the activities that will be subject to charging.

Conclusion

19. The Council thanks the Ministry for Primary Industries for the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed NES-PF.

20. The Council strongly supports the proposal to allow councils to charge for monitoring activities under the NES-PF. It addresses many of the concerns regional councils had with regards to the increased costs of permitted activity monitoring.
21. We trust that these comments are helpful. Should you require any further information or clarification about these comments, please do not hesitate to contact Planning Manager, Chris Spurdle, at these offices.

Yours faithfully
BG Chamberlain
Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AD McLay', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

per: AD McLay
Director - Resource Management

Agenda Memorandum

Date 25 July 2017



**Memorandum to
Chairperson and Members
Policy and Planning Committee**

**Subject: Regional freshwater recreational bathing
water quality report for 2016-2017**

Approved by: G K Bedford, Director-Environment Quality

B G Chamberlain, Chief Executive

Document: 1897674

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to update the Committee on the results of the 'state of the environment' programme that monitors freshwater contact recreational water quality, for the 2016-2017 bathing season (*Freshwater contact recreational water quality at selected Taranaki sites State of the Environment Monitoring Report 2016-2017, Technical Report 2017-01, July 2017*). The full report is available upon request, and will be published on the Council's website following this meeting. This memorandum summarises the report's data and results, and the Executive Summary and recommendations from the report are attached as an appendix.

A presentation on the report will be made at the meeting.

Executive summary

The Council's *Regional Freshwater Plan for Taranaki* recognises point source and diffuse source discharges of contaminants to surface freshwater as a significant resource management issue. The Council seeks to manage the quality and effects of such discharges through consents (for point sources) and programmes such as riparian exclusion and plantings (diffuse sources). Progressive improvement in in-stream water quality is achieved as consent conditions are made more rigorous, and as land managers undertake new fencing and planting.

The Council's State of the Environment monitoring programmes includes a programme to monitor the state and any changes in the state of the recreational quality of the region's freshwaters.

The latest report (for summer 2016-2017) is available as a separate item, and the Executive Summary of the report is attached to this memorandum as an appendix, for Members' information. Seventeen sites were monitored for bacteriological quality: 16 recognised bathing sites, together with the Waimoku Stream which is sampled every few years to assist in understanding the bacteriological state of the Oakura Beach. Nine of these sites are also

monitored for benthic cyanobacteria ('slime') as well. Three sites were monitored for both bacteriological quality and planktonic cyanobacteria (floating algal 'blooms')- Lake Rotomanu, Lake Opunake, and Lake Ratapiko, while Lake Rotokare was monitored solely for planktonic cyanobacteria. In the year under review, there were no further investigations conducted at designated bathing sites into particular sources of bacterial contamination, due to lack of suitable conditions.

Sampling frequency was increased in 2016-2017 to weekly at the region's most popular sites, including within the Christmas-New Year holiday period, with the additional sampling being undertaken regardless of weather. There was little difference in the two datasets ('SEM' samples versus all samples) other than for the Merrilands Domain site on the Waiwhakaiho River, where there was a small increase in the proportion of samples exceeding the guideline.

Bacterial levels were somewhat higher than usual in the season under review. This is put down to a wetter summer, so that, for example, dairy effluent ponds discharged for longer and more frequently than usual, and cloudy conditions would have reduced the degree of solar inactivation of bacteria. There would have been increased diffuse runoff. However, the percentage of samples within the programme that fell into the 'Action' category actually reduced slightly in the year under review, from 14.4% (2014-2015) and 15.9% (2015-2016) to 13.9%.

Over the past few years there has been an increase in the total number of samples falling into the 'Action' category (unacceptable for swimming). This effect has been driven solely by increasing bacterial contamination at two urban sites in New Plymouth (the Waiwhakaiho River adjacent to Lake Rotomanu and the mouth of the Te Henui Stream), and is due to contamination by waterfowl. The same cause and effect is found in the Waimoku Stream. It is particularly noticeable that bacteriological contamination increases sharply as these two waterways flow through urban areas from upstream agricultural areas, because of water fowl in the lower reaches. The Waiwhakaiho River fell from 100% compliant at Merrilands Domain, in upper urban New Plymouth, to 39% compliant adjacent to Lake Rotomanu, just above its mouth.

Seven of the 16 sites remained below the Ministry for the Environment's 'Action' level at all times during the season, the same number as in 2015-2016. Another 4 sites had only one non-compliance during the season, while a further two sites had 2. There were 29 samples altogether in the 'Action' category, not counting the Waimoku. Excluding the results from the 2 sites identified above, more than 96% of all samples met the MfE bathing guideline (cf 94% in 2015-2016). At Taranaki freshwater contact recreational sites, it is almost always isolated events rather than general seasonal quality that give rise to exceedances of guidelines.

The Council's *2012-2022 Long-Term Plan (LTP)* has as a target for microbiological quality in inland waters, the *maintenance or increase in the number of sites compliant with the 2003 Ministry of Health contact recreational guidelines* (with 2003-2004 as the baseline year). Out of the 11 inland bathing sites that have been monitored in both seasons, 6 were fully compliant in 2003-2004, and 6 in 2015-2016. There has been a very large increase in non-compliant samples at the mouth of the Te Henui Stream (from 4 in 2003-2004 to 12 in 2016-2017, out of 13 samples).

While the regional riparian programme and diversion of pond effluent will have significant benefits for reducing bacteriological contamination of waterways in the long term, through

reducing faecal deposition directly into waterways or on stream banks and through increasing interception and attenuation of runoff, the significant variations in results in the last decade point also to more immediate meteorological and hydrological as well as longer term land management and farming practice influences showing through.

Over the long term, there are clear indications of deteriorations in the Te Henui Stream, the lower Waiwhakaiho River, and the Waimoku Stream (in each case waterfowl are the source of microbial pollution).

Members may recall the release in 2013 of a report by the Ministry for the Environment, ('Suitability for swimming' July 2013 INFO 690), which focused solely on the grading system used by MfE and the Ministry of Health to indicate the presence of risk factors at swimming spots. The Council has repeatedly expressed its disappointment that this system, which does not take into account the state of water as revealed by day to day monitoring, is given so much emphasis, as is its mis-interpretation (e.g. '60% of NZ's waters unsafe to swim in') by the media. However, it is also acknowledged that in this publication at least, MfE noted that the suitability for recreation criteria:

- do not represent an accurate picture of water quality in the catchment;
- reflect a precautionary approach to managing health risk;
- are not designed to represent health risks on a particular day;
- tend to reflect the poorest water quality measured at a site rather than the average water quality;
- a site may be graded as poor but still be suitable for swimming much of the time; and
- do not replace the site-specific information available on council websites.¹

The Council is required to give effect to the *National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014* (NPS-FW) by implementing measures 'to safeguard... (b) the health of people and communities, **at least as affected by secondary contact with fresh water**; in sustainably managing the use and development of land, and of discharges of contaminants' (Objective A1 for Water Quality, emphasis added). This is colloquially described as ensuring at least a 'wadeability' quality in all water bodies. The National Objectives Framework (NOF) provides the numerical criteria by which a grade for 'wadeability' can be categorised, and it also provides a second set of criteria to categorise water bodies used for primary recreation, i.e. its 'swimmability'. The latter criteria are much more stringent. (Note: the Council does not attempt to differentiate types of water-based activity at any site i.e. all recognised recreational sites are regarded as needing to meet the 'swimmable' criteria).

The NOF criteria categorise sites on the basis, not of the typical water quality, but on the basis of the worst results within a record of data. While 14 of the 17 recognised fresh water bathing sites in Taranaki routinely comply with the 2003 Guidelines more than 90% of the time (with a 15th at 88% compliance), only 10 of the 17 meet the NOF criteria.

In February of this year, MfE released proposals to further amend the NOF 'swimmability' criteria. Although these proposals are still the subject of public consultation, this year's report includes an assessment of the state of Taranaki's freshwater bathing sites against the proposals, as a matter of information.

Naturally occurring cyanobacteria blooms occurred from December onwards at Lake Rotokare, and at Lake Rotomanu in March 2017, necessitating warning notices, while exposed mats of cyanobacteria and detached mats that washed onto river banks triggered

¹ *Suitability for swimming: Indicator update July 2013: INFO 690*, Ministry for the Environment

'alert' or 'action' levels at a number of sites to avoid potential risk to children or dogs (who seem drawn to the odour but are then adversely affected by toxins if present within the cyanobacteria).

In terms of promoting a 'one-stop shop' in public awareness of available guidance on water quality and suitability for recreational use, the Council now promotes the regional councils' LAWA website as the preferred source of national data on water quality and other environmental metrics. Data from the Council is uploaded automatically to the LAWA website as soon as it is available.

In terms of responsibility for advising the public on public health aspects of water quality, during 2016 the Council discussed with the district councils and the Medical Officer of Health the messaging that each agency should be providing to the public. As a result, it was agreed that the TRC website would direct all web enquiries around 'Can I swim here?' to the websites of the Taranaki District Health Board (TDHB) and district councils, where public health-based interpretation of water quality data would be provided and any advisory notification posted. During 2016-2017, there were 316 pageviews of the data on the Council's individual freshwater bathing sites, well down from over 4,000 individual page visits in 2015-2016 and 3,300 for July 2014-June 2015. The figures do not include anyone viewing the environmental data map only on the Council's home page. The individual pages for Lake Rotomanu, Lake Rotokare, and the Merrilands Domain were the most frequently visited, together accounting for almost half all page views. Staff also noticed public interest and enquiries re the Merrilands Domain site particularly around exposure of algal mats and attendant health risk to children and dogs.

Recommendations

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives the memorandum noting the preparation of the report *Freshwater Contact Recreational Water Quality at selected Taranaki sites SEM Monitoring Report 2016-2017, Technical Report 2017-01*
2. adopts the specific recommendations presented in Technical Report 2017-01.

Background

Section 35 of the Resource Management Act requires local authorities to undertake monitoring of the region's environment, including land, soil, air, and fresh and marine water quality. Monitoring is undertaken to identify pressures upon the regional resources, their state, changes in their state (i.e. trends), and the effectiveness of the policies and actions undertaken to maintain and enhance the environment.

The Taranaki Regional Council initiated freshwater contact recreational water quality monitoring at a number of designated sites as part of Council's state of the environment monitoring (SEM) in 1996. The on-going programme is designed to annually monitor the bacteriological quality of lakes, rivers and streams at popular contact recreational sites. This work is undertaken principally for state of the environment purposes, measuring the current condition of the sites and looking for any trends as indicators of pressures, but the results are also compared with various contact recreational guidelines as a means of providing perspective on the significance of the results.

Monitoring is scheduled to be carried out from early November to the end of March (ie the bathing season), but can extend to April, depending on weather conditions.

Freshwater contact recreational water quality monitoring measures the number of bacteria in the sampled water. Three types or families of bacteria were measured in the water sample: *E.coli*, enterococci, and faecal coliforms. The designated indicator bacterium is *E.coli*, but the other two parameters allow for further evaluation of sources and trends using the Council's full database record. Sampling is undertaken according to documented Council procedures, which includes avoidance of elevated river flow conditions.

The proposed programme for each year is workshopped with staff of the three district councils and the TDHB - Health Protection Unit prior to the start of each season, results are reported in real time on the Council's website throughout the season, and a full report on all results and findings presented to and discussed with each of the other agencies at the completion of the season.

Discussion

Programme description

This report examines the bacteriological quality of 16 popular freshwater recreational locations in the region for the 2016-2017 bathing season. It was the twenty-first such annual survey. Some of the sites have been added during the programme's lifetime, in response to concerns over cyanobacteria and as changes in access have meant new sites have become more popular. Sampling was completed within the period of early November to mid April.

Sample test results were compared with the Ministry for the Environment's (MfE) *Microbiological Water Quality Guidelines for Marine and Freshwater Recreational Areas* (2003). These guidelines are developed to apply to high-contact uses of water used intensively for recreational purposes, but are applied by the Council to each of the freshwater recreational sites without differentiation as to risk e.g. sites where there is paddling or kayaking or children playing in or near the water are treated the same as sites where there is repeated full immersion of swimmers' heads through activities such as diving or body-surfing rapids. The guidelines note a potential health hazard 'when the water is used for recreational activities such as swimming and other high-contact water sports. In these activities there is a reasonable risk that water will be swallowed, inhaled (Harrington et al

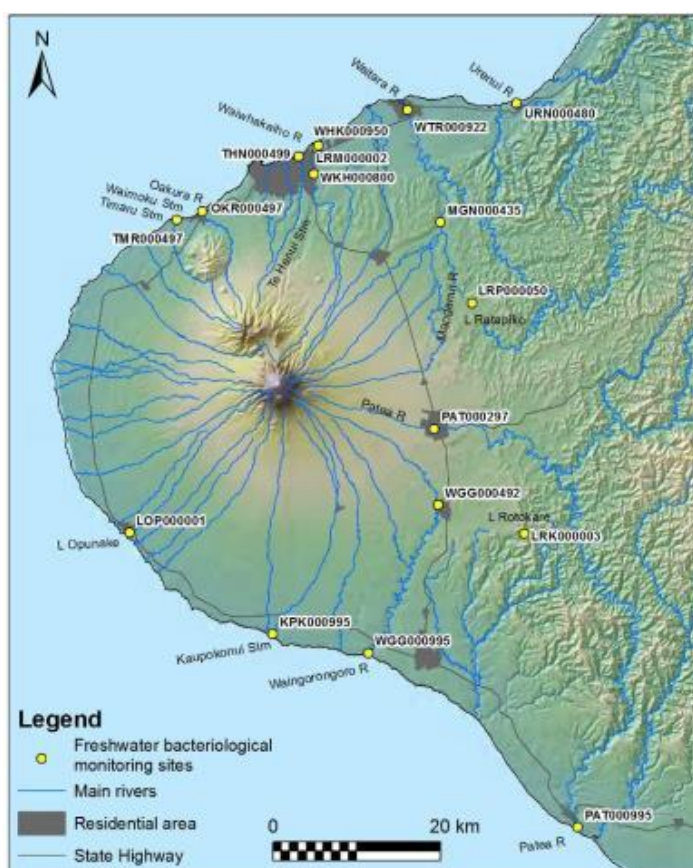


Figure 1 Location of freshwater contact recreation survey sites 2012-2013

where there is paddling or kayaking or children playing in or near the water are treated the same as sites where there is repeated full immersion of swimmers' heads through activities such as diving or body-surfing rapids. The guidelines note a potential health hazard 'when the water is used for recreational activities such as swimming and other high-contact water sports. In these activities there is a reasonable risk that water will be swallowed, inhaled (Harrington et al

1993), or come in contact with ears, nasal passages, mucous membranes or cuts in the skin, allowing pathogens to enter the body’.

The sites have also been graded for recreational suitability according to MfE, 2003 guidelines, based upon the immediately preceding five seasons of monitoring data (where such data existed). In addition, the Council assesses sites using the Ministry’s ‘Suitability for recreation’ (SFRG) criteria that base grades on surrounding land use. In doing so, it emerges that although most of the sites’ SFRGs suggest possible high risks associated with contact recreational usage, those SFRG gradings have been dictated by the agricultural nature of all catchments (meaning the sites are inevitably rated poorly regardless of proven quality).

For example, the 5-year microbiological data to 2017 indicate 15 of 17 sites achieving compliance on 90% or more of occasions. Yet the only freshwater bathing site in Taranaki graded either ‘good’ or ‘very good’ according to MfE criteria is Lake Rotokare. Further, the Urenui River estuary site, the Waiwhakaiho River at Merrilands Domain, the Waingongoro River site at the Eltham camp, the Patea River estuary site, the Kaupokonui River at the beach domain, and the Lake Ratapiko site, have either never reached or else have had only a single result in the ‘Action’ mode at any time during the last six seasons (i.e. at least a 99% compliance rate), under the sampling protocols of the SEM programme, and yet according to the Ministry for the Environment, all these sites should be deemed ‘poor’ sites for bathing.

In 2015-2016, for the first time, the report also referenced the *National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014* (NPS-FW), which requires that the Council, in giving effect to the NPS, is ‘to safeguard... (b) the health of people and communities, **at least as affected by secondary contact with fresh water**; in sustainably managing the use and development of land, and of discharges of contaminants’ (Objective A1 for Water Quality, emphasis added). This is colloquially described as setting a ‘wadeability’ standard for all water bodies. The NOF provides the quantitative criteria by which compliance with the narrative objective of the NPS-FW can be established. The NOF provides numerical criteria for ‘wadeability’. Of more relevance to this report, it also provides a second set of criteria to be applied to categorise water bodies used for primary recreation, i.e. ‘swimmability’. The NOF requires that a site be categorised on the basis, not of the typical water quality, but from the worst results obtained at any time throughout the record of monitoring.

In February of this year, MfE released proposals to further amend the NOF ‘swimmability’ criteria. Although these proposals are still the subject of public consultation, this year’s report also assesses the state of Taranaki’s freshwater bathing sites against these proposals, as a matter of public information and interest. While the latest proposals do not include a specific ‘national bottom line’, the government has announced its intention that 90% of all ‘swimmable’ waters in New Zealand should be within the top 3 of the 5 new categories.

In general, these data indicate shortcomings in the grading systems that are based upon landuse/perceived impacts, or a precautionary interpretation of monitoring data other than actual exceedances, rather than basing gradings upon actual monitoring data measured throughout the bathing seasons. The results of the Council’s contact recreational water quality programmes confirm that gradings do not reflect the recreational water quality experienced by recreational users and therefore should not be used or relied upon to make any statement about how safe water actually is for recreational purposes. They show only susceptibility, and predominantly reflect perceptions and suppositions about how some land uses might influence quality, as designated ‘risk factors’. It is the view of the Council that when there is regular and systematic testing of the actual quality, those results reflect actual levels and are far more informative and meaningful to recreational water users. The

Council emphasises the importance of results of systematic and timely on-going testing and reporting of actual contact recreational water quality.

It is noted that the Ministry for the Environment now acknowledges that the SFRG '*reflects a precautionary approach to managing public health risks and does not represent an accurate picture of water quality in the catchment. ... The grades reflect a precautionary approach to managing health risk and are not designed to represent health risks on a particular day. They tend to reflect the poorest water quality measured at a site rather than the average water quality. A site may be graded as poor but still be suitable for swimming much of the time....The indicator does not replace the site-specific information available on council websites.*'²

In terms of access to a 'one-stop shop' for public awareness of available guidance on water quality and suitability for recreational use, the Council now promotes the LAWA website as the preferred source of national data on water quality and other environmental metrics. The LAWA website has been set up and is supported by all regional councils across New Zealand, as a 'one stop shop' for the public to use to access environmental data. Data from the Council is uploaded automatically to the LAWA website as soon as it is available.

In terms of responsibility for advising the public on public health aspects of water quality, during 2016 the Council discussed with the district councils and the Medical Officer of Health the messaging that each agency should be providing to the public. As a result, it was agreed that the TRC website would direct all web enquiries around the question of 'can I swim here?' to the websites of the TDHB and district councils, where public health-based interpretation of water quality data would be provided and any advisory notification posted. During 2016-2017, there were 316 pageviews of the data on the Council's individual freshwater bathing sites, well down from over 4,000 individual page visits in 2015-2016 and 3,300 for July 2014-June 2015. The figures do not include anyone viewing the environmental data map only on the Council's home page. The individual pages for Lake Rotomanu, Lake Rotokare, and the Merrilands Domain were the most frequently visited, together accounting for almost half all page views. Staff noticed public interest and enquiries re the Merrilands Domain particularly around exposure of algal mats and attendant health risk to children and dogs.

Results

Microbiological quality

The Council's 2012-2022 Long-Term Plan (LTP) has as a target for microbiological quality in inland waters, the *maintenance or increase in the number of sites compliant with the 2003 Ministry of Health contact recreational guidelines*. Out of the 11 inland bathing sites that have been monitored in both seasons, 6 were compliant in 2003-2004, and the same number in 2016-2017. Thus the LTP target has been met. There has been a very large increase in non-compliant samples at the mouth of the Te Henui Stream (from 4 in 2003-2004 to 12 in 2016-2017, out of 13 samples). The Timaru Stream and Oakura River sites have seen increases, but these were not evident in the season under review.

In general terms, *E. coli* bacteriological water quality was somewhat worse, as marked by the overall number of samples entering the 'Alert' level and increases in seasonal median counts at several sites. There was marked deterioration at five sites and improvement at two sites in terms of median counts, in comparison with the previous summer's results (based on a greater than 20% change where the median value was ≥ 10 cfu/100 ml). Variability in quality

² *Suitability for swimming: Indicator update July 2013: INFO 690, Ministry for the Environment*

between bathing seasons at each site may be related to a variety of reasons including hydrological conditions, stock access, wildlife presence, and dairy farm wastes disposal practices in particular.

In relation to the guidelines, two bathing sites (the mouth of the Te Henui Stream and the Waiwhakaiho River site adjacent to Lake Rotomanu), together with the Waimoku Stream site failed almost invariably to meet the *E. coli* 'Action' guideline suitable for contact recreation. No other site had more than 2 (two sites) or 1 (four sites) non-compliant samples.

It can be noted that the Waiwhakaiho River at Merrilands Domain i.e., below the agricultural catchment and within the urban area, consistently has very high quality (99% compliance in the last five years). The deterioration in recreational quality occurs within the city boundaries. Less than one-quarter of samples in the lower Waiwhakaiho River have complied in the last five years. That is, compliance within the river falls from almost 100% to 23% within the urban reach.

Five sites maintained counts below the 'Alert' mode at all times throughout the season (compared with 3 last season), while two other sites maintained counts below the 'Action' mode at all times (5 last season). In terms of all samples at bathing sites during the monitoring season, there were 29 'Action' samples (33 in the previous season). Twenty of these samples were at just two sites, as noted above.

Permanent health warning signage had been erected by the New Plymouth District Council (on the direction of Taranaki District Health Board) following past exceedances of 'Alert' levels (at Oakura [for past Waimoku Stream issues], Waitara township, the lower Waiwhakaiho River, and Te Henui Stream). Temporary signage was also required at various times at Rotomanu, Ratapiko and Opunake lakes, and at the upper Patea and upper Waingongoro river sites, during the season. Vandalism of the warning signs at Waitara has been an on-going issue.

Based upon the number of samples that have been within the 'surveillance' mode (ie the highest category of suitability for swimming) over the entire record since 1996, the following ranking of sites (in descending water quality) may be used to summarise the quality of the water at bathing sites in Taranaki:

- 1= Urenui River at estuary
- 1= Patea River at boat ramp, Patea
- 1= Lake Ratapiko
- 4 Waiwhakaiho River at Merrilands Domain
- 5= Oakura River at SH45
- 5= Waingongoro River at Ohawe Beach
- 5= Lake Rotomanu
- 8 Manganui River at Everett Park
- 9= Kaupokonui River at beach domain
- 9= Lake Opunake
- 11 Waingongoro River at Eltham Camp
- 12 Waitara River at town wharf, Waitara
- 13 Timaru Stream at Weld Road
- 14 Patea River at King Edward Park, Stratford
- 15 Waiwhakaiho River adjacent to Lake Rotomanu
- 16 Te Henui Stream at mouth, East End
- (17 Waimoku Stream, not a recognised bathing site).

All sites ranked above twelfth in this list have not exceeded the 'surveillance' guideline on an average of at least 75% of seasonal sampling occasions.

Temporal trends over the 1996-2017 period have been evaluated for the sixteen sites that have ten years or more data (and will continue to be assessed annually). Two sites, the Waiwhakaiho River adjacent to Lake Rotomanu and the Te Henui Stream, show a statistically very significant increasing trend. There are indications of increasing trends in median E. coli counts at another nine bathing sites, and of reductions at five bathing sites.

The NOF provides the quantitative criteria by which compliance with the narrative objective for recreational use set out in the NPS-FW can be established. The NOF provides criteria for 'wadeability', and it also provides a second set of criteria to be applied when a water body is to be used for primary recreation, i.e. its 'swimmability'. The latter criteria are much more stringent. The NOF criteria categorise the 'swimmability' of each site according to its worst results, and not according to its typical results. Applying the NOF criteria, out of the 17 fresh water bathing sites that the Council routinely monitors each season, 5 fall into the 'A' NOF category for primary (swimming) usage, 5 into the 'B' category, and 7 would be deemed 'unacceptable for bathing'. Of these latter seven sites, 5 routinely meet the guidelines between 92-95% of the time, but because their 95th%ile results exceed the NOF criteria (that is, they do not have 95% or more of their results below 540 E coli/100 ml), they are to be regarded as 'unsuitable' according to the NOF even though their samples almost always meet the bathing guidelines.

Microbiological quality: proposed new NOF criteria

In February of this year, MfE released proposals to further amend the NOF 'swimmability' criteria. Although these proposals are still the subject of public consultation, this year's report assesses the state of Taranaki's freshwater bathing sites against the proposals, as a matter of information. The monitoring data from Taranaki's freshwater bathing sites for the past five seasons have been analysed against the proposed 2017 MfE criteria for 'swimmability' and the results are depicted in the table below. The government has announced its intention that 90% of the nation's rivers should be in the yellow, green, or blue categories (see table below) by 2040.

What becomes apparent is that gradings denoting degrees of suitability for swimming vary immensely according to the particular criterion. For example, the quality of the Oakura River below SH45 can apparently be variously rated as 'excellent', 'good', or 'only intermittently suitable' for swimming. Likewise, the Patea River at King Edward Park, the Timaru Stream, and the Waingongoro River could be variously graded as 'excellent' or 'good' through to only 'intermittently safe', or even completely 'not safe for swimming', depending on the choice of criterion. This lack of rationalisation between criteria is not helpful for sensibly conveying 'swimmability' to the public.

The Ministry has indicated that their view is that across all criteria, a single failure (i.e. either an 'orange' or a 'red') in any of the four distinct criteria is sufficient to constitute an overall 'unsuitable for swimming' grading. Of the 17 recognised freshwater recreational sites in Taranaki, for samples collected under conditions suitable for recreation 8 sites satisfy all criteria, and another 3 fail only one of the four criteria. Considering all samples collected under all conditions, 6 sites satisfy all criteria and 5 sites fail on only one criterion.

E. coli swimming categories for freshwater sites for the period November 2012 to April 2017, according to MfE 2017

CATEGORY/SITE	N 'SEM' samples/All samples	PERCENTAGE OF EXCEEDANCES OVER 540: E. COLI PER 100 ML		MEDIAN: E. COLI PER 100ML		95 TH PERCENTILE: E. COLI PER 100 ML		PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLES ABOVE 260: E. COLI PER 100 ML	
L Rotomanu: western beach	65/105	6.2	7.6	77	84	652	738	15	16
Waiwhakaiho R: Merrilands domain	65/104	1.5	7.7	54	64	220	1700	3.1	14
Waiwhakaiho R at L.Rotomanu	65	77		870		3075		89	
Te Henui S: mouth	65	88		1200		4525		97	
Patea R: King Edward Park	65	6.2		240		572		38	
Patea R. boat ramp, Patea	65	0		7		83		0	
Waingongoro R: Eltham camp	65	1.5		240		472		38	
Waingongoro R: Ohawe beach	65/76	4.6	3.9	160	180	518		17	16
Kaupokonui R: Beach domain	65/76	1.5	1.3	120	140	482		26	28
L Opuake: adjacent boat ramp	65	3.1		110		455		25	
Timaru S: Lower Weld Road	65	12		230		690		38	
Waimoku S. at Oakura beach	26	92		1250		3780		100	
Oakura R: d/s SH45	65	9.2		110		1675		17	
Waitara R: Town wharf	65	6.2		180		1000		29	
Urenui R: estuary	65	0		7		59		0	
Manganui R: Everett Park	65	3.1		200		432		17	
L Ratapiko: boat ramp	60	1.7		13.5		240		3.3	
L Rotokare: adjacent boat ramp	44	0		32		255		6.8	

	Excellent		Good most of the time		Fair some of the time		Intermittently suitable		Not safe
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Cyanobacteria

The presence of cyanobacteria can trigger health warnings in any of 3 ways- excessive coverage of the stream bed, exposure of algal mats on rocks at the water's edge, or excessive detached mats floating in the water column. There are national guidelines for unacceptable levels of stream bed coverage. In addition, the Council has chosen to adopt an approach when minor levels of exposed, detaching mats are detected that this should trigger an 'Alert' level as distinct from an 'Action' level, as the former better reflects the actual potential danger of benthic cyanobacteria. To date there have been no reported incidences of humans or animals in the Taranaki Region having been harmed by toxins produced by benthic cyanobacteria though there may well have been unreported incidences.

For planktonic (floating) cyanobacteria, of the four designated lake monitoring sites, two had biovolumes exceeding contact recreational guidelines during the 2016-2017 season, requiring the erection of warning signs: Lake Rotokare (a natural bush catchment) for most of the summer and Lake Rotomanu in March 2017. Lake Ratapiko rarely reached low numbers, and Lake Opunake had low to moderate levels of cyanobacteria.

Benthic (streambed) cyanoabacteria was monitored at nine locations and never reached public health warning levels on any cocasion at any site. The number of sampling occasions varied among sites (10-19 sampling occasions) depending on whether sites reached an 'Alert' level.

One site on a total of 3 occasions had over 20% coverage, thus triggering the 'Alert' level that requires follow-up weekly monitoring. This was a considerably lower level of elevated bed coverage across the region than in previous years. Exposed mats triggered the 'Action' or 'Alert' level at 4 sites (6 in the previous year) on a total of 17 occasions (35 in thee previous year), and detaching detached mats accumululating on the river's edge triggered the 'Alert' level at 4 sites on a total of 15 occasions (41 in the previous year).

11

Other matters

Microbial source determination testing has previously been conducted at four recreational sites, using environmental forensic DNA testing techniques. DNA marker tracking investigations in the lower Oakura and Waingongoro rivers and Timaru and Kaupokonui streams have found that the principal faecal contributions were sourced from wildfowl and from ruminants. The Council continues to use the technique for investigative purposes.

Conclusions

The report includes recommendations for the 2017-2018 bathing season that pertain to the scope of the sampling programme and integration with the dairy treatment pond compliance monitoring programme so that any adverse effects and sources can be efficiently identified and appropriate action taken. The recommendations are reproduced as an appendix to this memorandum, for the information of Members.

There is variability in quality between bathing seasons at each site, which is related to a variety of reasons including hydrological conditions, stock access, the presence of wildlife (particularly wildfowl), and dairy farm wastes disposal practices in particular. Similar results have been recorded elsewhere for sites in the middle and lower reaches of other streams and rivers in New Zealand (Deely et al, 1997 and MfE, 2008). The Ministry for the Environment identifies dense bird and wildlife populations, agricultural runoff, and storm water or sewerage discharges as potential sources of contamination.

These factors continue to be the major sources of adverse impacts on recreational water quality for the Council to address.

Decision-making considerations

Part 6 (Planning, decision-making and accountability) of the Local Government Act 2002 has been considered and documented in the preparation of this agenda item. The recommendations made in this item comply with the decision-making obligations of the Act.

Financial considerations—LTP/Annual plan

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the Council's adopted Long-Term Plan and estimates. Any financial information included in this memorandum has been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

Policy considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the policy documents and positions adopted by this Council under various legislative frameworks including, but not restricted to, the Local Government Act 2002, the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Biosecurity Act 1993.

Legal considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations comply with the appropriate statutory requirements imposed upon the Council.

Appendices/Attachments

Document: 1898428 Executive summary and recommendations from '*Freshwater contact recreational water quality at selected Taranaki sites State of the Environment Monitoring Report 2016-2017, Technical Report 2017-01*, July 2017.

Executive summary

(from 'Freshwater contact recreational water quality at selected Taranaki sites State of the Environment Monitoring Report 2016-2017, Technical Report 2017-01')

This survey of sixteen recognised freshwater contact recreational sites in the Taranaki region was the twenty-first of an on-going programme designed to annually monitor the bacteriological quality of lakes, rivers and streams at popular contact recreational sites during each bathing season. It forms a component of the State of the Environment bathing beaches trend monitoring programme, which commenced in the 1995-1996 summer period. Two sites (at Lakes Ratapiko and Opunake) were monitored in this programme during this 2016-2017 period for the eleventh time, partly as a component of the more recently instituted cyanobacteria programme (covering four lakes) instigated after consultation with Taranaki District Health Board. A site in the lower Waitara River was added in the 2010-2011 period at the joint request of Taranaki Healthcare and NPDC and two additional sites in the lower reaches of the Waiwhakaiho River and Te Henui Stream (both adjacent to the New Plymouth walkway) were included in the programme in the 2012-2013 period. The sixteen sites have been graded for recreational suitability (SFRG) according to MfE, 2003 guidelines, in part based upon the immediately preceding five seasons of monitoring data (where such data existed) although short-comings of this grading methodology are acknowledged. A reassessed SFRG also has been provided by inclusion of the current season's data for comparative purposes and this showed minimal change of the microbiological water quality guideline over this latest five year period.

The Waimoku Stream site is sampled on a three-yearly frequency and it was monitored during the period under review. This stream is known to carry extremely high levels of bacterial contamination due to its resident waterfowl population (pukekos, ducks), and a warning sign advising against recreational use of the stream is permanently in place. It is now monitored primarily for its potential impact on Oakura beach's water quality (refer Bathing Beach Water Quality State of the Environment Monitoring Report Summer 2016-2017, technical report 2017-2).

A further site (Lake Rotokare) has been monitored since 2007, principally for planktonic cyanobacteria. Additional comprehensive flowing water benthic cyanobacteria monitoring (at nine river/stream sites) was undertaken in the current period for the fourth time in this state of the environment programme.

Changes were made in 2016-2017 to follow protocols for reporting on the Land and Water Aotearoa (LAWA) website: sampling frequency at four of the most popular sites (Lake Rotomanu, Waiwhakaiho River at Merrilands Domain, and Kaupokonui and Waingongoro river mouths) was increased to weekly, mainly in dry weather, from December to February inclusive.

The results of the 2016-2017 survey have continued to illustrate variability in bacteriological water quality, with the highest quality achieved at the Urenui River estuary and lower Patea River sites where marked seawater intrusion is the norm (under high tide conditions), Lake Ratapiko and the Waiwhakaiho River (at Merrilands Domain). Impacts on bacteriological water quality at some sites, particularly the lower reaches of the Waiwhakaiho River and Te Henui and Waimoku Streams, were due principally to resident wild fowl populations in the

vicinity of recreational usage sites (as confirmed previously by inspections and DNA marker surveys).

In terms of E. coli, bacteriological water quality in the latest survey period was lower than normal in comparison with historical surveys. The total number of samples falling within the "Alert" or "Action" categories (36% of samples, or 40% if the samples of the Waimoku are included) across the 16 recognised bathing sites was the highest recorded. However, it should be noted that the "Action" category is the only category for which swimming is not recommended. In the 2016-2017 season, 86% of all samples (ie excluding the Waimoku) met the national bathing guideline, and this is a lower rate of non-compliance than in the previous two years. Of the 14% of samples that exceeded the guideline, 10% arose from just two sites- the two New Plymouth urban sites. Bird life was mainly responsible for the exceedances at these sites, where on occasions recreationalists have fed the birds.

Two sites recorded all single samples in either the 'Alert' or the 'Action' mode of the MfE, 2003 guidelines (Waimoku Stream at Oakura, and Te Henui Stream near East End beach), while one site (Waiwhakaiho River opposite Lake Rotomanu) recorded ten single samples in those modes. Eleven other sites from time to time exhibited single sample entries, mainly into the 'Alert' mode of the 2003 guidelines, at some time during the season. Seven of these sites had counts which entered the 'Action' mode, a slight increase in the number and frequency of guideline exceedances in comparison with many previous seasons' results.

To a certain extent these exceedances were probably a feature common to the mid and lower reaches of rivers and streams draining developed (particularly agricultural) catchments throughout New Zealand.

Notably, no exceedances of the MfE 'Action' guideline were found in the Waiwhakaiho River at Merrilands Domain (mid urban New Plymouth and downstream of agricultural land), whereas 8 of 13 samples exceeded this guideline near this river's mouth. Minimal follow-up sampling was performed when deemed necessary following exceedances of the 'Action' limit, as in most cases bacteriological quality was found to have returned to typical levels within short time frames or the causes were well established from historical data. Permanent health warning signage had been erected by the New Plymouth District Council (on the direction of Taranaki District Health Board) following past exceedances of 'Action' levels at the lower Waiwhakaiho River, Waimoku Stream, and Te Henui Stream sites, and of 'Alert' levels at Waitara. Temporary signage was required at the Lakes Rotomanu, Ratapiko and Opunake, and at Oakura, upper Patea and upper Waingongoro Rivers sites following single sample 'Action' levels, but single sample 'Alert' level exceedances at other sites were not necessarily signposted.

Temporal trends over the 1996-2017 period have been evaluated on the basis of seasonal median E. coli count for the sixteen sites that have ten years or more data (and will continue to be assessed annually). Two sites (Waimoku Stream and lower Waiwhakaiho River) have shown a statistically significant increasing trend. No other sites have shown statistically significant trends (positive or negative) in seasonal median E. coli counts.

Elevated enterococci to faecal coliform ratios have typified ponded sites near the stream/river mouths from time to time (and in the current season), possibly as a result of vegetative sources of enterococci and/or more prolonged survival in ponded freshwater environments, under high tidal conditions and often where saltwater penetration occurred.

Additional sampling (in accordance with the MfE, 2003 guidelines for datasets for grading purposes) at four principal usage sites (Lake Rotomanu and Waiwhakaiho, Kaupokonui and Waingongoro Rivers) coincided on a few occasions with wet weather conditions and resulted in large increases in the overall median bacteriological numbers at the Lake Rotomanu and Waiwhakaiho River sites. Up to three additional exceedances of the 'Action' limit occurred at these sites as poorer bacteriological water quality followed the wet weather events.

Cyanobacteria blooms were recorded at Lake Rotokare on most monitoring occasions from November 2016 to February 2017 and at Lake Rotomanu in March 2017. These numbers necessitated warning notices to avoid contact recreation in these waters during most of the recreational period. Low to moderate numbers of cyanobacteria were found in Lake Opunake, with a few instances of low numbers present in Lake Ratapiko.

Benthic cyanobacteria were found occasionally in most of the nine rivers and streams monitored, but did not reach public health warning levels. Monitoring frequency was increased from fortnightly to weekly in response to 'Alert' levels found on several occasions. One site (Kaupokonui River at mouth) exceeded the 'Alert' level for bed coverage on a total of three occasions. Exposed mats triggered the 'Alert' level at four sites (Waingongoro River at Ohawe, Kaupokonui River at the mouth, and Waiwhakaiho River at the last riffle and at Merrilands Domain) on a total of 17 individual site surveys, and detaching or detached mats accumulating on the river's edge triggered the 'Alert' level at the same four sites on a total of 15 surveys. Levels of cyanobacteria were lower than the previous four seasons; the improvement was probably caused by above-average rainfall causing a large number of freshes that scoured streambeds of periphyton.

Timely reporting of the results of bacteriological water quality and cyanobacteria numbers/cover was undertaken by use of the Taranaki Regional Council website (www.trc.govt.nz) and LAWA website (www.lawa.org.nz) as well as liaison with territorial local authorities and the Health Protection Unit of Taranaki District Health Board throughout the survey season of 2016-2017.

For the second time, this report also discusses the monitoring results in the light of the criteria for primary recreational use of water bodies ('swimmability') set out in the National Objectives Framework that is attached to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014. This report also discusses the monitoring results in the light of proposed criteria released for public discussion and submission in February 2017 (ie towards the end of the bathing period).³ It should be noted that these new criteria are still subject to public consultation and review.

It is recommended that annual bacteriological monitoring of selected freshwater sites be continued (in conjunction with the coastal bathing water programme) by use of a similar sampling format over a five month (November to March inclusive) contact recreational period to provide information for trend detection purposes and for assessment of suitability for contact recreational usage. Cyanobacteria monitoring at the four lakes sites and nine stream/river sites at a lesser frequency is also recommended to continue. A further recommendation involves appropriate scheduling of the annual round of dairy wastes disposal systems and advice provided in relation to stock access to watercourses to attempt to reduce the frequency of exceedances of recreational limits particularly in catchments

³ *Clean water: 90% of rivers and lakes swimmable by 2040*, Ministry for the Environment February 2017

where historical problems from this source have been located. Another specific recommendation relates to proposed faecal source tracking investigations at the Waingongoro River, Eltham site to provide information for future management/abatement initiatives in the mid Waingongoro River catchment.

6. Recommendations

(from 'Freshwater contact recreational water quality at Taranaki sites State of the Environment Monitoring Report 2016-2017, Technical Report 2017-01')

As a result of the 2016-2017 summer freshwater contact recreation bacteriological survey it is recommended:

1. THAT the 2017-2018 survey be performed at sixteen regular sites continuing with the existing sampling protocols during the season extending from 1 November to 31 March (and into April, if necessary).
2. THAT the 2017-2018 survey includes additional samples collected at the four principal usage sites (Lake Rotomanu, Waiwhakaiho River at the Merrilands Domain, Waingongoro River at Ohawe and Kaupokonui River at the mouth) in accordance with MfE, 2003 guidelines.
3. THAT the 2017-2018 summer survey includes cyanobacteria monitoring at the three lake sites and an additional lake (Rotokare) site and benthic cyanobacteria monitoring at nine of the river and stream sites fortnightly on at least ten occasions.
4. THAT follow-up sampling (after guideline exceedances) be performed when deemed necessary by TRC staff.
5. THAT appropriate timing of the annual dairy farms inspection round be incorporated into the programme for catchments where issues relating to exceedances of contact recreational standards have been identified and advice and publicity be provided in relation to the prevention of stock access to natural water.
6. THAT appropriate DNA faecal source tracking marker investigations are undertaken into the source of high baseline *E.coli* counts at the Waingongoro River site at Eltham Presbyterian camp.
7. THAT reporting of results be performed as appropriate during the season, and in an Annual Report upon completion of the season's programme.
8. THAT the appropriate statistical trend detection procedures be applied to the data and reported in the Annual Report.

Agenda Memorandum

Date 25 July 2017



**Memorandum to
Chairperson and Members
Policy and Planning Committee**

**Subject: Bathing beach recreational water quality
SEM report 2016-2017**

Approved by: G K Bedford, Director-Environment Quality

B G Chamberlain, Chief Executive

Document: 1897680

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to present to the Committee the report on the quality of coastal bathing waters in the Taranaki region during the 2016-2017 bathing season, as set out in the report *Bathing Beach Water Quality State of the Environment Monitoring Report Summer 2016-2017, Technical Report 2017-2*. The Executive summary and recommendations from the report are attached to this memorandum. The full report is available upon request, and will be published on the Council's website following this meeting.

Executive summary

The report provides an assessment of microbial water quality at 12 bathing beach sites in the Taranaki region, based on a routine of regular summer monitoring of faecal indicator bacteria (enterococci, *E. coli* and faecal coliforms) in the 2016-2017 summer. A core group of 9 beaches is monitored every year, and another 10 are monitored in the course of a rotating 3-year cycle. The sites are shown in Figure 1. Results are immediately released to the public via the Council's and the national LAWA (Land-air-water-Aotearoa) website as they become available, and are assessed by the Council at the end of each season for any evidence of trends and for compliance with microbiological water quality guidelines for recreational use, prepared by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and the Ministry of Health (MfE, 2003).

Thirteen samples are collected at every site under bathing conditions ('SEM samples'). In the 2016-2017 season, 8 of the sites had a additional 11 samples collected at each, under all-weather and all-tide conditions ('MfE samples'), in order to meet MfE specifications for data analysis and site suitability gradings, and to provide the public with increased timely results during holiday periods. This is the first year that the weekly sampling regime has been applied so widely throughout the summer to satisfy these requirements.

During the 2016-2017 summer season, microbiological water quality was generally somewhat worse than usual across bathing beaches in the Taranaki region, with a majority of sites having higher median counts than in the long-term records. By comparison, in 2015-2016 extremely low median enterococci counts had been recorded for almost all beaches monitored. However,

during 2016-2017 only one site entered the MfE 'Action' level (defined as two consecutive samples containing more than 280 enterococci cfu/100ml), on one occasion during the season, whereas there had been two such occurrences in 2015-2016. The increase in median counts at most sites is associated with a generally wetter summer, with a pronounced fresh water influence on many occasions at most coastal sites.

Out of the 156 samples collected for SEM purposes, 94% were below the intermediate 'Alert' level, and 99.5% were below the 'Action' level.

In the 2016-2017 season, Opunake and Fitzroy beaches were the region's cleanest bathing beaches, followed closely by the two Oakura beach sites. Back Beach and Bell Block Beach had the highest medians, although these were still far below even the MfE 'Alert' level that triggers additional surveillance (while still considered suitable for swimming). Both beaches have monitoring sites close to stream mouths. Over the long term, Opunake, Oakura beach in front of the camping ground, Fitzroy, Patea beach, Mana Bay, and Waverley beaches are amongst the region's cleanest.

Two sites are showing a statistically significant improvement- Fitzroy and Ngamotu- and no site is showing a statistically significant deterioration. Ohawe Beach continues to show an indication of improvement (although not at a rate that is statistically significant) following, in June 2010, the removal of the Eltham waste water treatment plant discharge into the Waingongoro River.

In the case of the two Waitara beaches, this has been the third season that the discharge of treated municipal sewage has been diverted to New Plymouth for additional treatment prior to discharge through the New Plymouth outfall. There have since been authorized overflow discharges through the Waitara outfall, but the duration and volume are a negligible fraction of what they were. The Waitara River rather than the Waitara outfall is always been considered to have the greater effect on bacteriological quality on the local beaches, and review of the results from the two beaches reveals no pattern of a change in bacteriological levels since the termination of the discharge, implying that the outfall discharge was not having a discernible ongoing effect upon beach water quality.

Through the Council's Long Term Plan (LTP) and 2016-2017 Annual Plan, the Council's target in respect of the microbiological state of coastal bathing sites is that there is *maintenance or increase in the number of sites from 2003 compliant with 2003 Ministry of Health contact recreational guidelines*. In 2003, 10 of 11 coastal bathing sites were compliant with the guidelines ('Action' levels). In the season under review, 11 of 12 sites were compliant throughout the season. Thus, both the number of compliant sites and the proportion of compliant sites within the total programme increased.

In terms of promoting a 'one-stop shop' in public awareness of available guidance on water quality and suitability for recreational use, the Council now promotes the LAWA website as the source of national data on water quality and other environmental metrics. The LAWA website has been set up and is supported by all regional councils across New Zealand, as a 'one stop shop' for the public to use to access environmental data. Data from the Council is uploaded automatically to the LAWA website as soon as it is available.

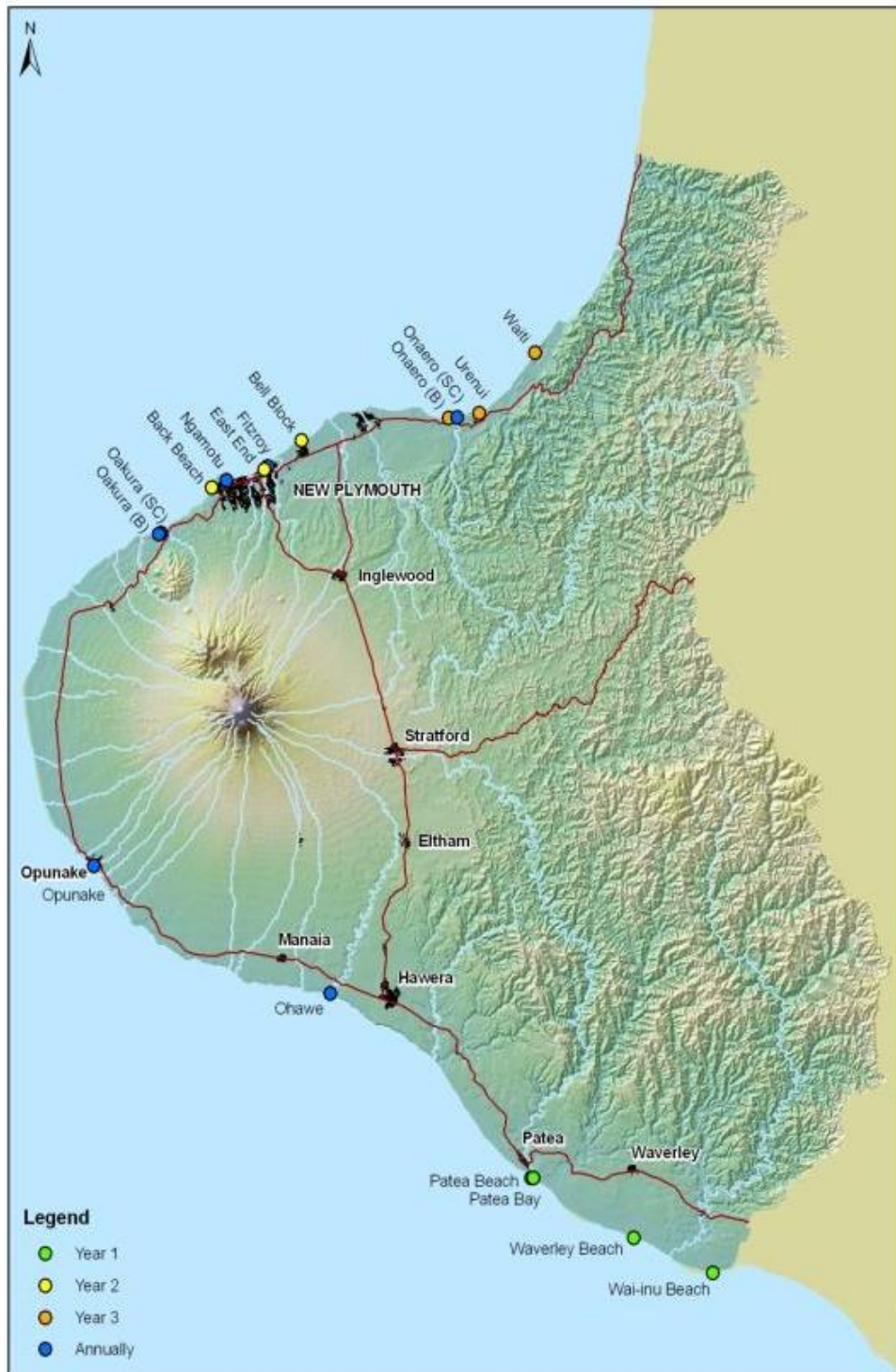


Figure 1 SEM beach bathing bacteriological survey sites

In terms of responsibility for advising the public on public health aspects of water quality, during 2016 the Council discussed with the district councils and the Medical Officer of Health the messaging that each agency should be providing to the public. As a result, it was agreed that the TRC website would direct all web enquiries around 'can I swim here?' to the websites of the TDHB and district councils, where public health-based interpretation of water quality data would be provided and any advisory notification posted. During 2016-2017, there were 247 pageviews of the data on the Council's individual coastal bathing sites, down from 915 individual page visits in 2015-2016 and 864 for July 2014-June 2015. Two-thirds of all page views were of the data for the two Waitara beaches. The figures do not include anyone viewing the environmental data map only on the Council's home page.

Recommendations

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives the memorandum noting the preparation of the report *Bathing Beach Water Quality State of the Environment Monitoring Report Summer 2016-2017 Technical Report 2017-2*
2. adopts the specific recommendations, concerning sampling and reporting, presented in Technical Report 2017-2.

Background

Taranaki's coastal and inland fresh waters are widely used for a range of contact recreational activities such as swimming, sailing, surfing, wind surfing, and underwater diving. The sea is important as a source of kaimoana. Maintaining and protecting the quality of this recreational water is therefore an important resource management and public health issue.

It is recognised that the quality of coastal waters in New Zealand is variable. It can be compromised by contaminants from sources such as sewage and storm water outfalls, septic tanks, urban run-off, birdlife, sanitation discharges from boats, and dairy effluent discharges and contaminated run-off from agricultural land. The Ministry for the Environment has identified that intensifying land uses in rural areas and rapid urban development of coastal areas has the potential to put increasing pressure on the quality of our coastal recreational waters.

As one of the suite of State of the Environment (SEM) monitoring programmes that the Council has in place, each summer bathing water quality around the region's coastline is assessed. Nine primary beach sites are repeatedly sampled during the bathing season every year, and another ten beaches are sampled every third year on a rotating basis. The programme began in 1995-1996.

The bacteriological state and overall grading of each site is compared with national guidelines for recreational use¹.

Through the Council's LTP and 2016-2017 Annual Plan, the Council's target in respect of the microbiological state of coastal bathing sites is that there is *maintenance or increase in the*

¹ *Microbiological Water Quality Guidelines for Marine and Freshwater Recreational Areas*, Ministry for the Environment 2003

number of sites from 2003 compliant with 2003 Ministry of Health contact recreational guidelines. In 2003, 10 of 11 coastal bathing sites were compliant with the guidelines ('Action' level).

Discussion

The report presented to the Committee today summarises the results for the 2016-2017 bathing season, including beaches monitored in year three of the rotation.

Thirteen samples were collected over the bathing season at each of the twelve sites designated for the season, as part of the Council's regular SEM monitoring programme, with an additional eleven samples collected at eight of the beaches to fulfil Ministry for the Environment requirements for the size of dataset to be used in calculating the microbiological assessment categories (which go beyond the Council's long-established programme and are sampled under a different protocol, including all-weather and all-tide conditions). The additional samples also allowed the Council to provide timely information to the public throughout the summer season, including within holiday periods. This is the first year in which such comprehensive ongoing monitoring has been undertaken.

The monitoring results have been assessed using the national microbiological guidelines for marine recreational areas (MfE, 2003). The indicator bacteria measured are enterococci. Levels of less than 140 enterococci per 100 ml are considered to be acceptable (i.e. water quality is suitable for bathing, and approximately weekly sampling is routinely undertaken for surveillance purposes). Should any of these routine samples contain greater than 140 enterococci per 100 ml, the 'Alert' mode is triggered – water is considered potentially unsuitable for bathing, and further sampling is undertaken to more definitively ascertain the situation. This is a surveillance mode, and it is not considered that public health is potentially compromised if samples are at this level. Samples containing greater than 280 enterococci per 100 ml indicate water is highly likely to be contaminated. Sampling is to be undertaken again within 24 hours to see if the situation is continuing. If the second result is also above 280 then the 'Action' mode is triggered. That is, it is when there are two consecutive samples above 280 enterococci per 100 ml that it is considered public health is potentially compromised. If this occurs, the Taranaki District Health Board is notified for their follow-up action. High flows in streams and rivers following rainfall events, or shifting stream mouths across a beach, may have a major localised influence on the water quality of Taranaki beaches, and re-sampling is not always undertaken if a significant rainfall event in the recent past is determined to be the likely cause of a sample exceeding 280 enterococci per 100 ml. In the 2016-2017 season, additional immediate sampling was undertaken in both occurrences of a sample exceeding 280 cfu/100 ml.

Microbiological water quality was generally good across bathing beaches in the Taranaki region during the 2016-2017 summer bathing season. After very low median enterococci counts in the previous two years, cfu/100ml, the median of all samples rose slightly in the period under review to 15 cfu/100 ml, while still remaining well below medians for the preceding summers (29 and 37 cfu/100ml, respectively).

Out of the 156 samples collected for SEM purposes, 94% were below the intermediate 'Alert' level (97% in the two previous years, and 94% before that), and 99.5% were below the 'Action' level (99% last year). Out of the 244 samples collected for both SEM and for additional monitoring purposes, 88% were below the 'Alert' level (compared to 94-96% in the last few years). There were no additional samples in the 'Action' category.

Waitara West beach was the only site to reach MfE 'Action' mode (two consecutive samples

above 280 enterococci cfu/100ml) during the 2016-2017 summer. At 5 of the 12 sites, no SEM sample entered even the Alert mode.

In the 2016-2017 season, Opunake, Fitzroy and Oakura (in front of the camping ground) beaches were the region's cleanest bathing beaches (noting that almost all beaches had very low counts in any case), followed closely by Oakura beach near the surf club. Over the long term, Opunake, Oakura beach in front of the camping ground, Fitzroy, Patea beach, Mana Bay, and Waverley beaches are amongst the region's cleanest.

Back and Ohawe beaches are comparatively the worst, and were again the worst in 2015-2016, while noting that their long-term medians of around 30 are still only 10% of the 'Action' level. Ohawe Beach has shown a trend of improvement in previous years (following the removal of the Eltham waste water treatment plant discharge into the Waingongoro River in June 2010), although the degree of improvement is now indicative rather than significant. In both cases the sampling sites can be affected by changes in the position of their respective river mouths.

In the case of the two Waitara beaches, this has been the third season that the discharge of treated municipal sewage has been diverted to New Plymouth when the plant is fully functioning. There have since been authorized overflow discharges through the Waitara outfall but the duration and volume are a negligible fraction of what they were. The Waitara River rather than the outfall is always been considered to have the greater effect on bacteriological quality on the beaches, and review of the results from the two beaches reveals no pattern of a change in bacteriological levels since the termination of the discharge, implying that the outfall discharge was not having a discernible ongoing effect upon beach water quality.

Two sites are showing a statistically significant improvement- Fitzroy and Ngamotu. In terms of indicative (as distinct from statistically significant) trends, a further five sites are showing signs of reductions in median enterococci, while three are showing indications of an increase i.e. improvements are outnumbering deteriorations by around 2 to 1 overall.

Frequent and timely reporting of the results of bacteriological water quality was undertaken by use of the Taranaki Regional Council and LAWA websites (www.trc.govt.nz and www.lawa.org.nz) as well as liaison with territorial local authorities and the Health Protection Unit of Taranaki District Health Board throughout the summer bathing season of 2016-2017.

Continuation of the bathing beach SEM programme in the 2017-2018 year is recommended.

Decision-making considerations

Part 6 (Planning, decision-making and accountability) of the *Local Government Act 2002* has been considered and documented in the preparation of this agenda item. The recommendations made in this item comply with the decision-making obligations of the *Act*.

Financial considerations—LTP/Annual plan

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the Council's adopted Long-Term Plan and estimates. Any financial information included in this memorandum has been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

Policy considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the policy documents and positions adopted by this Council under various legislative frameworks including, but not restricted to, the *Local Government Act 2002*, the *Resource Management Act 1991* and the *Biosecurity Act 1993*.

Legal considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations comply with the appropriate statutory requirements imposed upon the Council.

Appendices/Attachments

Document 1879182 (excerpts): Bathing Beach Water Quality State of the Environment Monitoring Report Summer 2016-2017, Technical Report 2017-2 (Executive summary and recommendations).

Executive summary

This report provides an assessment of microbial water quality at 12 bathing beach sites in the Taranaki region, based on routine summer monitoring of faecal indicator bacteria (enterococci, *E. coli* and faecal coliforms) conducted by the Council between 1 November 2016 and 11 April 2017. The report focusses on enterococci results, as this indicator is considered by health authorities to provide the closest correlation with risks of health effects in New Zealand coastal waters. Results have been assessed for compliance with microbiological water quality guidelines prepared by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and the Ministry of Health (MfE, 2003).

Thirteen samples were collected at every monitored beach under dry weather conditions for state of the environment monitoring (SEM) purposes. An extra 11 samples were collected regardless of weather conditions at 8 sites, to satisfy MfE requirements for the number of seasonal samples to be used for grading purposes and to provide more timely results during the holiday periods. The season under review was the first in which the increased frequency has been provided by the Council.

During the 2016-2017 summer season, median faecal indicator bacteria counts for the majority of sites were elevated compared to previous years. The higher counts were likely influenced by unusually heavy rainfall throughout the summer. Out of the 244 samples collected for both SEM and for additional monitoring purposes, 91% were below the Alert level. Of the samples which entered the Alert and Action guideline category (9%), the vast majority (20 out of 23) had been influenced by rainfall and/or freshwater flows.

The guideline MfE Action mode is reached when enterococci counts in two consecutive samples exceed 280 enterococci cfu/100 ml. One site, Waitara West, reached Action mode once during the 2016-2017 season.

Mann-Kendall tests were performed in order to assess long term trends in microbiological water quality. Two sites show a significant decrease in median enterococci counts over the 15-22 years monitored (Fitzroy and Ngamotu beaches), indicating an overall improvement in their microbiological water quality. No site showed a significant increase in enterococci medians over the time period monitored i.e. deterioration in water quality.

Microbiological water quality results were regularly reported on the Taranaki Regional Council website (www.trc.govt.nz) and there was timely liaison with territorial local authorities and the Health Protection Unit of the Taranaki District Health Board throughout the summer bathing season of 2016-2017.

Through the Council's LTP, the Council's target in respect of the microbiological state of coastal bathing sites is that there is *maintenance or increase in the number of sites from 2003 compliant with 2003 Ministry of Health contact recreational guidelines*. In 2003, 10 of 11 coastal bathing sites were compliant with the guidelines (Action levels). In the season under review, 11 of 12 beaches were compliant with the guidelines throughout the season. The LTP target was therefore met.

Continuation of the bathing beach SEM programme is recommended in the 2017-2018 year.

6. Recommendations

As a result of the 2016-2017 summer marine contact recreation bacteriological survey it is recommended:

1. THAT the 2017-2018 summer survey be performed at 13 sites continuing with the existing sampling protocol (annual, plus Year 3 sites).
2. THAT the 2017-2018 summer survey also includes an additional eleven samples collected at eight sites (Onaero, Waitara West, Waitara East, Fitzroy, Ngamotu, Oakura Surf Club, Opunake and Ohawe) in accordance with MfE, 2003 guidelines.
3. THAT follow-up sampling be performed as deemed necessary by Council staff. This should include follow-up samples within 24 hours of any samples exceeding 280 cfu/100 ml in order to assess if Action level has been reached.
4. THAT photographs of the position of the Waimoku Stream and Waingongoro River mouths are taken over the 2017-2018 season to aid the interpretation of faecal indicator bacteria results at the Oakura Beach and Ohawe Beach sites respectively.
5. THAT reporting of results be performed as appropriate during the season, and in an Annual Report upon completion of the season's programme.

Agenda Memorandum

Date 25 July 2017

**Memorandum to
Chairperson and Members
Policy and Planning Committee**



**Subject: Review of the Biodiversity Strategy for the
Taranaki Regional Council**

Approved by: S R Hall, Director - Operations
B G Chamberlain, Chief Executive

Document: 1847094

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to present for Members' consideration the draft *Biodiversity Strategy for the Taranaki Regional Council* (Biodiversity Strategy).

Officers will be making a short PowerPoint presentation on the draft Biodiversity Strategy for Members' information and discussion.

A copy of the draft Biodiversity Strategy is attached to the agenda for Members' information. A copy of an abridged version of the Draft Strategy is also attached.

Executive summary

- Compared to other Council programmes, biodiversity is a relatively new area of focus for regional councils in New Zealand.
- In May 2008, the Taranaki Regional Council (the Council) adopted and implemented a **non-statutory** strategy to guide its biodiversity actions. The Strategy identifies the Council's priorities, activities and programmes – whether statutory or non-statutory – that contribute to biodiversity outcomes. Of note, most activities undertaken by the Council are discretionary.
- Since 2008, Council has focused on four priority areas of activity, these being:
 - supporting landowners with the management of regionally significant sites (Key Native Ecosystems)
 - enhancing the biodiversity component of existing Council programmes (e.g. biosecurity and land management, consents and inspectorate, policy, information and education, environmental monitoring)
 - working with others in the community to assist with the overall coordination and facilitation of biodiversity work across the region, and
 - developing systems for gathering and managing biodiversity data.
- Nine years on, it is timely for the Council to review and update the Biodiversity Strategy to make sure the priorities and work programme remain on track. As part of this review,

Council officers have reviewed the effectiveness of current programmes and sought to update the Strategy where appropriate.

- The draft Biodiversity Strategy attached to this agenda encapsulates the findings of the officers' review. While the document continues to focus on the same four priority areas, it does include some notable new or reinforced initiatives such as:
 - increased focus on ensuring the protection and active management of sites that are representative of the full suite of ecosystems within the region
 - investigating expanding the Self-help Possum Control Programme to support community driven pest control initiatives, including landscape predator control in the majority of our most threatened land environments
 - providing robust support to Wild for Taranaki so as to ensure a multi-stakeholder regional effort that substantially increases biodiversity protection across the region.
- With the exception of landscape predator control initiatives, the actions proposed in the draft Biodiversity Strategy will generally be resourced from the Council's existing resources through existing programmes. The Council may at any time re-consider resourcing of Council programmes to adjust the intensity and pace of biodiversity protection through existing programmes.
- While the draft Biodiversity Strategy has an internal operational focus, it identifies that the Council is well placed to contribute to the coordination of biodiversity work by working with the other agencies, communities and individuals involved in biodiversity. Therefore, it is proposed to publish an abridged version of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy for wider circulation via Wild for Taranaki and the general public.
- Through a revised Biodiversity Strategy the Council will continue to deliver on expectations from national policy such as the *New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy* and the *National Priorities for Protecting Rare and Threatened Native Biodiversity on Private Land*.

Recommendations

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives this memorandum and the draft Biodiversity Strategy documents (full and abridged versions)
2. notes that the Biodiversity Strategy reviews and updates Council biodiversity priorities and work programme remain to ensure they remain relevant, efficient and effective.

Background

Indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems are vital to New Zealand's environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being. However, the loss of indigenous species and habitat is ongoing and, despite some good work being done in Taranaki and elsewhere in New Zealand, the trends are not currently positive.

While having slowed in recent years, an incremental loss of indigenous habitat continues, (e.g. Council's 2015 state of the environment report identifies ongoing drainage of wetlands and a net loss 6,070 ha of indigenous forest from Taranaki between 2001 and 2012). At the same time degradation of existing indigenous habitat continues due to ongoing pressures from herbivorous pests, particularly in the eastern hill country, and ongoing predation of our indigenous fauna sees many species moving steadily towards extinction (e.g. kiwi are declining at a rate of 2% per annum in New Zealand).

However, there is some good news too. The biodiversity condition of sites in Taranaki being actively managed shows improvement over time. Increasingly the public, business and public agencies are mobilising to protect and enhance indigenous biodiversity. This includes a host of agencies, non government organisations, individuals and businesses coming together under 'Wild for Taranaki' to better co-ordinate biodiversity knowledge, interests and activities, with the intention of managing threats and maximising benefits to biodiversity in Taranaki.

The Council's mandate to support and undertake biodiversity work within the region comes from the Resource Management Act (the RMA) and the Local Government Act, and other supporting provisions such as regional plans and pest management strategies. Of particular note, a 2003 amendment of the RMA provided a clear statutory mandate for involvement in biodiversity management through specifically stating that one function of regional councils is the establishment and implementation of objectives, policies and methods for maintaining indigenous biodiversity (s30(ga) of the RMA).

The Government subsequently prepared a statement of *National Priorities for the Protection of Rare and Threatened Native Biodiversity on Private Land 2007* (National Priorities). This statement provides local government with guidance on where to direct biodiversity efforts.

The *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010* (the RPS) prepared under the RMA includes objectives, policies and methods for maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity.

In 2006, the Council adopted a preliminary *Inventory of Key Native Ecosystems* (KNEs). The objective of the inventory was to identify sites and places with indigenous biodiversity values of regional significance where regional intervention to protect, maintain and enhance those values could be considered. In 2008, the Council adopted its first strategy entitled *Biodiversity Strategy: An Operational Strategy to Guide Biodiversity Actions of the Taranaki Regional Council*.

Over the last nine years, the Council has implemented the aforementioned strategy, which has strongly focused on the active protection of biodiversity. This has involved increasing the emphasis on biodiversity within a range of existing Council programmes, along with the development and implementation of a new flagship biodiversity programme – the KNE programme.

The KNE programme facilitates the on-going and voluntary identification of KNEs on private land, and involves the preparation of management plans for legally protected areas to minimise threats to important biodiversity and to support landowners in managing regionally significant biodiversity upon their land. To date over 100 Biodiversity Plans have been prepared for KNEs (target 10+ new plans per annum), covering over 4,000ha.

Council's existing work programmes contributing to indigenous biodiversity outcomes include: the development and use of regional plans; public information and education; the KNE programme, pest animal and plant programmes; and land management programmes (riparian restoration, sustainable land management, protection of wetlands, removal of fish barriers etc).

The Council has also focused on 'working with others', with extensive facilitation of regional biodiversity initiatives. The main outcomes of this work have been the establishment of the

Taranaki Biodiversity Forum, maintenance and development of a robust operational relationship with the Department of Conservation, and the evolution and development of the Taranaki Biodiversity Trust, known as 'Wild for Taranaki'.

The Council has also focused on maintaining various aquatic monitoring programmes and has developed a programme of monitoring terrestrial biodiversity. A State of Environment (SOE) report for the region was prepared in 2015. Detail on the status of biodiversity within the region and threats to biodiversity can be found in the Biodiversity chapters of that report.

New Zealand / regional context

Since the 2003 RMA amendment, regional councils around the country have been developing and implementing operational experience and programmes for biodiversity. Inevitably, there has been some learning and monitoring along the way. Council officers regularly and actively participate with other regional councils in various national forums to share that experience and to contribute to the development of norms. Key national learnings from monitoring and from these forums is that, while some very good work is being carried out by councils and their communities, New Zealand is continuing to slowly lose ground with habitat condition and the threat status of species.

There are key issues around the large quantity of biodiversity on private land and the ability for landowners and/or regional councils to be able to physically or financially afford to protect and maintain **all** habitats. Across New Zealand there is a recognition by councils (and the Department of Conservation) that there is an urgent need to identify and protect representative areas of all ecosystems to the best of our abilities. There is also a need to provide better information to assist landowners with remnant habitat.

Recently this Council commissioned an analysis of the Taranaki region to identify representative ecosystem types in the region plus the priority representative areas where the Council could work together with landowners, Wild for Taranaki members, and the Department of Conservation to bring those areas under active management for biodiversity protection purposes. Where possible the priority representative areas include lands where one or more entity is already conducting some sort of active management of biodiversity.

Another issue identified is the onslaught posed by a suite of pest animal species to indigenous fauna and habitat, resulting in ongoing predation and habitat decline. Of note, the Government has recently launched its *Predator Free 2050* initiative, following recognition of the issues around predation and the 'Battle for the Birds' campaign.

In Taranaki, through good strategy and management, we have an excellent Self-help Possum Control Programme (SHP). This is a landscape scale programme covering approximately 240,000 hectares of farmland on the ring plain and coastal terraces. It protects our most acutely threatened ecosystems in lowland Taranaki, including remnant wetland, bush and coastal areas and the ever increasing ribbons of riparian vegetation establishing along waterways from mountain to sea. Through the draft Biodiversity Strategy, the Council is proposing to investigate introducing predator control to the SHP. This would involve the control of mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels), cats and localised control of rats in key habitat remnants. The proposed predator control would provide significant protection to our most threatened ecosystems and in an environment where the logistics of access, property size and economics are enabling.

There has also been recognition by regional sector working groups that, there is no single agency, group, business or individual that is capable of protecting biodiversity alone. This is because biodiversity and ecosystems span both private and public land, very large and small properties, and our freshwater fauna and birdlife may be transient across property and administrative boundaries. Therefore it is essential that there is a well co-ordinated response to protecting and maintaining biodiversity within the region, that is well informed (by data management, science and research) and provides for 'joined-up' efforts by individual landowners, communities, businesses, non government organisations, and government agencies. The Council's ongoing role and its contribution to the regional Wild for Taranaki initiative is therefore crucial and fundamental to success for biodiversity within the region.

Review process

Biodiversity programmes and activities cut across all sections of the Council. Therefore, Council officers conducting the review have taken a 'whole of council' approach and have worked with relevant personal across the organization to review and update the current Strategy. As appropriate, new information and approaches have been incorporated into the revised draft.

Oversight in the development of the draft Biodiversity Strategy has been provided by the Director Operations, and two versions prepared. The full version, which includes added operational detail and assigned responsibilities within the Council for delivering on its objectives, is for internal use. An abridged version has also been prepared for external audiences.

As part of the Strategy review process, officers have been observant of other regional council approaches and have aligned the overall approach of the strategy.

The Council is not required by law to have such a document. However, it provides a policy framework to support the integrated, efficient, and effective delivery of the Council biodiversity programmes and priorities.

Set out below is a summary of the key features of the strategy.

The Draft Biodiversity Strategy of the Taranaki Regional Council

As previously noted the draft Biodiversity Strategy is a revised **non-statutory** document.

Of note, most activities undertaken by the Council are discretionary. The Strategy therefore covers all of the Council's biodiversity activities and programmes relating to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity habitat within the region. In so doing, it covers the Council's full suite of non-regulatory and regulatory biodiversity management programmes and activities.

Purpose

The purpose of the Strategy is to set out the Council's priorities and programme of action to be implemented for the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity in the Taranaki region.

Scope and structure

The scope and structure of the draft Biodiversity Strategy is as follows.

Section One and Two introduces the Strategy and sets the scene in relation to biodiversity. It includes what is happening with Taranaki's biodiversity and the Council's roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities of other key players are also identified.

Section Three sets out the Council's vision or goals for managing indigenous biodiversity. It was developed from previous targeted consultation on the current Strategy. However, the Vision still remains relevant by setting out what success would look like.

Section Four provides an overview and explanation of the four priority areas for the Council to achieve the Strategy's vision for biodiversity. Refer to discussion below

Section Five sets out, in relation to each priority area, the suite of actions being undertaken or proposed to be undertaken by the Council to contribute to biodiversity outcomes. The section of Council responsible for implementing each action is also identified.

Finally, Section Six outlines the monitoring and review provisions of the Strategy.

Key changes and priorities

As noted in the preceding discussion, the draft Biodiversity Strategy contains some important changes that incorporate national learnings, lessons and opportunities.

First, the Strategy has an increased focus on prioritising our work to better protect the broad suite of **representative** ecosystem types across the region. The Council already works closely with many private landowners. However, through the Strategy we will be working closer with other key entities such as Wild for Taranaki and the Department of Conservation to bring those areas under active management for biodiversity protection purposes.

Second, there is an opportunity through national initiatives such as *Predator Free 2050* to significantly build on the work we do to potentially deliver landscape predator control across the larger part of Taranaki. In particular, there is an opportunity to combine with other key players to introduce predator control to the Self-help Possum Control Programme. This would involve the control of mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels), cats and localised control of rats in key habitat remnants across the ring plain and coastal terraces.

The draft Biodiversity Strategy four priority areas for achieving its vision and objectives are as follows:

1. **Implementation of the Key Native Ecosystems programme:** This involves continuing to grow and implement an integrated and co-ordinated biodiversity protection and enhancement programme, that supports private landowners with Key Native Ecosystems (regionally significant sites) representing the full suite of ecosystems within the region
2. **Enhancing the biodiversity component of other existing Council programmes:** This involves acknowledging the biodiversity component of existing Council programmes, particularly the provision of education and advice. Bring an increased 'biodiversity focus' to these programmes, especially as they relate to sites or places with regionally significant biodiversity values, wildlife corridors established through the Riparian Programme and habitat protection resulting from the Self Help Possum Control programme

3. **Working with others:** This involves programmes and actions working with others to facilitate improved coordination of biodiversity work undertaken by different agencies, trusts and community groups across Taranaki. This includes the consideration and investigation of larger landscape scale biodiversity initiatives where Council is able to partner with others.
4. **Improving biodiversity information gathering and management:** This involves programmes and activities contributing to the management and development of biodiversity information systems relevant to Taranaki to ensure management decisions are based on sound scientific information and to enable the monitoring of outcomes for biodiversity in the Region and the revision of priorities as necessary.

Resourcing the Strategy

With the exception of landscape predator control initiatives, the actions proposed in the Draft Biodiversity Strategy largely build on existing programmes and will generally be resourced from the Council's existing resources through existing programmes. The Council may at any time re-consider resourcing of Council programmes to adjust the intensity and pace of biodiversity protection through existing programmes.

Reporting on progress with implementing the Strategy

It is proposed that progress with implementing the Strategy will be monitored and reported across various programmes through the Council's quarterly reporting framework, and through annual (Long Term Plan) planning and processes. From time to time as biodiversity matters arise officers may prepare reports to Council to report on progress with key initiatives.

The Council's five-yearly State of the Environment report will also contain a biodiversity chapter, which will report on the state and pressures on biodiversity across the region, incorporating information from the Council, district councils, community groups, Department of Conservation and Ministry for Primary Industries.

Decision-making considerations

Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 2002* (planning, decision-making and accountability), has been considered and documented in the preparation of this agenda item. The recommendations made in this item comply with the decision-making obligations of the *Act*.

Financial considerations—LTP/Annual Plan

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the Council's adopted Long-Term Plan and estimates. Any financial information included in this memorandum has been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

Policy considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the policy documents and positions adopted by this Council under various legislative frameworks including, but not restricted to, the *Local Government Act 2002*, the *Resource Management Act 1991* and the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987*.

Legal considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations comply with the appropriate statutory requirements imposed upon the Council.

Attachments – two separate reports

Document 1509652: Draft Biodiversity Strategy for the Taranaki Regional Council

Document 1821449: Draft Biodiversity Strategy for the Taranaki Regional Council (The abridged version)

Biodiversity Strategy for the Taranaki Regional Council

Taranaki Regional Council
Private Bag 713
Stratford

February 2017

Document number: 1509652

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Over the life of the Strategy, the Taranaki Regional Council aims to achieve the following:

Vision

The full range of Taranaki's indigenous ecosystems and species are maintained in a healthy and fully functioning state, from the mountain to the ocean depths and from protected areas to productive landscapes. Agencies, community groups and individuals work cooperatively in partnership, taking an integrated, efficient and cost effective approach that is based on sound science. People living in Taranaki value and better understand biodiversity so that we can all enjoy and share in its benefits, as the foundation of a sustainable economy and society.

(refer section 3)

Four priorities

We will achieve the vision by implementing the following strategic priorities for action:

Private Key Native Ecosystems (KNEs)

Description

Work programmes to support private landowners with KNEs (regionally significant sites) to maintain and protect the full suite of ecosystems within the region

Key actions (over duration of the Strategy)

- Continue to identify KNE representing the full suite of ecosystems within the region
- Prepare at least 10 biodiversity plans per annum for privately owned KNEs
- Work with and support biodiversity plan holders to improve the condition of priority KNEs

Building on existing Council programmes

Increased 'biodiversity focus' for other Council programmes contributing to the protection of healthy functioning native ecosystems

- Enhance the biodiversity capacity and focus of Council officers
- As part of the Riparian Management Programme, establish wildlife corridors from the mountain to the sea
- Expand the Self-help Possum Control Programme, to support community driven pest initiatives, including landscape predator control

Working with others

Facilitate and support the efforts of others in the community contributing to biodiversity outcomes as part of a collective regional effort

- Implement programme to support land occupiers and community groups contributing to biodiversity outcomes in KNEs
- Implement landscape predator control programme
- Provide servicing and support for Wild for Taranaki
- Implement programme using environmental enhancement grants to support iconic or significant biodiversity initiatives
- Develop shared services arrangements with key agencies and biodiversity entities where there are mutual benefits

Information management and gathering

Contribute to the community's management and development of information systems to promote public awareness and actions based upon sound scientific information

- Maintain and develop Council's biodiversity databases
- Monitor and report on Taranaki's biodiversity through its state of the environment monitoring programmes
- Work with other agencies and biodiversity entities to promote and share biodiversity data capture

(refer section 4)

(refer section 5)

Outcomes

Key outcomes delivered by the Strategy by 2027 that contribute to the vision are:

- More than 25,000 ha (>18%) of Taranaki's remnant native ecosystems on private land is subject to active management to protect and enhance biodiversity, through the KNE programme, other council programmes and by working with others
- Including the public conservation estate, 60% (170,000ha) of Taranaki's remnant native ecosystems are formally protected
- Intensively farmed catchments (the ring plain and coastal terraces) are retired and vegetated to create wildlife corridors from the mountain to the sea
- In the Egmont National Park and intensively farmed catchments, possums and predators are being maintained at very low levels (over 32% of the region) to protect remnant native ecosystems and indigenous wildlife
- Egmont National Park is pest-free and characterised by high quality habitat protection and species richness for both the Park and surrounding areas
- Wild for Taranaki and community groups are widely supported and resourced to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of biodiversity initiatives and outcomes for the region
- Biodiversity policy in the region is informed by strong science and robust information.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document is entitled the Biodiversity Strategy for the Taranaki Regional Council (the Strategy).¹

The purpose of the Strategy is to set out the Taranaki Regional Council's (the Council) priorities and programme of action to be implemented for the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity in the Taranaki region.

1.2 Scope and background

This Strategy is a non regulatory document that has been prepared by the Council to part of a 'whole of council approach' for biodiversity in the Taranaki region.

The Strategy will assist the Council to implement the biodiversity objective, policies and methods of the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki*. However, the Strategy outlines work programmes across all sections of the Council and across all legislative responsibilities, including under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), the Local Government Act 2002, and the Biosecurity Act 1993. In so doing, it addresses Council aspirations and responsibilities for biodiversity on land, in freshwater, within the coastal environment, and offshore.

The RMA defines 'biological diversity' as "...the variability among living organisms, and the ecological complexes of which they are a part, including diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems".

That definition incorporates three key elements:

1. *Genetic diversity*: This is the genetic variation between individuals of a single species or within a population of a single species. Genetic diversity is important for the long-term survival of a species because it increases the adaptability and, therefore resilience of a species to external changes.
2. *Species diversity*: This is the variety of species within a specific geographic area (sometimes referred to as 'species richness').
3. *Ecosystem diversity*: This is the variety of ecosystem types or different assemblages

(combinations) of species. Ecosystem diversity is closely related to variation in the "non-living" (physical) components of the environment such as soil, nutrients, light, temperature, water which interact with biota to form distinct ecosystems.

Unless the context indicates otherwise, for the purposes of this Strategy the term 'biodiversity' refers to indigenous biodiversity. Although described as separate dimensions, the three types of diversity outlined above are, in fact, inter-dependent. That is, all must be present for any one to be maintained long term. For example, species biodiversity is reliant on genetic diversity and genetic diversity is reliant on ecosystem diversity.

The Strategy includes a vision, which is our stake in the ground against which to rally action and to measure success against. The "How" part of this strategy outlines the first steps in the action plan. We are identifying where our key biodiversity areas and habitats are located now, we are prioritizing projects so that key habitats and species are stabilised, and then we will work towards ensuring they are enhanced, healthy and functioning.

Achieving our vision might seem a long way off, but impacts on our indigenous biodiversity have been a long time in the making and as a community we are realistic about the challenge ahead. It has taken more than 200 years to create the biodiversity problems we have today, so it's going to take a while to make progress towards fixing them.

1.3 Structure of the Strategy

The Strategy has been prepared in six sections as follows;

Section One introduces the Strategy, including its purpose, scope and structure.

Section Two sets the scene in relation to biodiversity. It includes what is happening with Taranaki's biodiversity and the Council's roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities of other key players are also identified.

Section Three sets out the Council's vision or goals for managing indigenous biodiversity.

¹ This Strategy is the second document of its type. It is the outcome of a review on the first Strategy which was adopted in 2008 following extensive targeted consultation.

Section Four identifies four priority areas (and explanation) for the Council to achieve the Strategy's vision for biodiversity. The four priority areas relate to:

1. the implementation of the Key Native Ecosystems programme
2. enhancing the biodiversity component of other existing Council programmes
3. working with others, and
4. improving biodiversity information gathering and management.

Section Five sets out, in relation to each priority area, the suite of actions being undertaken or proposed to be undertaken by the Council to contribute to biodiversity outcomes. The section of Council responsible for implementing each action is also identified.

Section Six outlines the monitoring and review provisions of the Strategy.

A definition of terms and acronyms used in the Strategy, and appendices containing supporting information are presented at the back of the Strategy.

The largest remnant concentrations of indigenous forest in the region occur in the Egmont National Park, and the steeper parts of the eastern hill country



2. The Taranaki context

2.1 What is happening with Taranaki's biodiversity?

Taranaki is a unique part of New Zealand with a wide variety of native species, habitats and natural features.

Before humans settled here, almost the entire region would have been covered in dense forests, rich in bird life. Clearance of vegetation cover started with early Māori and continued with the arrival of Pākeha leaving a legacy of widespread modification of the natural ecosystems.

Forest clearance, wetland drainage, and stream realignments have been necessary for the development of the region. However, development has had a considerable impact on indigenous biodiversity.

Little remains of the original forests, and other natural habitats, like wetlands, have been greatly diminished and modified. The Egmont National Park and the hill country to the east contain the only sizeable remnants of natural vegetation. The highly modified ring plain and coastal terraces now have only a few fragmented remnants.

Taranaki's remaining biodiversity is still vulnerable to a range of threats, particularly ongoing habitat loss and modification of the landscape, and browsing and predation by invasive introduced species. It is often difficult to attribute declines in biodiversity to specific threats, but it is recognised that the adverse impact from one threat can be exacerbated by the effects of other threats acting together, i.e. habitat fragmentation combined with invasive species.

Despite extensive modification, Taranaki contains a great diversity of landscapes, habitats, plants, animals, and areas of high biodiversity value. There are areas in Taranaki which support a diverse and significant range of indigenous species and terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecosystems, including the Egmont National Park,

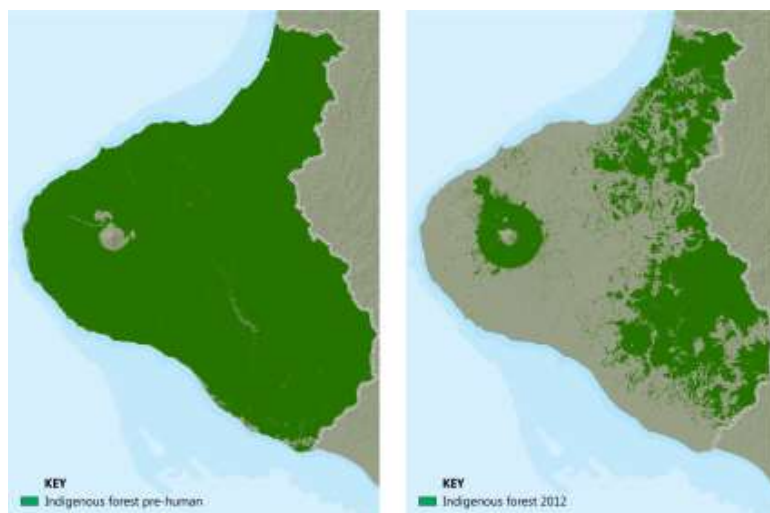
Parininihi, Lake Rotokare, and the Sugar Loaf Islands. Many of these sites are in very good condition.

Several endemic species which are nationally threatened or regionally distinctive have remnant populations in the region. These include the Western North Island brown kiwi, whio (blue duck), gold-striped gecko, *Notoreas* moth (*Notoreas perornata*), and the *Powelliphanta* 'Egmont' land snail.

Commercial forests and farmland are also important to regional biodiversity as these areas have wetlands, and plantings for erosion and sediment control and riparian protection.

Though the rich range of species that used to thrive in our region is greatly reduced and fragmented, nationally significant fragments of land and wildlife remain.

For further information refer to the biodiversity chapters in the Councils state of the environment report 2015 – *Taranaki as One*.



It is estimated that prior to human settlement most of Taranaki was covered in native forest, shrubland and wetland vegetation (left.) Today, remnant vegetation covers about 40% of the region (right).

Key facts

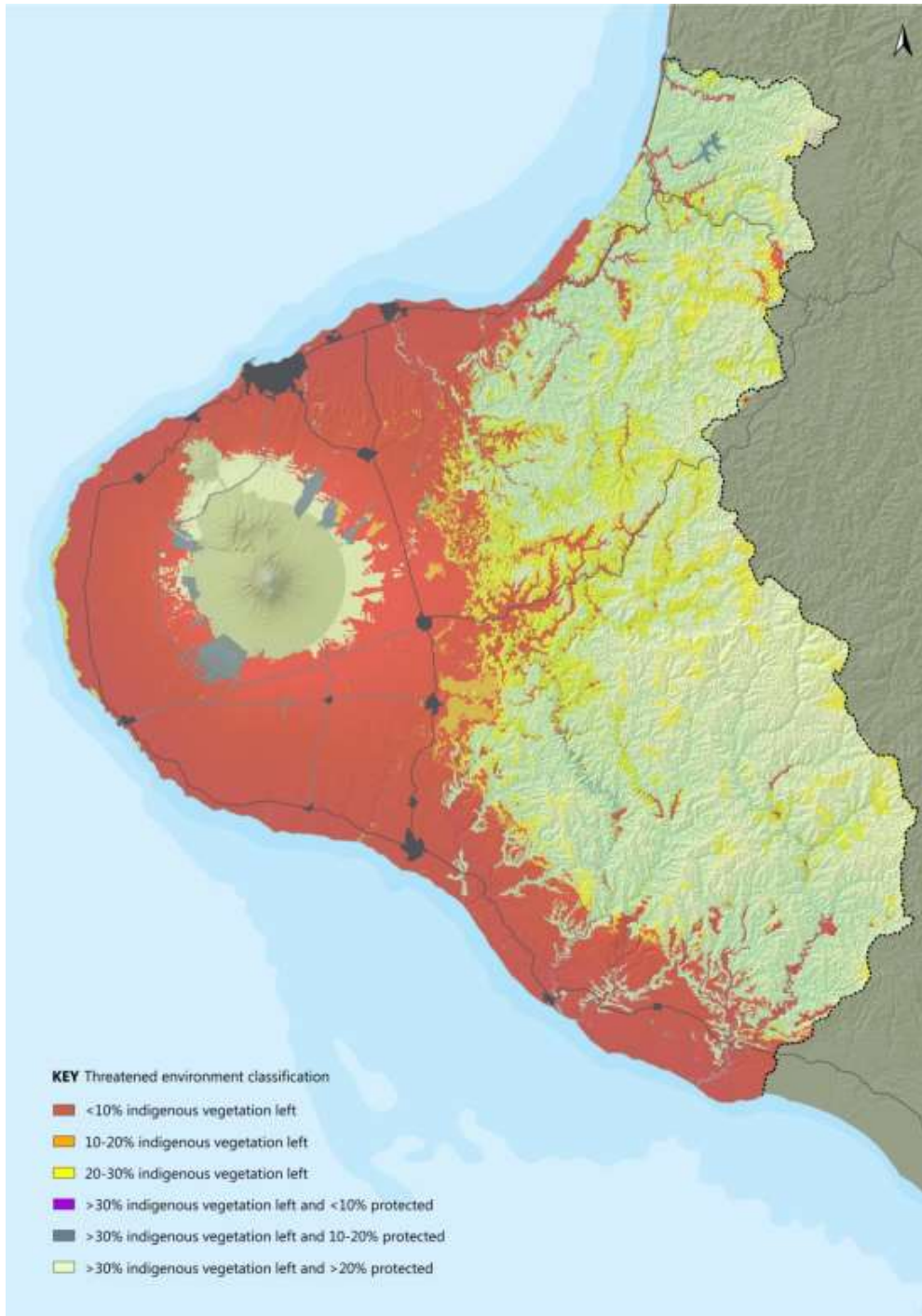
- 40% of Taranaki is native forest or shrubland (compared to 24% nationally)
- Largest remnant concentrations of indigenous forest in the region occur in Egmont National Park, and the steeper parts of the eastern hill country
- 21% of Taranaki is legally protected, including Department of Conservation reserves, local purpose reserves and QEII covenants. This equates to approximately 50% of Taranaki's native forests and shrublands
- Some environment types (Figure 1) are particularly threatened in that there is less than 20% of the original indigenous vegetation remaining in the area
- 8.2% of Taranaki's original wetlands remain
- 17% of New Zealand's 270 threatened or at-risk terrestrial fauna species, subspecies, or unique populations are present in Taranaki
- Taranaki has 37 native bird species, two bat species, eight reptile species, and 54 plants that are nationally threatened or at-risk
- Eastern Taranaki is considered to be a stronghold for the Western North Island taxon of the Brown Kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*)
- Taranaki has six species of threatened or at-risk terrestrial invertebrates, including the Notoreas moth (*Notoreas perornata*), which is 'nationally vulnerable'. One endemic large land snail species (*Powelliphanta 'Egmont'*) is found only in Taranaki
- Eighteen species of native freshwater fish are present in Taranaki. Ten of these species are classified as nationally 'threatened' or 'at risk'. Although they live in freshwater, many native fish species have a marine stage in their life-cycle
- Some native species are considered 'regionally distinctive' because Taranaki is the national stronghold for the species, the species is particularly uncommon in the region, or the species does not exist either further north or further south of Taranaki. Regionally distinctive species are not necessarily nationally threatened.



New Zealand dotterel.



The nationally 'at-risk' gold stripe gecko is more widespread in Taranaki than in any other region.



Approximately 52% of the region's land environments are classified as 'acutely' or 'chronically threatened' in that there is less than 20% of indigenous vegetation remaining in those areas. The most threatened environments are located on the intensively farmed ring plain, coastal terraces, and alluvial valley floors in the eastern hill country.

2.2 Taranaki Regional Council's authority to act

The Taranaki Regional Council (the Council) has a number of statutory roles, responsibilities and powers relating to biodiversity management. Of particular note are the statutory mandates provided for under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), the Biosecurity Act 1993, and the Local Government Act 2002.

2.2.1 Resource Management Act 1991

Under Section 30(1)(ga) of the RMA, Taranaki Regional Council functions include:

"The establishment, implementation, and review of objectives, policies and methods for maintaining indigenous biological diversity".

Under the RMA the Taranaki Regional Council is responsible for controlling use and development of the coast, fresh water, air and land for soil conservation purposes. Council objectives, policies, rules and other methods relating to these functions are set out in the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* (2010) and a suite of regional coastal, freshwater, land and air plans.

What does maintaining indigenous biodiversity entail?

An amendment to the RMA in 2003 established a unique function that refers broadly to the establishment and implementation of methods (not just narrow regulatory control) and includes an objective (maintenance) within the function itself. That is, not only do local authorities have to manage natural resources so as to avoid, remedy or mitigate effects on the biodiversity of its region, they must (in theory) establish and implement methods to *maintain* biodiversity.

That is an ambitious task for two related reasons:

- First, maintaining biodiversity in the face of the threats faced will likely require more than managing the negative externalities of resource use and will require active intervention by councils, other agencies, and the communities they represent.
- Second, whether biodiversity is maintained will depend on a range of parties and actions outside of a local authority's control (including for example, how well the Department of Conservation manages its estate and species recovery programmes).

There needs to be a close link between the RMA functions and LGA tools and priority setting processes (refer section 2.2.3).

Section 30 regulatory functions by themselves are likely to be insufficient to deliver the *maintenance* of biodiversity (only an avoidance of, or reduction in, adverse impacts) other, additional, actions may be necessary to fully deliver the section 30(1) (ga) "maintenance" function. These will likely centre on tools and mandates provided under other legislation (discussed in sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 below).

2.2.2 Biosecurity Act 1993

Under the Biosecurity Act 1993 a regional council has the *power* to prepare regional pest management plans and regional pathway management plans.

Such plans contain rules requiring owners of land to eradicate, manage or contain plant or animal pests or otherwise manage pest pathways. Plans must also set out sources of funding for methods that may be proposed to address a pest issue.

While regional councils do not have a mandatory function requiring them to control pests for biodiversity (or other) purposes, before preparing pest and pathways plans regional councils must be satisfied that a number of tests can be met. One of these is that the pest to be managed under the plan is capable of causing adverse effects on one or more aspects of the New Zealand environment including:

- The viability of threatened species of organisms
- The survival and distribution of indigenous plants and animals
- The sustainability of native and developed ecosystems, ecological processes and biological diversity².

Thus the Biosecurity Act provides a mandate and a set of powers and tools for pest control that aims to protect biodiversity.

The powers and tools available to regional councils under the Biosecurity Act are also available to government agencies/Ministers.

² See section 71 (d) of the Biosecurity Act.

2.2.3 Local Government Act and associated legislation

The 2012 amendment to the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) narrowed the statutory purpose of local government and the role of local authorities. It did not, however, affect the role of councils in biodiversity since that role is prescribed by separate statute (i.e. the RMA) – despite biodiversity protection not being a “core service” in section 11A.

The key relevance of the LGA is that it provides, in the form of Long Term Plans (LTPs), the framework for the direction and priorities of each local authority. Through LTPs councils secure funding for non-regulatory (operational) biodiversity protection methods (with specific measures subject to the work programming/budgeting and community consultation process).

As noted earlier, proactive non regulatory measures (e.g. incentives for landowners and community groups, education and awareness raising, pest control, stock exclusion etc) are a critical component of delivering on the ambitious RMA function of maintaining biodiversity (something that will often require more than just managing the negative externalities).

This is the conundrum and principal source of tension in biodiversity management. Operational measures are required to deliver on the “maintain biodiversity” function of regional councils under the RMA, but the nature and extent of such measures remains, of necessity, a matter for regional council/community to determine under the LGA processes.

Of note regional councils may also use section 85 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 to provide for rates remission for land that has high biodiversity value where they have a policy to do so under section 109 of the same Act.

2.3 Other agencies’ statutory mandate

A large number of agencies and groups (in addition to regional councils) have statutory or voluntary roles affecting biodiversity management. The key agencies/groups and their roles are outlined briefly below. These roles are identifiable from the functions listed in legislation or from the programmes that agencies implement.

2.3.1 Department of Conservation

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is the principal central government agency involved in the conservation of biodiversity. Its role is broad and multifaceted operating under a number of different statutes, including the *Conservation Act 1987*, the *National Parks Act 1980*, the *Wildlife Act 1953* and the *Reserves Act 1977*. DOC’s statutory responsibilities can be grouped as follows:

- Legal protection of land and marine areas for conservation purposes (i.e. creation and extension of a terrestrial and marine public conservation estate) including the on-going management of that estate. In Taranaki, DOC is responsible for 146,973 hectares of Crown land (or 21% of the region).
- The pro-active protection of species and populations on, and affecting public conservation land and, to some extent, more broadly. Threatened species recovery programmes in Taranaki include recovery of the Western North Island brown kiwi and the whio (blue duck) in Egmont National Park and adjacent farmland. Part of the DOC species recovery programme is to support the re-establishment of kōkako in Taranaki.
- Promotion of conservation off the public conservation estate through funding and advocacy.

2.3.2 District councils

There are three district councils in Taranaki - New Plymouth District Council, Stratford District Council and South Taranaki District Council.

Under the RMA, the district councils have a role for controlling the effects of use and development and protection of land, including for the purpose of the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity.

Each district council has objectives, policies and actions or methods of implementation in their district plans in relation to indigenous vegetation generally or significant natural areas (SNAs) specifically. Most

councils have funds available for private landowners for the protection of significant natural areas, e.g. the NPDC Heritage Protection Fund targeted at helping landowners with fencing of natural areas to help facilitate covenanting with QEII. Each district council also manages a number of council owned reserves and undertakes direct management of plant and animal pest threats within parks, reserves and other council administered lands.

2.3.3 Ministry for Primary Industries

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has three roles relevant to the maintenance of biodiversity.

- *Fisheries management* (including the four freshwater species in the quota management system) – controlled under the Fisheries Acts 1983 and 1996 and various regulations
- *Indigenous forest management* to ensure sustainable harvest – under Part IIIA of the Forests Act 1949 (as amended in 1993).
- *Biosecurity/pest management* – leadership of the national biosecurity system. This includes certain pre and post border roles that are important to maintaining biodiversity. (Note that new measures aimed at managing pests that threaten biodiversity at the national level (such as a pest management plan) would be led by DOC in accordance with the general scheme of the Biosecurity Act).

The first two of these roles illustrate MPI's role as lead agency for the *sustainable use* of New Zealand's biodiversity.

2.3.4 Fish and Game New Zealand

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council is a statutory but non governmental entity charged under the Conservation Act with managing both sports fish and game. This involves operating a licensing system and well as operational activity to maintain fish and game stocks.

Fish and Game's role extends to advocating for the protection of habitat for those game and sports species (all of which are introduced) and may, according to recent case law, extend to advocating for freshwater habitat protection more generally.

2.3.5 QEII National Trust

The QEII National Trust assists landowners to secure legal protection of private land (usually by covenant with the Trust acting as the perpetual trustee). Although supported both by DOC and local authorities the QEII National Trust is an independent entity and source of advice for landowners that operates under its own governing legislation (the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Act 1977).

Voluntary uptake of QEII covenants provides a method and tool for the protection of areas and habitats of importance to the maintenance of biodiversity.

2.3.6 Science Research Institutes

Landcare Research is a key provider of land cover information, science and research and custodian of various biodiversity relevant data bases (and geospatial information tools) including the National Vegetation Survey (NVS) – to which DOC, regional councils and others also contribute data. NVS is a detailed centralised database of vegetation cover from survey plots throughout New Zealand.

NIWA is the key provider for information and research concerning freshwater and marine environments. NIWA undertake a range of biodiversity research projects and maintaining databases such as the National Freshwater Fish Database. Regional councils, DOC and others contribute to that database.

2.3.7 Trusts and community organisations

Dozens of trusts and other community organisations around the region have established and maintain reserves and/or programmes involving "hands on" conservation work. Most of these will contribute in some way towards maintaining biodiversity.

In Taranaki, examples of trusts and community organisations actively undertaking conservation work include the North and South Taranaki branches of Forest and Bird, Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society, Ngati Tara Oaonui Sandy Bay Society, Taranaki Kiwi Trust and the Patea Planting Trust.

The Council supports several individual trusts within the region that involve broad community involvement and are making a particularly significant contribution to habitat and threatened species protection. These trusts include the Tiaki Te Mauri o Parininihi Trust, Purangi Kiwi (formerly East Taranaki Environment Trust), Lake Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust and the Rapanui Grey Faced Petrel Trust. The Council has worked with each of these trusts over the years, providing technical and funding support alongside a

range of partner organisations, including DOC and district councils.

Of particular note is the 'Wild for Taranaki' branded Taranaki Biodiversity Trust. This independent trust was formed in 2015 following several years of the Council facilitating closer engagement between biodiversity entities within the region. This facilitation work culminated in the preparation of a constitution and election of a trust board in 2015.

While still in its infancy Wild for Taranaki will arguably be the most significant non-government biodiversity organisation in Taranaki and will be responsible for several projects that the Council considers will be iconic within the region, including;

- 'Restoring Taranaki' – facilitating and supporting a collaborative, multi-agency approach to the progressive, staged protection and enhancement of the region at landscape scales;
- 'Wild for Wetlands' – facilitating and supporting the protection and enhancement of the regions wetlands;
- 'Wild for Coasts' – facilitating and supporting the protection and enhancement of the regions coastal environment, and the;
- 'Community Biodiversity Fund' – a programme of strategic fund raising and redistribution to community initiatives that will resource the protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the region.

Eighteen species of indigenous freshwater fish are present in Taranaki. Ten of these species are classified as nationally 'threatened' or 'at risk'. Although they live in freshwater, many indigenous fish species have a marine stage in their life-cycle.



2.4 Overview of statutory roles and responsibilities for biodiversity management in Taranaki

There are certain things that regional councils must do in accordance with their statutory obligations. However, regional councils may choose to deploy additional resources and institute non regulatory programmes and/or regulate using powers available under other legislation. Table 1 below outlines Council's (and other central and local governments) place in the wider legislative framework for biodiversity management.

Table 1: Taranaki Regional Council's place in biodiversity management

	Habitat Quality			Species protection/population management & recovery
	Legal protection of sites	Management of adverse effects of resource use	Operational investment in habitat protection and restoration	
Private (including Maori) land	DOC [Nga Whenua Rahui, Nature Heritage Fund QEII - covenants Territorial authorities [consent conditions/notices, reserves acquisition] Regional councils [Memorandums of Encumbrance]	Territorial authorities Regional councils* MPI [Sustainable forestry permits]	Regional councils [riparian, fish barrier, wetland & KNE programmes] Territorial authorities [SNA programmes]	DOC [Biodiversity advice & condition improvement funding] Regional councils [Direct & 3 rd party funding of habitat protection projects] Regional councils/DOC/ MPI [pest management]
Freshwater environments	-	Regional councils*		DOC – [Wildlife protection MPI [Indigenous forest harvesting] DOC [Wild animal control] MPI [Biosecurity – incursion response]
Marine environments (<12NM)	DOC [Marine reserves]	Regional councils*	Regional councils* [Oil Spill recovery]	DOC – [Freshwater fish and whitebait management] MPI [Fisheries management] MPI [Biosecurity – incursion response]
Marine environments (12NM – 200NM)	DOC [Marine reserves]	Minister for the Environment/EPA	-	MPI [Fisheries management] MPI [Fisheries management] DOC [Marine mammals protection]
Public conservation estate	DOC [Ownership]	Regional councils*	DOC	DOC – Access and concessions system DOC [species recovery, mainland islands, pest control] Regional councils [pest management]

* Mandatory regional council biodiversity functions in *italics*.

3. What we want to achieve

This section sets out the Council's vision for biodiversity in the Taranaki region. It is what we want to achieve and involves four inter-related outcomes:

A vision for biodiversity in Taranaki³

The full range of Taranaki's indigenous ecosystems and species are maintained in a healthy and fully functioning state, from the mountain to the ocean depths and from protected areas to productive landscapes.

Agencies, community groups and individuals work cooperatively in partnership, taking an integrated, efficient and cost effective approach that is based on sound science.

People living in Taranaki value and better understand biodiversity so that we can all enjoy and share in its benefits, as the foundation of a sustainable economy and society.

Taranaki's own unique character and the biodiversity matters of national importance are sustained and enhanced now and into the future.



The kereru or wood pigeon

³ Vision was developed and confirmed following targeted consultation on the 'Biodiversity Strategy – An Operational Strategy to Guide Biodiversity Actions of the Taranaki Regional Council'.

Table 2: Strategic considerations for prioritising Taranaki Regional Council's biodiversity activities

Strategic considerations for prioritising the Council's biodiversity actions	
<p>One of the challenges in achieving our vision for biodiversity is that there is invariably more work than can be achieved with the resources available. Some prioritising of its biodiversity actions and responses actions is necessarily required by the Council.</p> <p>In determining its biodiversity priorities and actions (refer sections 4 and 5 of this Strategy), the Council has had regard to the following strategic considerations.</p> <p>Authority and mandate</p> <p>Community support for the Council's biodiversity work is strongest where it is clearly enshrined in legislation or where it has obtained a social mandate for that work.</p> <p>The following legislation, strategies and plans contribute to authorising the Council's biodiversity related programmes and activities (for further information refer Appendix I):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 Legislation such as the RMA and the Biosecurity Act 🚩 National policy such as the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and the National Priorities for Protecting Rare and Threatened Native Biodiversity on Private Land 🚩 Resource management strategies and plans such as the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki, Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki, and the Regional Fresh Water Plan for Taranaki 🚩 Pest management plans 🚩 Long term plans under the Local Government Act. <p>The Department of Conservation is funded and empowered, in its own right, to manage the public conservation estate. Similarly other agencies identified in section 2.3 above are funded and empowered to undertake their statutory responsibilities. It is important not to duplicate the work of other agencies, but rather to work cooperatively, provide support and add value where appropriate.</p> <p>Operational capacity - what can the Council do?</p> <p>The Council's biodiversity work will be more effective where it builds on existing programmes.</p> <p>In particular, the Council has an opportunity to enhance biodiversity outcomes by utilising its existing operational capacity across a broad range of work areas, including:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 Building on positive working relationships and the goodwill of private landowners built up through the Council's existing biodiversity, land management and pest management programmes 🚩 Recognising that the Taranaki Riparian Management Programme will ultimately lead to restoration of indigenous vegetation and habitat on threatened land environments (the ring plain and coastal terraces), and the creation of wildlife corridors between the mountain and the sea (and the many fragmented forest and wetland remnants in between) 🚩 Incorporating wetlands and remnant bush on private land, particularly on threatened land environments, into the existing land management plans 🚩 Recognising that the current Self-help Possum Control Programme protects remaining indigenous vegetation on threatened land environments and within the iconic Egmont National Park 🚩 Building on the success of the significant wetland and key native ecosystem programmes by expanding support to other sites of significance 🚩 Promoting greater understanding of biodiversity values and threats through existing media and environmental education programmes 🚩 Recognising the biodiversity component of consent compliance and monitoring programmes. <p>Other good ideas - what else should the Council do?</p> <p>There are other good ideas in relation to what the Council could do for the public good, to add value and/or contribute to the Council's vision for biodiversity in the region.</p> <p>'Biodiversity work' spans an extensive suite of possible actions – from planning, advocacy and consent management, to protecting wetlands or bush remnants with covenants, fencing, and pest animal and plant management. While all might be 'good ideas', to make the most efficient use of Council resources available for biodiversity, the actions that the Council chooses to undertake must be strategic and prioritised.⁴</p> <p>Appendix II sets out a list of possible biodiversity actions for the Council based upon the outcomes of targeted consultation undertaken when preparing the first biodiversity strategy action plan in 2008.</p>

⁴ To do otherwise runs the risk of being unable to deliver on community expectations or spreading resources too thinly for effective outcomes, such as focusing on carrying out direct control where a focus on building landowner and community knowledge and capacity to do that control may produce greater results.

4. Priorities for biodiversity

This section sets out four priority areas (and explanation) for the Taranaki Regional Council to achieve the Strategy's vision for biodiversity. The priorities take into account the Council's authorisation for undertaking biodiversity work, the extensive scope for biodiversity work in the region, and the Council's existing capacity, skills and experience (i.e. the strategic considerations outlined in Table 2).

Council's Top Biodiversity Priorities⁵

1. Continue to grow and implement an integrated and co-ordinated biodiversity protection and enhancement programme, that supports private landowners with Key Native Ecosystems (regionally significant sites) representing the full suite of ecosystems within the region.
2. Acknowledge the biodiversity component of existing Council programmes, particularly the provision of education and advice. Bring an increased 'biodiversity focus' to these programmes, especially as they relate to Key Native Ecosystems and other sites or places with regionally significant biodiversity values.
3. Where appropriate, facilitate improved coordination of biodiversity work undertaken by different agencies, trusts and community groups across Taranaki and, in particular, consider and investigate larger landscape scale biodiversity initiatives, while partnering with others.
4. Contribute to the management and development of biodiversity information systems relevant to Taranaki to ensure management decisions are based on sound scientific information and to enable the monitoring of outcomes for biodiversity in the Region and the revision of priorities as necessary.

⁵ In no priority order.

4.1 Private Key Native Ecosystems

Continue to grow and implement an integrated and co-ordinated biodiversity protection and enhancement programmes that prioritise support towards private landowners with Key Native Ecosystems (regionally significant sites).

Explanation

All landowners within the region wanting to protect biodiversity on their properties are eligible for advice and information from the Council. However to effectively maintain biodiversity and ecological condition across a full range of indigenous ecosystems in Taranaki, the Council will prioritise its work and funding to sites on private land with regionally significant indigenous biodiversity values.⁶

The *Inventory of Key Native Ecosystems* (2008) has been the first step in identifying sites to be prioritised for biodiversity protection. It recognises that in terms of the Council's vision of maintaining the full suite of ecosystems within the region, some ecosystem types are more vulnerable to use and development than others (e.g. wetlands and lowland forest) or are now very poorly represented in the region. Information on original and residual extent of the region's ecosystems will also be important in helping target engagement with the owners of potential KNE.

Identifying and prioritising sites is a means to ensuring that limited resources are directed to the most important sites first, or sites where the Council can make the most practical difference in a sustainable way. Like elsewhere in New Zealand, much of Taranaki's remaining rare and threatened indigenous biodiversity is found on private land. Many habitat types and species depend upon these remnants for their survival.

The Council will continue to work collaboratively with landowners on issues such as legal protection, fencing,

⁶ Site prioritisation has previously been supported by the community through consultative processes for the Regional Policy Statement, LTP and the previous Biodiversity Strategy. It also reflects the National Priorities for protecting rare and threatened native biodiversity on private land.

revegetation, pest management, monitoring and technical advice and support.

This prioritization contributes to the Council's vision of maintaining a full representative range of ecosystems and habitats by focusing on those most vulnerable or representatively rare in Taranaki.

4.2 Building on existing Council programmes

Acknowledge the biodiversity component of existing Taranaki Regional Council programmes, particularly the provision of education and advice. Bring an increased 'biodiversity focus' to these programmes, especially as they relate to Key Native Ecosystems and other sites or places with regionally significant biodiversity values.

Explanation

Biodiversity work, by its very nature, requires a 'whole of agency' approach. Practically every section of the Council undertakes some sort of biodiversity work, therefore there is an opportunity for existing Council programmes to contribute and/or add value to biodiversity outcomes.

The Council has a number of existing programmes that already contribute to biodiversity outcomes on private land, rivers, streams and wetlands, and in the coastal marine area in the region. The Council will maintain and enhance the 'biodiversity focus' of these programmes to:

1. Take action where there is **urgent and imminent threat** to local populations of indigenous flora and fauna
2. Take action to avoid the incremental loss of habitat in the following order of priority:
 - **protect** what habitats we already have
 - **restore** degraded ecosystems
 - **create** new areas of habitat.

In line with its vision, the Council will bring an increased biodiversity focus to existing programmes, particularly where these are focused on threatened land environments, wetlands, sand dunes, 'originally rare' ecosystems or habitats for threatened species.

4.3 Working with others

Where appropriate, facilitate improved coordination of biodiversity work undertaken by different agencies, trusts and community groups across Taranaki and, in particular, consider and investigate larger landscape scale biodiversity initiatives, while partnering with others.

Explanation

The Council is well placed strategically to add value to the business of biodiversity management on private land in Taranaki. The Council will facilitate better coordination of all the region's various biodiversity related groups, agencies, trusts, iwi and individuals. Greater coordination will contribute to greater efficiencies and biodiversity outcomes for Taranaki.

The RPS signals that the Council will promote integrated management of indigenous biodiversity in the Taranaki region by working with other agencies, community groups, trusts and individuals.

The Council is particularly interested in supporting Wild for Taranaki (Taranaki Biodiversity Trust) as part of its ongoing work supporting other agencies and community groups. It is envisaged that members of Wild for Taranaki will make effective and valuable contributions to some flagship projects that will protect and enhance Taranaki's biodiversity on a regional scale. Wild for Taranaki has identified the following key regional projects:

- 'Restoring Taranaki'
- 'Wild for Wetlands'
- 'Wild for the Coast', and;
- The 'Community Biodiversity Fund'.

These projects along with 'Project Taranaki Mounga'⁷ are considered by the Council to be 'iconic projects' that involve collective regional action. These projects, will amplify the biodiversity work being undertaken by individual agencies and community groups, showcase good biodiversity protection techniques and contribute

⁷ *Project Taranaki Mounga is a ten+ year project involving pest eradication and reintroduction of species over the 34,000ha of Egmont National Park and off-shore islands. It is a collaborative project involving DOC, iwi, the NEXT Foundation and the local community including the Council. The vision of the project is to 'protect our mountain for our wellbeing – Ko Taranaki tooku whakaruruhau'. Project Mounga also recognises the important role of involving the regional community in the control of invasive animals and plants and biodiversity protection and enhancement, in a 'halo' adjacent the national park and outwards to the sea and eastern hill country - connecting up Taranaki biodiversity.*

to a network of 'biodiversity-jewels' in the Taranaki landscape.

The Council also recognizes and supports 'significant' independent trust projects that are highly organized, make significant contributions to biodiversity in their project areas, and provide significant opportunities for local and wider community involvement. These trusts include:

- Lake Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust
- Purangi Kiwi
- Tiaki Te Mauri O Parinihi Trust, and
- Rapanui Grey Faced Petrel Trust
- Taranaki Kiwi Trust.

Opportunities exist to work more collaboratively with the three territorial authorities in the region to achieve greater support of the owners of private land in order to maintain significant biodiversity values. It is also of importance that the Council works closely with the Department of Conservation in the mutual identification of priority areas for active management and maintenance of biodiversity across a full suite of representative ecosystems within the region.

Working with other agencies is particularly relevant to the marine environment where the Council's mandate is focused on the coastal marine area and managing it under the RMA. This alone will not fully achieve indigenous biodiversity outcomes as the management of the coastal marine area rests with the Crown and is carried out by the DOC and MPI. The Council does not intend to take over or duplicate Crown management responsibilities, but could contribute to improved coordination between the agencies.

4.4 Information management and gathering

Contribute to the management and development of biodiversity information systems relevant to Taranaki to ensure management decisions are based on sound scientific information and to enable the monitoring of outcomes for biodiversity in the Region and the revision of priorities as necessary.

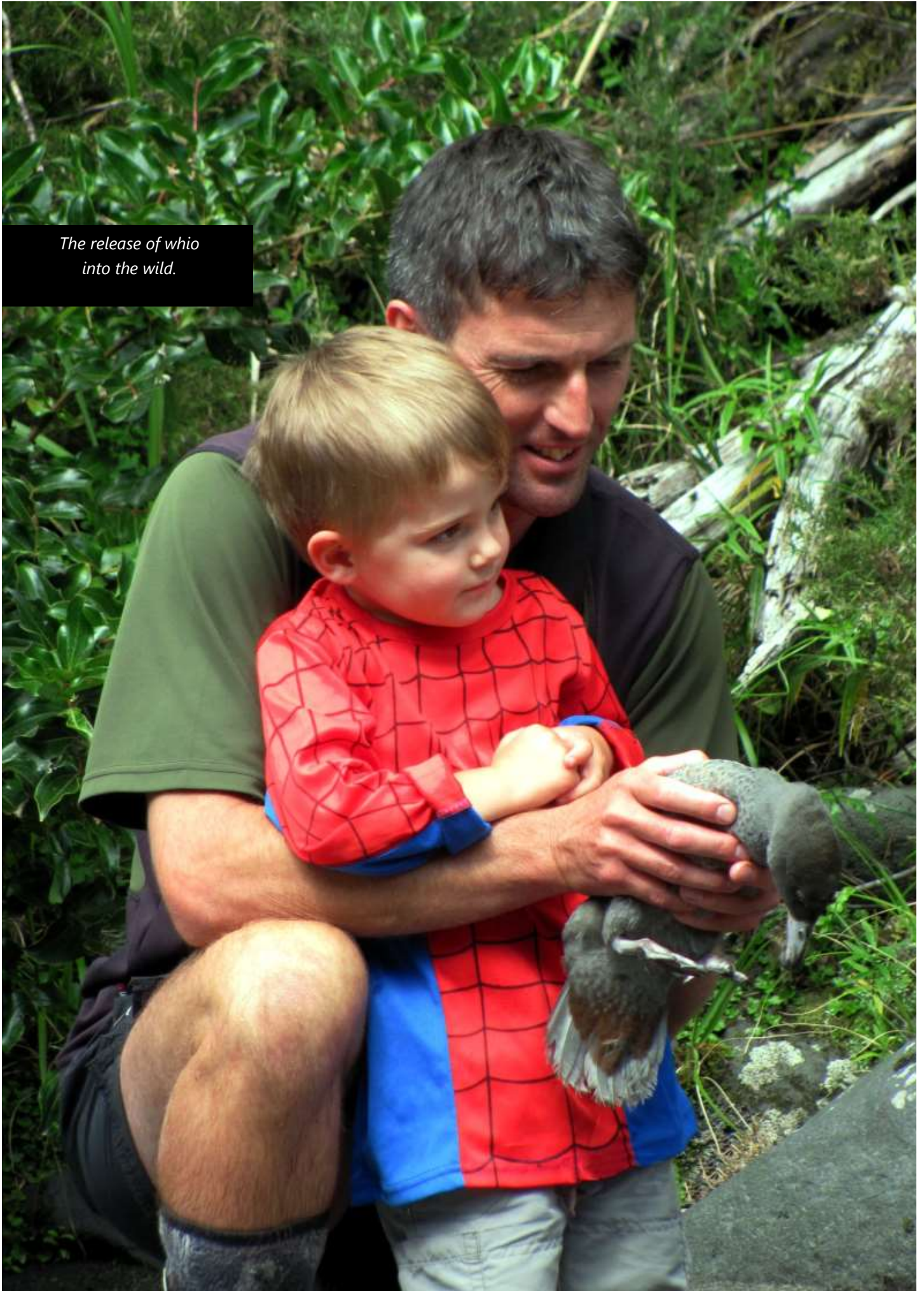
Explanation

Biodiversity management, like all other aspects of resource management, relies on having good systems for gathering and managing data and information. Systems need to be maintained, reviewed and improved for identifying and gathering strategic and relevant biodiversity information. In particular work undertaken with Key Native Ecosystems requires systems for managing information for site identification and prioritization, identification of significant values, threats, planning, management and monitoring information.

The Council has a longstanding philosophy of undertaking resource management from a position of sound scientific information. The biodiversity field is no different. It is important to identify strategic indicators to measure progress with Council policies and to gather information for specific resource investigations to inform decision making. The Council has commenced establishing baseline data in selected indicators and will be measuring changes resulting from biodiversity management and changes within the region generally as part of its state of the environment and operational monitoring.

Working with DOC and others to gather regional species distribution data would be highly beneficial. This data is essential if we, as a region, are to ensure that all species present are represented within priority habitat areas for protection, either on private land or land administered by DOC, and possibly by district councils.

The Council could also support regional initiatives that serve the wider biodiversity community through development of information gathering platforms that can be contributed to by the wider community. Further investigations on the most effective means of supporting community gathered data could be made.



*The release of whio
into the wild.*

5. Plan of action –what we want to do

This section sets out the actions either being undertaken or proposed to be undertaken by the Taranaki Regional Council in relation to maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity.

Programmes and activities are structured according to the strategic priority areas identified in Section 4:

1. Key Native Ecosystems programme;
2. Biodiversity in existing Council programmes;
3. Integrating with others working in the biodiversity field; and
4. Information gathering and management.

In the sections that follow, an objective has been identified for each priority area. In relation to each objective, tables (and a brief explanation) set out the specific activities, measures and targets to be undertaken or achieved.

The Section within the Council with lead responsibility for each activity is identified. Most activities are already being implemented by the Council. However, some activities seek to enhance or build on existing programmes or represent a new activity. Any new or additional actions are highlighted in the tables below by grey shading.

The Umutekai Wetland on the outskirts of New Plymouth.



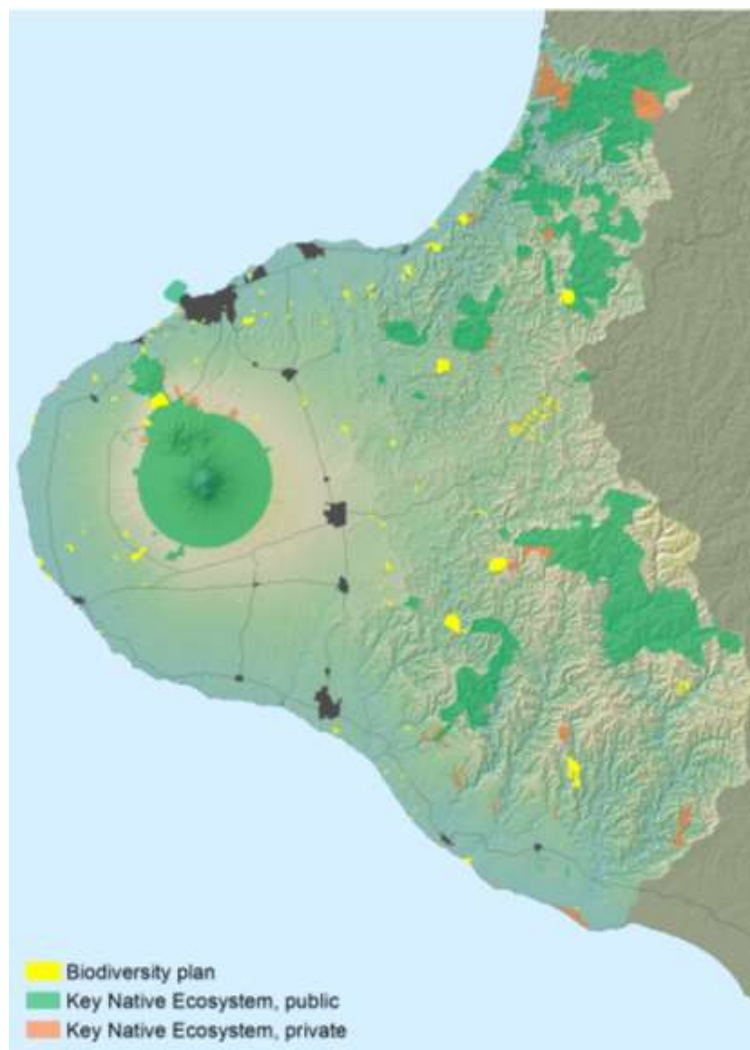
5.1 Key Native Ecosystems programme

5.1.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Key Native Ecosystem programme are:

For the duration of the Strategy, maintain and improve the condition of sites with regionally significant indigenous biodiversity values, primarily on private land and, within the Taranaki region, by:

1. *Identifying sites with regionally significant indigenous biodiversity values – Key Native Ecosystems (KNEs)*
2. *Prioritising privately owned KNEs for site management, particularly sites representing the full suite of ecosystems within the region and other areas of particular ecological significance*
3. *Preparing Biodiversity Plans for priority KNE sites, with an integrated package of actions*
4. *Supporting landowners and community groups with the implementation of biodiversity plans providing ongoing information and management advice.*



Key Native Ecosystems with Council-developed Biodiversity Plans at July 1 2017

5.1.2 Identifying Key Native Ecosystems

An initial identification has been made of regionally significant sites, or Key Native Ecosystems (TRC, 2006). The Key Native Ecosystem inventory included regionally significant sites on land, most regionally significant wetlands and some coastal sites. This work has regularly been updated and is maintained on the Council's GIS system and relevant databases.

OBJ 1: Identifying sites with regionally significant indigenous biodiversity values – Key Native Ecosystems (KNEs)	
Activities for identifying KNEs	Lead responsibility
1. Maintain and regularly update current inventory of KNEs in Taranaki and the information it contains	Environment Services
2. Maintain an inventory of regionally significant wetlands with high biodiversity values through the Freshwater Plan ⁸ and in the riparian planning GIS	Policy Environment Services Land Management
3. Maintain an inventory of significant coastal sites in the Coastal Plan	Policy
4. Utilise criteria and maintain processes for identifying regionally significant sites and places for terrestrial, freshwater and coastal biodiversity for their possible inclusion in the KNE inventory and/or regional plans according to the following criteria ⁹ : 1. Presence of rare or distinctive indigenous flora or fauna 2. Representativeness of the place or site, including consideration of threatened land environment (LENZ) status and residual ecosystem extent, presence of indigenous vegetation on sand dunes, wetlands, or 'originally rare ecosystem types' 3. Ecological context of an area 4. Sustainability of the area to continue to be significant in the future	Policy, Environment Services
5. Investigate original and residual ecosystem extent representing the full suite of terrestrial ecosystems within Taranaki, in order to identify priority sites for potential inclusion to the KNE Inventory	Environment Services
6. Undertake site assessments at 'candidate' KNE sites identified with (2) to (5) above and, where sites meet the necessary criteria and given landowner approval, include them to the KNE Inventory	Environment Services (terrestrial) Environment Quality (freshwater and coastal)
7. Consider during the review of the Freshwater Plan, the inclusion of additional rivers, streams or reaches of regional significance for biodiversity	Policy Environment Services Environment Quality
8. Consider during the review of the Coastal Plan, the inclusion of additional coastal sites, places or features of regional significance for biodiversity ¹⁰	Policy Environment Quality

⁸ Refer Appendix II and III (wetlands) of the Regional Freshwater Plan for Taranaki (2001).

⁹ Refer Policy 4 of the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki.

¹⁰ Coastal areas of significant conservation value have been identified in the Coastal Plan and the Inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance in the Taranaki region (TRC, 2004).

5.1.3 Prioritising Key Native Ecosystems for action

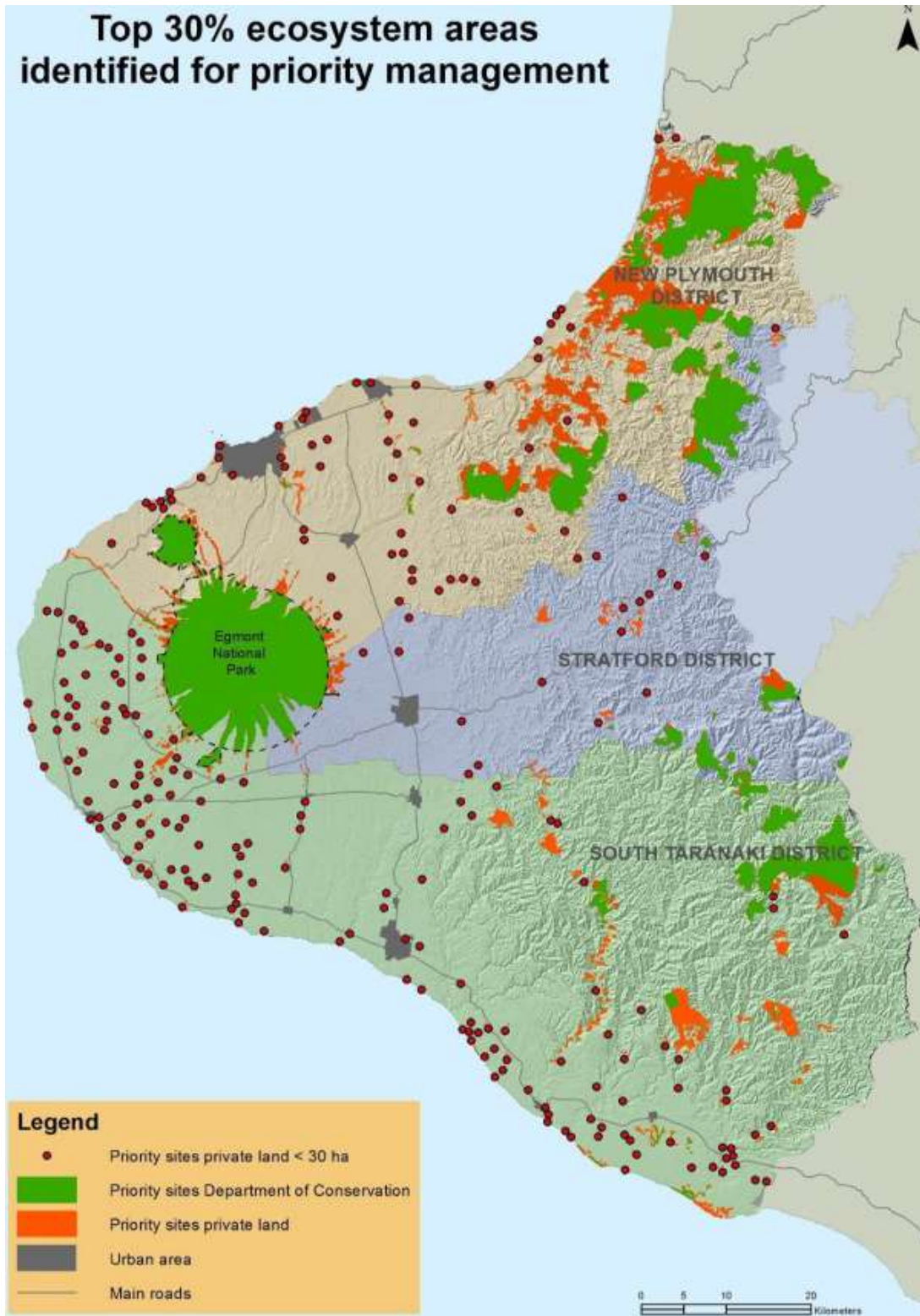
As at 1 July 2016, the Council's Inventory of KNEs includes 218 sites, 172 of which are partially or completely privately owned. At that time numerous KNEs were subject to landowner management, with 101 Biodiversity Plans subject to ongoing Council support. The Council is targeting sites where the greatest amount of biodiversity protection could be achieved, alongside willing landowners, in the most cost effective manner.

Over the next ten years the Council will continue to constructively engage with KNE landowners, in order of ecological priority. The focus is to bring as many KNE under biodiversity management as possible, to a level as agreed with well informed landowners.

OBJ 2: Prioritising privately owned KNEs for site management, particularly representative sites and areas of ecological significance to the region		
Activities for prioritising protection for KNEs		Lead responsibility
9.	Prioritise management for KNEs on private land according to their ecological value (such as, but not limited to, size, presence of threatened species, threatened land environment, habitat complexity, residual extent of ecosystems, representativeness etc.) and on the basis of current or required management needed to address the threats to those values	Environment Services
10.	For prioritised sites, identify those that are already fenced, legally protected and in the Self-help Possum Control Programme or other ongoing pest control regime, as these are the ones most likely to be ready for the next level of management	Environment Services
11.	Provide information to all landowners of privately owned KNEs about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the KNE programme, • significant ecological values and species within their KNE, • key threats to ecological values within their KNE, • ecological management actions landowners can undertake themselves, • Council support and funding opportunities, • opportunities and support for landowners, in addition or alternative to Council support 	Environment Services Land Management
12.	Respond to all requests for service from landowners (KNE or otherwise) within the region that are interested in more information on biodiversity sites on their land, by conducting site assessments and providing advice	Environment Services Land Management



The Council works with willing landowners of KNEs to identify measures to protect their values.



Top 30% ecosystem areas prioritized for biodiversity plans

5.1.4 Preparation of Biodiversity Plans for Key Native Ecosystems

A planned approach to the management of KNE sites is important to ensure that landowner management actions are effective and efficient.

The Council will continue to incrementally extend its KNE biodiversity planning programme throughout Taranaki. The Council has developed much experience with preparing '*Biodiversity Plans*'. These 'site led' plans vary according to the complexity of management needs at a particular site and capacity of its owners. Developing a property-specific biodiversity plan of the required management actions will:

- provide the landowner with a clear idea of the values of the site, actual and potential threats to those values, and what management is required to sustainably manage the site for biodiversity purposes
- define respective roles and responsibilities (landowner, Council and others) to ensure responsibilities are allocated for the various management actions, and
- assist landowners to access funds from the various funding pools available (e.g. QEII, TRC Environmental Enhancement Grant, district council heritage funds, Wild for Taranaki, Biodiversity Condition Fund etc).

Implementation of initial Biodiversity Plans, typically over a five-year timeframe, provides the opportunity to increase landowner knowledge around site management and the opportunity for Council to assist with initial biodiversity protection and control of threats. Revised plans may be prepared for subsequent management beyond 5 years, in order to take stock of achievements and to set out an ongoing maintenance regime for the landowner, alongside ongoing advice from Council officers.

In addition to site-led Biodiversity Plans there is scope to develop plans that include wider consideration of ecosystems and threats at the landscape scale.

With some plans, liaising with other agencies is a critical part of the planning process, as those other agencies may already have developed a relationship with the landowner. It is important to streamline the management of biodiversity at certain sites to avoid doubling up of effort. Other agencies or community groups may also be helpful in terms of information gathering, monitoring progress, funding, volunteer support etc.

OBJ 3: Preparing biodiversity plans with an integrated package of actions		
Activities for preparing Biodiversity Plans		Lead responsibility
13.	Maintain detailed KNE Procedures to inform staff and to achieve consistent preparation and review of Biodiversity Plans for KNE	Environment Services
14.	Prepare various types of Biodiversity Plans to suit different situations, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Comprehensive Biodiversity Plans</i>: for legally protected sites that are more complex to manage and likely to attract significant Council funding support 2. <i>Simple Biodiversity Plans</i>: for sites that are less complex to manage are likely to attract low to moderate levels of Council funding support and will generally be subject to existing covenants. Simple plans may be prepared on a case-by-case basis for un-protected sites, subject to certain criteria and funding limits 	Environment Services Land Management
15.	Investigate the potential to prepare <i>Biodiversity Landscape Plans</i> to efficiently cover KNE in composite land-ownership or for landscape settings where multiple KNE may benefit from co-ordinated responses to protect identified values	Environment Services
16.	Involve other relevant agencies in legal protection and Biodiversity Plan preparation processes for KNEs where appropriate, including; QEII, district councils, DOC, Wild for Taranaki, and ecological restoration groups	Environment Services Land Management

5.1.5 Implementing biodiversity plans and providing supporting information, advice and assistance

The key to effective implementation of Biodiversity Plans for KNEs will be the Council working with and developing a good relationship with the landowner. The Council's assistance and support to implement Biodiversity Plan recommendations should facilitate and empower the landowner to undertake the necessary management steps. The Council will also liaise with other agencies where appropriate to support the landowner in their management of a KNE.

OBJ 4: Supporting landowners and community groups with the implementation of biodiversity plans providing ongoing information and management advice		
Activities for implementing biodiversity plans		Lead responsibility
17.	Develop and maintain a good relationship with the landowner and build their awareness of biodiversity values within their KNE and management of threats to those values	Environment Services
18.	Ensure integration of landowner support and site monitoring between agencies that have an interest in KNEs with Biodiversity Plans	Environment Services
19.	For KNEs with Biodiversity Plans, facilitate landowner's access to the Council's Environmental Enhancement funding, and other funding including from QEII, Wild for Taranaki, district council heritage funds and DOC community funding	Environment Services Land Management
20.	Ensure actions relating to the implementation of Biodiversity Plans are recorded in relevant databases, such as IRIS, to enable reporting	Environment Services Land Management
21.	Consider adopting new technologies and approaches to biodiversity and pest management, either as best practice or in specific situations	Environment Services Land Management
22.	Monitor the effectiveness of the management of KNE with Biodiversity Plans alongside unmanaged sites as part of regional State of the Environment reporting for terrestrial biodiversity	Environment Services Land Management
23.	Maintain a suite of relevant information sheets and best practice guidelines available from the Council and other sources on protecting, retaining and enhancing biodiversity on private lands	Environment Services, Information Officer Land Management
24.	Ensure Operations staff are sufficiently trained to effectively provide biodiversity management information to landowners with KNE and other landowners throughout the region	Environment Services Land Management
25.	Ensure information on KNEs and biodiversity values within the region generally is available on TRC website and is promoted to the public via various media	Public Information, Environment Service

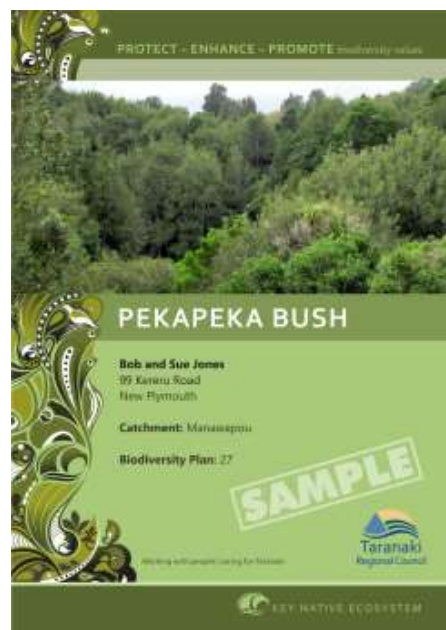
5.1.6 Measuring and reporting progress with the KNE programme

The Council will report regularly to its Policy and Planning Committee on progress with implementing the KNE programme through quarterly reports. Measuring its progress with implementing the KNE programme will also be reported annually as part of the Long Term Plan process under the Local Government Act 2002 and five yearly as part of the Council's state of the environment reporting on biodiversity outcomes undertaken pursuant to section 35 of the RMA.

Key performance indicators for the KNE Programme are:

1. Number, or area (ha) of KNEs added to inventory
2. Number of KNEs with a Biodiversity Plan and area (ha) covered by site specific and landscape scale plans
3. Progress with management recommendations from the Plans
4. Change in the number, or area (ha) of KNEs under formal protection (legal covenants, Council Memorandums of Encumbrance, or rules in district or regional plans)
5. Number of KNEs, or area (ha) under a sustained animal pest control programme (i.e. including area within the self help possum control programme)
6. Number of KNEs, or area (ha) under a sustained weed control programme
7. Number of KNEs that are fully fenced or otherwise stock proof
8. Number of KNEs in receipt of biodiversity funds (from a range of sources – Council funds, district council funds, QEII, central government funds etc)
9. Change in biodiversity condition of specific sites that are being monitored through Biodiversity Plans
10. Change in biodiversity indicators across representative KNE sites (refer Section 5.4 actions).

A biodiversity plan is prepared in consultation with the landowner, providing them with a clear idea of what is required to protect a KNE's biodiversity values. It also details what work the landowner can perform and areas where Council staff or other groups may help.



5.2 Enhancing biodiversity component in other Council programmes

5.2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Council's biodiversity work generally are:

For the duration of the Strategy, to enhance the biodiversity focus of existing Taranaki Regional Council programmes and activities by:

1. *Building biodiversity capacity and awareness across the Council*
2. *Promoting biodiversity outcomes through policy development and review*
3. *Increasing peoples awareness and changing attitudes and behaviour through public information, advice and communications*
4. *Promoting biodiversity outcomes through the Sustainable Land Management Programmes*
5. *Promoting biodiversity outcomes through pest management programmes*
6. *Exercising legislative powers to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity from use and development of natural resources.*

5.2.2 Building in-house capacity within the Council

Maintenance of indigenous biodiversity covers a whole spectrum of activities across the entire Council's functions. Recognising biodiversity as part of the culture and ethos of the Taranaki Regional Council enables staff to identify and take up opportunities for undertaking biodiversity work within their own work area.

OBJ 1: Building biodiversity capacity and awareness across the Council		
Activities for building capacity in the Council		Lead responsibility
26.	Encourage all Council officers to recognise the biodiversity component of their current work	Executive team
27.	Include biodiversity in the orientation process for new staff	Human Resources
28.	Identify biodiversity training required for Council officers	Directors and Supervisors
29.	Maintain a biodiversity steering group with representatives from the Operations teams to oversee the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy and works to raise the profile of biodiversity across all areas of the Council's work	Director - Operations

5.2.3 Policy development and review

The Council develops and reviews policies under the RMA and the Biosecurity Act. The following actions will assist the Council to integrate biodiversity actions into these other plans. This list of actions also identifies those areas of policy that could be reviewed to give a greater biodiversity focus or to provide the systems to streamline biodiversity actions.

OBJ 2: Promoting biodiversity outcomes through policy development and review		
Activities for biodiversity policy development and review		Lead responsibility
30.	Consider indigenous biodiversity during the interim and statutory reviews of the regional freshwater, soil and coastal plans and Regional Policy Statement	Policy
31.	Determine through the Council's Long Term Plan and annual planning processes the level of Council funding to be attributed to biodiversity specific and related work within the region	Policy Corporate Services
32.	Consider indigenous biodiversity during the interim review and statutory review of pest management plans	Policy
33.	Consider Council biodiversity practice notes and implications of threatened species recovery plans when developing Council policies	Policy
34.	Review this Biodiversity Strategy to ensure it continues to be relevant, effective and efficient	Policy Environment Services
35.	Maintain and develop systems to determining eligibility for Council's funds and support towards regional biodiversity initiatives	Environment Services
36.	Review the use of TRC encumbrances to safeguard ecological and environmental values at sites where Council resources are invested to support landowner decisions, investment and actions	Environment Services Land Management
37.	Consider coastal and marine biodiversity when developing oil spill contingency plans	Inspectorate
38.	Support Wild for Taranaki in the implementation, development and review of that organisation's policy	Policy Environment Services



5.2.4 Information, advice and communications

Increasing people's awareness, capacity to act, and changing attitudes and behaviours so that biodiversity is appropriately valued is critically important. The provision of information, advice, education and communications are key methods used by the Council to raise public awareness and understanding of issues and subsequently to lead to behavioural change. The following actions specifically target biodiversity communication activities and will be undertaken in accordance with the *Environment Services Communication Plan*.

OBJ 3: Increasing peoples awareness and changing attitudes and behaviour through public information, advice and communications		
Activities for promoting biodiversity through advice and education		Lead responsibility
39.	As part of the ongoing review and maintenance of the Council's website ensure that information on biodiversity in a range of environmental domains is available and up to date	Public Information
40.	Ensure information sheets and guidelines are available to assist landowners in the identification of biodiversity values, threats, protection and management actions	Environment Services
41.	Identify any gaps in public information on biodiversity matters and develop information to fill those gaps	Environment Services Public Information
42.	Promote 'good news stories' on biodiversity and relevant Council programmes through various electronic and print media to cultivate a greater community awareness of biodiversity values and opportunities	Public Information
43.	Promote community understanding of indigenous biodiversity issues through showcase projects on Council land, such as the Pukeiti Gardens, and through field days etc	Regional Gardens Public Information Environment Services
44.	Include biodiversity components to the integrated Environmental Education programmes delivered to schools by the Council	Public Information
45.	Seek opportunities to present talks to groups, in conjunction with other biodiversity agencies/trusts/community groups on biodiversity and biosecurity management and opportunities in Taranaki	Environment Services Land Management Science Services
46.	Provide input to industry developed education programmes that promote and encourage practical biodiversity outcomes, e.g. Wild for Taranaki, Dairy NZ discussion groups	Environment Services Land Management
47.	Promote awareness of the pest characteristics of invasive plants and animals	Environment Services Public Information
48.	Promote awareness of the importance of remnant wetland and bush areas, particularly on threatened land environments or where important habitat for threatened species during interactions with landowners	Land Management Environment Services
49.	Maintain and develop a communications campaign to raise the profile of Taranaki's riparian programme and increase implementation of the riparian plans by landowners	Land Management Public Information
50.	Make nominations for Environmental Awards to recognise individuals or groups who have contributed to the maintenance, protection or enhancement of indigenous biodiversity	Environment Services
51.	Provide information to school groups on freshwater biodiversity and threats to biodiversity (i.e. pest fish, didymo) and encourage school based monitoring through the Council's education programme	Environment Services Public Information
52.	Provide information to school groups on coastal biodiversity and encourage school based monitoring through the Council's rocky shore education programme	Public Information
53.	Provide information on biodiversity as part of the Council's Rainforest School at Pukeiti	Public Information
54.	Investigate options for creating an on-line information sharing system to assist with two way information sharing.	Environment Services



The Council's Education Officer leads students on a journey of conservation discovery as part of the Rainforest School at Pukeiti.



The Council's Land Management Officers work with farmers in the hill country to promote sustainable land management practices including the retirement of remnant wetlands and bush.

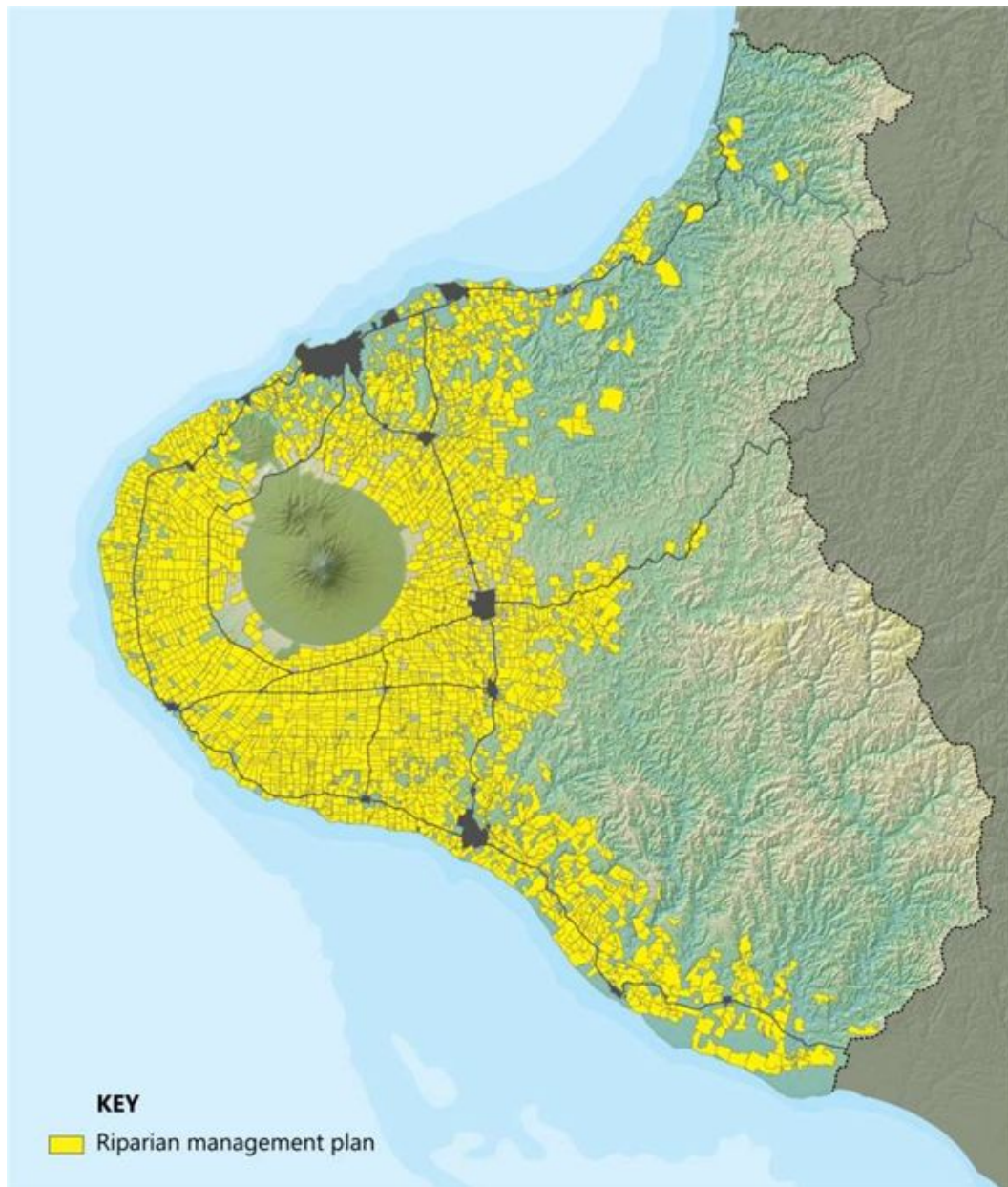
5.2.5 Sustainable land management programmes

The Council's sustainable land management programmes provide landowners with advice and information on riparian restoration on the ring plain and sustainable management of the hill country. The Taranaki Riparian Management Programme, in particular, is transforming the Taranaki landscape by creating ecological corridors, from the mountain to the sea, through stock exclusion and riparian planting along Taranaki waterways traversing intensively farmed land on the ring plain and coastal terraces.

The Council's environmental enhancement grant funding may be used for the protection of significant biodiversity within the region. Sustainable land management programmes are important components of the Council's freshwater, terrestrial and coastal biodiversity work. In recent years a shift in focus has accentuated the biodiversity benefits of these programmes.



OBJ 4: Promoting biodiversity outcomes through the Sustainable Land Management Programmes		
Activities for promoting biodiversity outcomes through sustainable land management programmes		Lead responsibility
55.	Continue to promote the voluntary retirement and planting of riparian margins with indigenous vegetation forests and wetlands through the Taranaki Riparian Management Programme in a manner that recognises the biodiversity benefits of restoring and re-connecting KNEs and ecosystem priority areas	Land Management
56.	During the monitoring of riparian or farm plan implementation, promote the voluntary identification, protection and restoration of indigenous biodiversity (e.g. remnant bush, wetlands, small streams, seeps, lake and estuarine margins etc), particularly on ecosystem priority areas, threatened land environments, or where important habitat for threatened or distinctive species is evident	Land Management
57.	Promote the importance of maintaining freshwater fish passage and the effects of fish passage obstruction caused by small in-stream structures such as weirs, fords and culverts.	Land Management Science Services
58.	Promote, as appropriate, the protection, retirement or planting of areas of indigenous forest or scrub on highly erosion-prone land during the preparation of comprehensive farm plans.	Land Management
59.	Provide appropriate native plant materials at low cost to land users for land stabilising, soil conservation and riparian and ecological restoration	Land Management
60.	Maintain a system to facilitate the use of contractors to assist landowners with riparian planting and biosecurity programmes	Land Management
61.	Facilitate as appropriate opportunities for community assistance with riparian planting on public or private land, e.g. schools, Rotary, sports clubs etc to assist landowners with riparian planting programmes within Wild for Taranaki project areas	Land Management.
62.	Promote the use of local indigenous species for riparian restoration	Land Management
63.	Providing landowners with assistance/information/support for plant and animal pest control in riparian areas	Land Management Environment Services
64.	Assist landowners in accessing funds to protect areas of biodiversity, particularly on priority ecosystem areas, threatened land environments or to protect habitat for threatened species, through the Council's Environmental Enhancement fund, Wild for Taranaki, Fish and Game etc.	Land Management Environment Services



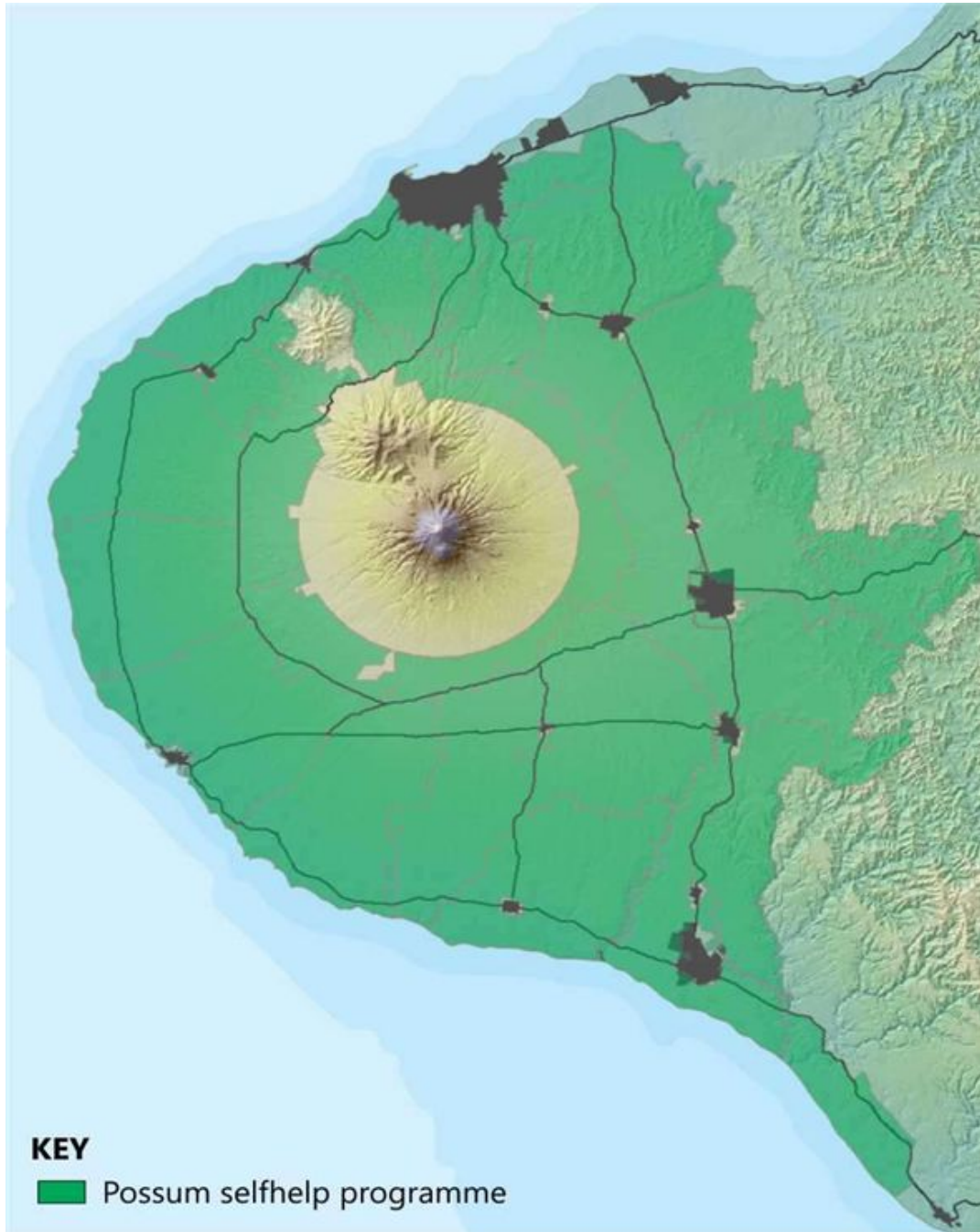
Riparian management plans covering almost all of the ring plain and coastal terraces create potential wildlife corridors in the region – from the mountain to the sea.

5.2.6 Pest animal and plant management programmes

The Council's pest management programmes focus on invasive animals and plants that pose a problem to both agriculture and the natural environment. The Council's self help possum control programme covers the majority of the ring plain with the aim of maintaining possum numbers below 10% residual trap catch (RTC). This is an important and valuable contribution to safeguarding biodiversity on threatened land environments. However, the Council also manages other ecological pests within the region through a site-led approach, including predators (rodents, mustelids, hedgehogs, cats) and browsers (pigs, goats and deer).

There is an increasing interest within the national and regional community for landscape scale predator and browser control, or even predator free status, to protect biodiversity as well as land productivity.

OBJ 5: Promoting biodiversity outcomes through the pest management programmes		
Activities for promoting biodiversity outcomes through pest management programmes		Lead responsibility
65.	Continue to support, encourage and advise landowners on possum control in the Self-help Possum Control Programme	Environment Services
66.	Investigate expanding the Self-help Possum Control Programme, or developing new programmes, to target other pests at landscape scales	Environment Services
67.	Continue to support, encourage, advise landowners on pest plant control throughout the region and enforce compliance with pest management rules where necessary	Environment Services
68.	Continue to support the Department of Conservation's ongoing 1080 operations within the Egmont National Park by facilitating control on adjacent private land, and consider increasing support through potential new initiatives as the DOC 'Project Mounga' evolves and matures	Environment Services
69.	Continue to promote urban pest control to protect indigenous biodiversity values within urban landscapes and their wider rural context	Environment Services
70.	Consider providing pest animal and plant control assistance on private land to protect indigenous biodiversity as part of select large scale regional projects; e.g. partnership projects with Wild for Taranaki and other community groups	Environment Services
71.	Assist landowners to access funds to undertake pest control on areas of biodiversity (not already identified as KNEs), particularly on threatened land environments or to protect habitat for threatened species etc	Environment Services
72.	Provide support, encouragement and advice to landowners to assist with pest plants and other weeds capable of impacting on biodiversity values	Environment Services
73.	Explore opportunities for joint pest plant projects with communities and district councils, particularly as a tool to encourage urban community groups to get active in urban biodiversity maintenance	Environment Services
74.	Ensure pest management officers have sufficient training to effectively promote biodiversity protection during their interactions with landowners, and then keep training up to date.	Environment Services
75.	Work with other agencies (MPI, DOC) on the surveillance, response and management of invasive species incursions (e.g. didymo, undaria, deer)	Environment Services
76.	Work with local communities and inter-regionally to address potential pathways for pest incursion within and to the region	Environment Services



By June 2016, the Self-help Possum Control Programme covered approximately 32% of the region.

5.2.7 Consenting and enforcement

The Council exercises legislative powers under the RMA and the Biosecurity Act. The inclusion of this table of actions in this Strategy clearly recognises the important component of the Council's overall biodiversity work achieved through the processing, monitoring and enforcing of resource consents, or through the enforcing of rules developed under pest management plans.

OBJ 5: Exercising legislative powers to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity from use and development of natural resources		
Activities for promoting biodiversity outcomes through consenting and compliance programmes		Lead responsibility
77.	Apply regional rules (in existing regional plans) to regulate, mitigate or prohibit resource use and development activities that have potential or actual adverse environmental effects on indigenous biodiversity on land, freshwater or marine	Consents Inspectorate
78.	Apply regional rules (in pest plans) relating to the control of pest plants and animals that have actual or potential adverse effects on biodiversity values	Environment Services
79.	Require sufficient information on resource consent applications, from both applicants and Science Services, to be able to adequately assess the effects of a consent application on biodiversity	Consents Science Services Environment Services
80.	Maintain and develop consent conditions that avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse environmental effects through the maintenance, restoration and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity on land or freshwater or in the coastal marine area	Consents
81.	Review and implement the Council's Biodiversity Practice Notes and utilise the 'check list' for consent processing	Consents, Policy, Environment Services
82.	Enforce compliance with regional rules, consent conditions, and pest rules that aim to safeguard or protect indigenous biodiversity.	Environment Services
83.	Progressively identify, prioritize and address fish passage issues, identified in an ongoing basis through the inventory of barriers to fish passage ¹¹ .	Scientific Services
84.	Maintain and implement guidelines for both applicants and consenting officers in terms of information they need to gather for consent applications involving small stream modifications, channelising and culverting	Consents Land Management Science Services Policy

Through the consenting process, issues such as native fish passage and or avoiding , remedying or mitigating habitat loss are considered



¹¹ Dams, Weirs and Other Barriers to Fish Passage in Taranaki (2001).

5.2.8 Measuring and reporting progress with enhancing biodiversity in existing programmes

The Council will report regularly to its Policy and Planning Committee on the progress of biodiversity achievements of existing programmes through quarterly reports and as part of the Long Term Plan process under the Local Government Act 2002 and five yearly as part of the Council's state of the environment reporting on biodiversity outcomes undertaken pursuant to section 35 of the RMA.

Key performance indicators for enhancing biodiversity in existing programmes are:

1. Trends arising from digital media monitoring
2. Number of riparian property plans or comprehensive farm plans prepared
3. Length of stream bank where riparian vegetation has been fenced and restored¹²
4. Trends in the number of consents granted for piping or realigning small streams for land improvement purposes (as a contra indicator)
5. Change in hill country land that has been retired
6. Amount of indigenous vegetation remaining in the region
7. Amount of wetland habitat remaining in the region
8. Trends in assessment of ecological condition at managed forest and wetland sites
9. Number of regionally significant wetlands covenanted or formally protected.
10. Number of properties in Self-help Possum Control Programme with residual trap catch levels below 10% post treatment
11. Number of structures in streams that are a barrier to fish passage¹³
12. Amount of money allocated from the Council's environmental enhancement grant.

¹² Refer to targets relating to dairy farms for preparation and implementation of property plans in the Sustainable Dairying Accord.

¹³ Dams, Weirs and Other Barriers to Fish Passage in Taranaki (2001).

5.3 Working with others

5.3.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Council in working with others are:

To contribute to co-ordination and help build capacity for the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous vegetation and the habitats of indigenous species within the region by:

1. *Establishing and participating in biodiversity forums*
2. *Establishing protocols with key conservation agencies and community groups involved in biodiversity*
3. *Working with and supporting other agencies and community groups to improve biodiversity outcomes related to iconic and significant projects*
4. *Working with iwi on biodiversity management*
5. *Working with other key conservation agencies and community groups involved in biodiversity to add value to the business of biodiversity management in Taranaki*
6. *Advocating and lobbying to other agencies and organisations to promote biodiversity outcomes for the region.*



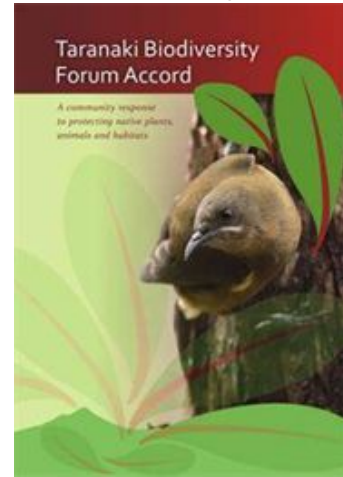
5.3.2 Biodiversity forums

Taranaki is one of a number of regions where a regional biodiversity forum is being used for promoting networking, information dissemination and integrated management, including assessing partnership options for the integrated delivery of services and funding.

The Taranaki Biodiversity Trust, branded 'Wild for Taranaki', includes the Council and arose from biodiversity forum activity.

Wild for Taranaki builds on the work of the former Taranaki Tree Trust, which administered funding and published guidelines for restoration planting. Wild for Taranaki aims to identify significant partnering projects, where regional biodiversity groups can work together to achieve and demonstrate landscape scale biodiversity protection within the region. Wild for Taranaki is also seeking to regularly run community events and workshops, coordinate the receipt and redistribution of biodiversity funding to support initiatives within the region, plus maintain a database of existing community biodiversity projects.

The Council may participate in other forums, or platforms for collaboration and information sharing, with individual government agencies and non government organisations or groups with a topical interest.



OBJ 1: Establishing or participating in biodiversity forums		
Activities for promoting biodiversity outcomes through forums		Lead responsibility
85.	Promote integrated management of indigenous biodiversity in the Taranaki region by liaising and maintaining linkages with territorial authorities, DOC, MPI, iwi, community groups and NGOs	Policy Environment Services Land Management
86.	Provide servicing and support to Wild for Taranaki. Encourage Wild for Taranaki to assist with implementing actions in this Strategy where objectives are aligned	Environment Services
87.	Facilitate Taranaki's contribution to the MPI's 'Freshwater Biosecurity Partnership Programme' and assist with development of a regional response plan	Environment Services
88.	Establish joint approaches with DOC to promote public awareness and to develop shared data on the distribution and sightings of significant indigenous species and pests (such as pest fish, deer, goats, argentine ants, wasps, plague skinks, and invasive weeds of shared concern)	Environment Services Land Management Public Information
89.	Participate in working party with Fish and Game to investigate options for enhancing wetlands for duck shooting/biodiversity purposes	Environment Services
90.	Advocate to DOC and MPI the value of gathering together all those agencies/groups with an interest in better coordinating marine biodiversity in order for groups to meet, discuss marine biodiversity projects and identify opportunities for working more closely together to progress marine and coastal biodiversity initiatives	Science Services
91.	Participate in Te Taihauauru Fisheries Forum and liaise as appropriate with the Taranaki Commercial Fishing Association	Science Services Iwi Communications Officer
92.	Encourage the 'two-way sharing' of information between Council and groups who have specific skills and experience to share, e.g. contribute as appropriate to technical advisory groups and/or provide in-kind support for significant biodiversity projects	Environment Services
93.	Explore opportunities for supporting Wild for Taranaki, community groups and landowners through running forums, workshops, and supporting them to attend workshops	Environment Services Land Management

5.3.3 Protocols with others

Improving communication with other agencies, groups, trusts or individuals involved in biodiversity work will primarily be undertaken on an informal basis. However, there are specific occasions where more formal protocols or agreements, e.g. memorandums of understanding (MOUs) could help clarify roles and responsibilities.

Through establishing protocols (informal or formal) with community groups working on biodiversity, the Council has the opportunity to focus on capability building and identifying practical ways of supporting community initiatives.

Identifying ways to make private and community initiatives more viable, effective and durable will be the challenge for the Council, but in the long term, probably the most effective means of stretching limited resources. Such initiatives might include Council officers providing technical ecological input to habitat protection programmes and projects, or help with developing sustainable administrative capacity within community groups.



Council Environment Officer working with Conrad O'Carroll from Tiaki te Mauri O Parininihi Trust.

OBJ 2: Establishing protocols with key conservation agencies and community groups involved in biodiversity		
Activities for promoting biodiversity outcomes through forums		Lead responsibility
94.	Develop protocols for managing and sharing information with other agencies and groups – particularly in relation to databases developed for storing information on significant sites and location of sensitive species ¹⁴	Policy and Planning Environment Services
95.	Develop agreements with the QEII National Trust, district councils and, where appropriate, DOC, on working together to support private-land owner initiatives to protect biodiversity	Environment Services Land Management
96.	Develop agreements between the different agencies (e.g. district councils, QEII, DOC) regarding site specific biodiversity work Agreements may cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key contacts per KNE, Significant Natural Areas, covenants, adjoining reserve land • Protocols for keeping other agencies informed in a timely fashion • Providing best possible information to private landowners • Respective responsibilities and commitments around site management actions • Monitoring e.g. joint monitoring with QEII or DOC • Data management and sharing 	Environment Services
97.	Work with DOC to prioritize and identify management needs, capacity and opportunities for crown managed land and for private land across the full suite of ecosystems within the region	Policy and Planning Environment Services
98.	Develop agreements with Wild for Taranaki and other community groups working on 'iconic' projects within the region	Policy and Planning Environment Services
99.	Maintain MOU and 'in-kind' work agreements with trusts operating 'significant' biodiversity protection projects within the region, including Lake Rotorangi Scenic Reserve Trust, Tiaki Te Mauri o Parininihi Trust, and Purangi Kiwi	Environment Services

¹⁴ Method 18(b) Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki.

5.3.4 'Iconic' and 'significant' projects

The Council works with other agencies or community groups on a small number of 'big-ticket' projects that contribute to the protection of a network of 'biodiversity-jewels' in the Taranaki 'crown', particularly those that showcase Taranaki's biodiversity and the value of communities and different groups working together. These projects are referred to as either iconic or significant projects.

'Iconic' biodiversity projects, projects of the Wild for Taranaki Trust and Project Mouna, are recognized by the Council to be collaborative initiatives that will amplify the biodiversity work being undertaken by individual community groups or agencies. These projects will help develop and showcase good biodiversity protection and enhancement techniques, and connect up a network of control of invasive animals and plants for biodiversity protection at the regional scale.

'Significant' biodiversity projects include the Tiaki te Mauri O Parininihi Trust's Parininihi project where the Council has supported in intensive possum and rat control to protect ecosystems and to benefit kiwi and improve the potential return of kōkako to the region.



Opening ceremony of the kiwi kōhanga at Rotokare 2012.

The Council has also provided technical and financial support to the Lake Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust in South Taranaki, whose work has included eradicating introduced mammals and constructing a predator-proof fence around 230 hectares of remnant forest and wetland around Lake Rotokare. This has led to an improvement in many indigenous plant and animal populations. The tieke (saddleback) and whitehead, previously lost from the area, have both been successfully reintroduced to the Reserve.

The Council also works with the Purangi Kiwi, a restoration trust that targets possums, goats, and stoats on more than 13,000 hectares in north-eastern Taranaki in efforts to improve habitat condition and to secure and enhance species, including a notable population of the Western North Island brown kiwi. A core area of more than 1,000 hectares is extra-intensively controlled for rats and possums. This is to prepare a habitat suitable for reintroduction of kōkako to the region.

The Rapanui Grey Faced Petrel Trust and the Taranaki Kiwi Trust are species-lead initiatives that are also considered to be significant within the region. They have both proven to be sustainable and are well organized in mobilizing community effort in providing protection for their focus species.

Over the life of this Strategy, the level of Council involvement in iconic or significant projects will be assessed on a case by case basis taking into consideration:

- The project being based on sound scientific/ecological information
- The project covering sites and areas recognised as having regionally significant biodiversity values
- Strong and sustainable community and landowner support and active involvement
- The ability for the Council to assist by providing technical support and/or leveraging funds from the community or central government
- The ability of the project to become a public showcase of Taranaki's biodiversity (i.e. educational opportunities, level of public access etc), and
- The benefits of investing ratepayer resources.

OBJ 3: Working with and supporting other agencies and community groups to improve biodiversity outcomes related to iconic and significant projects		
Activities for working with others on iconic or significant projects		Lead responsibility
100.	Work with the iconic Project Taranaki Mounga to support the development and implementation of habitat protection and enhancement initiatives, where the project interfaces with private land surrounding the Egmont National Park.	Environment Services
101.	Work with Wild for Taranaki to support the development and implementation of the four iconic regional biodiversity initiatives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restoring Taranaki 2. Wild for Wetlands 3. Wild for Coasts 4. The Community Biodiversity Fund 	Policy and Planning Environment Services
102.	Provide technical advice and encouragement to priority community group projects, appropriate to the scale and significance of projects, in a way that builds sustainable community ownership. It is expected that the council will continue to extend funding support to Wild for Taranaki, who in turn will be supporting community group initiatives at various scales throughout the region	Environment Services Land Management
103.	On a case-by-case basis, work with biodiversity trusts deemed to be significant within the region to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop memoranda of understanding (+/-3 years) to define cooperative arrangements • develop in-kind work programmes as appropriate • support development of sustainable operational and administrative capacity • provide technical and practical assistance with developing and implementing pest monitoring and control at varying scales • provide technical and practical assistance with developing and implementing biodiversity outcomes monitoring. 	Environment Services
104.	Explore opportunities for leveraging additional resources into community biodiversity initiatives within the region	Environment Services

5.3.5 Working with iwi

Māori are interconnected with the natural environment. As kaitiaki, Māori have a unique and important role in the protection, management, restoration and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity.

The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are the legal foundation for continued Māori connection with indigenous biodiversity, in particular in regard to the retention of rangatiratanga or sovereignty over resources and taonga. This recognises the diverse range of interests that tangata whenua have with biodiversity ranging from governance to protection, to customary and commercial use.

Of importance to tangata whenua is the ability to maintain and sustain Mātauranga Māori (Māori traditional knowledge) through biodiversity. Mātauranga Māori includes traditional biodiversity protection mechanisms tapu (ban) rahui (temporary ban) and noa (lifting of the ban). Traditionally, these tools provided for sustainable use of indigenous resources and ensured that food, fibre and medicines in its many varieties would always be in plentiful supply.

Customary use describes traditional Māori use, practice, and knowledge carried out through the use of tikanga (customs), kawa (protocols) and Mātauranga Māori, as well as contemporary uses of biological resources. For example, native species are an important source of materials for carving, weaving, and rongoa (medicine). Alongside customary use, the growing commercial interests of iwi and hapū in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, and eco-tourism, are all associated with successful biodiversity management. Customary use is integral to sustaining relationships with traditional areas and maintaining Mātauranga Māori.



The Council recognises the importance of developing partnerships with iwi to progress biodiversity protection and enhancement. The Council is in the process of developing and formalising relationships with iwi. This will help to better engage with iwi on biodiversity matters. Both the Council and iwi have 'kaitiakitanga' roles to play in the management of biodiversity and opportunities to work together will need to be sought.

Obj 4: Working with iwi on biodiversity management		
Activities for working with iwi		Lead responsibility
105.	Incorporate biodiversity work into memorandums of understanding developed with iwi who have completed Treaty Settlements and other MOU such as with PKW	Policy
106.	Seek opportunities to engage with, and assist iwi on biodiversity related projects, e.g. Tiaki Te Mauri o Parininihi Trust pest control and Kokako reintroduction, and Okoki Pa KNE Biodiversity Plan with Ngati Mutunga.	Environment Services Land Management
107.	Gather case studies to illustrate examples of kaitiakitanga in action. Use these for State of Environment reporting	Science Services
108.	As appropriate include iwi in monitoring of consents – e.g. Fonterra outfall discharge	Science Services
109.	Provide opportunities for tangata whenua to be represented on the Taranaki Regional Council's Policy and Planning Committee, the Consents and Regulatory Committee, and other committees arising from Treaty of Waitangi settlements	Council
110.	Encourage iwi participation in the activities of the Taranaki Biodiversity Forum and Wild for Taranaki initiatives	Environment Services

5.3.6 Working with others

In addition to 'iconic' or 'significant' projects in Taranaki, many agencies, community groups and individuals have an interest in biodiversity and it is sensible and more efficient to work collaboratively with others. Along with other agencies, the Council provides funding to private landowners or to trusts for biodiversity projects on private land. Between 2008 and 2013, the Council allocated a total of \$1,857,295 through the Environmental Enhancement Grant. The New Plymouth District Council also allocated \$138,083 through its Natural Heritage Fund and DOC allocated \$882,646 through the Community Conservation Partnerships Fund (formerly the Biodiversity Condition Fund).

The Council could also play a role in setting up and running information gathering platforms that the whole community could feed information into. The Council is not the only agency or group interested in gathering biodiversity information, and indeed, it is sensible and more efficient to work collaboratively with others to both identify information needs and gather information.



OBJ 5: Working with other key conservation agencies and community groups involved in biodiversity to add value to the business of biodiversity management in Taranaki		
Activities for promoting biodiversity outcomes by working with others		Lead responsibility
111.	Work with landowners on privately owned KNEs (Refer Section 5.1)	Environment Services
112.	Work with others on iconic and significant biodiversity projects (refer sections 5.3.4 and 5.3.5)	Environment Services Land Management

5.3.7 Advocacy

A key tool at the Council's disposal for biodiversity work is advocacy – at both the regional and national level. The following actions identify specific opportunities for advocacy.

OBJ 6: Advocating and lobbying to other agencies and organisations to promote biodiversity outcomes for the region		
Activities for promoting biodiversity outcomes by advocacy		Lead responsibility
113.	Advocate for additional funds for biodiversity, for long term sustainable funding for regional projects	Policy
114.	Advocate for tools and sensible policy approach from MfE, MPI and DOC in relation to managing indigenous biodiversity on private land	Policy
115.	Advocate to district councils that district plans and long term plans have appropriate provisions to safeguard local biodiversity values.	Policy Environment Services
116.	Advocate for the protection of freshwater biodiversity values through the Water Programme of Action ¹⁵	Policy
117.	Advocate the sustainable use of the marine environment ¹⁶	Policy
118.	Advocate for appropriate biodiversity management on Crown land and land owned by local government	Policy
119.	Advocate, subject to community views, for a Taranaki-wide approach for establishing a network of areas that protect marine biodiversity in the Taranaki region through a mosaic of marine reserves, marine parks, mataitai, taiapure, seasonal closures and area closures to certain fishing method	Policy
120.	Advocate for the maintenance and protection of biodiversity through making submissions on activities that have the potential to affect biodiversity, e.g. on planning applications adjacent to KNEs	Policy
121.	Work with DOC, the district councils and other regional councils to identify areas for collaboration for more effective management of biodiversity, e.g. databases, research priorities, leveraging research and reporting on national priorities	Policy Environment Services
122.	Advocate for better integration of national and regional data management systems, particularly for geo-spatial information	Policy
123.	Advocate for research institutions to undertake research that will help inform regional council biodiversity management generally and where appropriate specific to Taranaki through the promotion of a research and monitoring programme for biodiversity	Environment Service Land Management Science Services
124.	Advocate for research into issues and options for reconnecting biodiversity within the region, in particular riparian habitat, and protecting areas in the long term from environmental weeds, predators etc	Environment Service Land Management
125.	Advocate for research into biodiversity management in KNEs and waterways presenting significant habitat or habitat for threatened and regionally distinctive freshwater species	Environment Service Land Management

¹⁵ Action 2.1a New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.

¹⁶ Method 13, Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki.

5.3.8 Measuring and reporting progress with working with others on biodiversity programmes

The Council will measure and report the progress with working with others on biodiversity projects annually as part of the Long Term Plan process under the Local Government Act 2002 and five yearly as part of the Council's state of the environment reporting on biodiversity outcomes undertaken pursuant to section 35 of the RMA. A system will be developed for gathering this information, and will incorporate case studies to illustrate examples of the Council adding value through facilitating greater networking and communication between agencies and community groups.

Key performance indicators for working with others are:

1. Establishment and support for the Taranaki Biodiversity Forum and Wild for Taranaki initiatives
2. Number of community groups undertaking work to maintain biodiversity and area in hectares covered
3. Level of Council funding distributed to Taranaki landowners and community biodiversity initiatives.
4. Level of funding realised and re-distributed to biodiversity initiatives within the region by Wild for Taranaki
5. Submissions made to other agencies to advocate for biodiversity outcomes.
6. Number of formal partnerships/protocols/memorandums established.
7. Progress with significant and collaborative regional biodiversity projects (recognising and acknowledging the different levels of commitment and contributions to projects).



The regionally extinct tīeke (saddleback) has been successfully re-introduced at Lake Rotokare through the combined efforts of a large number of organisations and individuals led by the Lake Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust.



5.4 Monitoring and information management and sharing

5.4.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Council in biodiversity monitoring and information management and sharing are:

To develop and manage efficient and effective systems for gathering and managing data and information on indigenous biodiversity in the Taranaki region by:

1. *Gathering monitoring information on the effectiveness of the Council's management actions relating to biodiversity;*
2. *Gathering state of the environment monitoring information on terrestrial, freshwater and coastal biodiversity to inform future reviews of Council policy;*
3. *Exploring and supporting opportunities for the consolidation and sharing of biodiversity information between interested parties about indigenous biodiversity in the region; and*
4. *Undertaking or commissioning biodiversity resource investigations as appropriate.*



5.4.2 Operational monitoring and information management

The Council maintains a number of databases that it uses to manage its work. Furthermore, many areas of work are digitalised and represented spatially in a GIS. There are different types of information that need to be managed for either further analysis or to record information on management actions undertaken at a particular site.

This section sets out the actions necessary to maintain and further develop systems for managing operational data that monitors our actions, including the efficiency and effectiveness of our actions.

OBJ 1: Gathering monitoring information on the effectiveness of the Council's management actions relating to biodiversity		
Activities for maintaining biodiversity data and information		Lead responsibility
126.	Maintain and further develop the IRIS database and GIS data management systems to manage Council information on the identification, values, threats, management actions, levels of protection, and condition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KNE sites • Regionally Significant Wetlands • State of the environment terrestrial monitoring sites, and • other natural areas, including coastal, freshwater and terrestrial sites that have been assessed by Council officers 	Environment Services Land Management Corporate Services
127.	Further develop and maintain Council's GIS based ecosystem prioritization data and update as approaches to ecosystem prioritization evolve. Target engagement with the owners of sites that may meet criteria for inclusion in the KNE Inventory and Biodiversity Plans	Environment Services
128.	Maintain, review and, if necessary, update protocols relating to the collection of biodiversity data and management of information on Council's databases (e.g. field protocols for data collection, adding new information to databases, updating existing information, running reports)	Environment Services Policy
129.	Monitor effectiveness of freshwater consent conditions for managing adverse effects on biodiversity values, including the maintenance of indigenous fish diversity and abundance through provision of fish passes	Science Services
130.	Monitor effectiveness of coastal consent conditions for managing adverse effects on coastal biodiversity values	Science Services
131.	Regularly review the needs/wants from various databases for Council programmes that involve an element of biodiversity work and maintain and develop such data management systems, e.g. riparian programme, Self-help Possum Control Programme, regional weed monitoring programme	Environment Services Land Management Corporate Services Policy
132.	Update and maintain current GIS layers to capture information in riparian plans identifying wetland polygons and potentially remnant bush and intact dune areas.	Land Management Corporate Services
133.	Explore opportunities, and the appropriateness, of sourcing DOC and community biodiversity data to improve Council's biodiversity datasets, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national databases (e.g. Nature Watch, EBird) • external data management systems (such as the NIWA freshwater fish database , DOC's threatened species databases, national vegetation survey archive, national herbaria, five minute bird count database etc) • regional biodiversity and ecosystem data gathered and maintained by community groups (such as gathered by Orthinological Society, Herpetological Society, EMAP etc) 	Environment Services Land Management Corporate Services Policy

5.4.3 State of biodiversity in Taranaki

The Council gathers information on biodiversity as part of its State of Environment (SoE) reporting under the RMA.

The state of the region's terrestrial biodiversity is largely monitored through four programmes outlined in the *Terrestrial Biodiversity Monitoring Plan for Taranaki*. These programmes monitor the extent and condition of forest, wetland and coastal ecosystems, the pressures on them and Council and community efforts for improving the regions biodiversity. Monitoring sites include both managed sites (such as KNEs with biodiversity plans) and unmanaged sites. Additional general condition monitoring is also conducted at other managed KNE and Regionally Significant Wetlands through regular condition assessments. Freshwater and coastal biodiversity are separately monitored for under other consents and SoE related programmes.



OBJ 2: Gathering state of the environment monitoring information on terrestrial, freshwater and coastal biodiversity to inform future reviews of Council policy	
Activities for monitoring terrestrial biodiversity	Lead responsibility
134. Maintain the State of Environment monitoring programme for terrestrial biodiversity in the Taranaki region, including unmanaged sites and sites subject to biodiversity management actions. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitoring remaining regional extent of indigenous vegetation and terrestrial ecosystems, including dunes and wetlands, in relation to historic extent using remotely sensed data monitoring ecological condition of forest, wetland and coastal dunes and turfs over time at selected sites monitoring pressures on indigenous ecosystems including habitat loss and distribution and relative abundance of selected exotic plants and animals that impact negatively on indigenous biodiversity gathering and reporting on data relating to biodiversity protection in Taranaki including formal protection of habitats, extent of indigenous cover in water catchments, area and effectiveness of management for biodiversity 	Environment Services
135. Continue regular condition assessments at selected KNE and Regionally Significant Wetland sites	Environment Services Land Management
136. Monitor the area covered by indigenous forest at the 25 hill country sites, or using the land cover database	Land Management
137. Monitor changes in land use, and implications for biodiversity restoration in the hill country, through evaluating implementation of comprehensive farm plans	Land Management.
Activities for monitoring freshwater biodiversity	Lead responsibility
138. Maintain the State of Environment monitoring programme for freshwater biodiversity in the Taranaki region. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitoring freshwater biodiversity through SEM of invertebrate communities monitoring changes in indigenous freshwater fish species at selected sites 	Science Services Policy
139. Implement, and review as appropriate, a SEM programme for regionally distinctive freshwater fish species	Science Services
Activities for monitoring coastal biodiversity	Lead responsibility
140. Review and maintain the State of Environment monitoring programme for coastal biodiversity in the Taranaki region, which may include estuarine, soft sediment and rocky shore programmes	Science Services

5.4.4 Consolidating and sharing regional biodiversity data and information

In addition to the Council, other parties have a significant role and are active in biodiversity management in the Taranaki region. Many other agencies, groups and organisations therefore gather and maintain information that may be of interest to others.

To promote the effectiveness and efficiency of our respective efforts the Council will work with others to explore ways to incorporate information gathered by other groups.

OBJ 3: Exploring and supporting opportunities for the consolidation and sharing of existing and new information between interested parties about indigenous biodiversity in the region		
Activities for maintaining and sharing regional biodiversity data and information		Lead responsibility
141.	Work with DOC and others to identify known habitats and/or range of threatened and regionally distinctive species within the region	Environment Services
142.	Work with DOC and local experts to develop and maintain regional threat classifications for indigenous flora and fauna	Environment Services
143.	Update and maintain database and reporting of known fish passage barriers in line with national direction	Science Services
144.	Investigate working with Wild for Taranaki on setting up or promoting existing information gathering platforms (e.g. Nature Watch) that the whole community could feed information into	Environment Services
145.	Investigate working with groups and agencies in the community that are gathering biodiversity information (e.g. Ornithological Society, Project Hotspot, RSRT, Purangi Kiwi, TKT etc) to assist with the holding, analysing or reporting of the data, for example GIS	Environment Services Land Management Science Services
146.	Advocate for research and investigations into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issues and options for reconnecting biodiversity within the region, in particular riparian habitat, and protecting areas in the long term from environmental weeds, predators etc • biodiversity management in KNEs and freshwater and coastal habitats with regionally significant values 	Environment Services Land Management Science Services

5.4.5 Biodiversity resource investigations

This section sets out those one off specific resource investigations identified as necessary for establishing a solid scientific baseline of biodiversity information to inform management decisions.

OBJ 4: Undertaking or commissioning biodiversity resource investigations as appropriate		
Activities for resource investigations – biodiversity general		Lead responsibility
147.	Develop and maintain list of possible resource investigations for biodiversity management in Taranaki and use these to advocate for appropriate research to be undertaken within the region by universities and other research organisations	Environment Services Land Management
148.	Consider or support investigation into incentives, drivers and impediments to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> landowners actively engaging in biodiversity management on their own land, and as part of collective action across landscapes public engagement in supporting landowners in active biodiversity protection and enhancement on private land; e.g. riparian planting, pest animal network servicing, weed control, biodiversity monitoring 	Environment Services Land Management
Activities for resource investigations – terrestrial		Lead responsibility
149.	Collate all existing research on indigenous biodiversity in Taranaki into an easily searchable inventory, identify information gaps and establish protocols for keeping current	Environment Services Science Services Corporate Services
150.	Incorporate biodiversity information from other agencies, and community groups (e.g. from Orthnological Society) into Biodiversity chapter of State of Environment report	Environment Services Policy
151.	Consider or support investigation into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes in predator and prey behaviour, population dynamics and habitat use in response to landscape scale control biodiversity and biosecurity responses to riparian restoration programme to help inform ongoing management the ecology and management of fragmented biodiversity (forest and wetland fragments) in intensively farmed landscapes, e.g. ring plain fragments the ecology and management of biodiversity on private land in extensively farmed hill country landscapes 	Environment Services Land Management
Activities for resource investigations – fresh water		Lead responsibility
152.	Reassess issue of the cumulative effect of piping small streams and land drainage in relation to potential loss of freshwater biodiversity (Small Streams Report)	Science Services
153.	Investigate or support investigations to identify freshwater biodiversity values of significance within landscape scale biodiversity protection projects within the region	Science Services, Environment Services
Activities for resource investigations – coastal		Lead responsibility
154.	Review inventory (or equivalent) of coastal areas of local or regional significance to update information on biodiversity values	Policy Science Services
155.	Continue to maintain and identify new opportunities to work in partnership with others (e.g. DOC, MPI, researchers, iwi and community groups) to research, identify and map sensitive marine habitat areas, including reefs	Policy Science Services
156.	Explore working with DOC and/or MPI to ensure a complete environment monitoring system is developed for the coastal marine area	Science Services
157.	Investigate or support investigations to identify coastal/marine biodiversity values of significance within landscape scale biodiversity protection projects within the region	Environment Services Land Management

5.4.6 Measuring progress with working with biodiversity information gathering and management

The Council will measure and report the progress with biodiversity information gathering and management annually as part of the Long Term Plan process under the Local Government Act 2002 and, five yearly as part of the Council's state of the environment reporting on biodiversity outcomes undertaken pursuant to section 35 of the RMA. The Council's 5 yearly State of Environment report will also be a critical vehicle for reporting overall trends in biodiversity across the region, and across land, freshwater and marine ecosystems. Input for the State of the Environment report will be sought from all the various groups working on biodiversity in the region.

Key performance indicators for monitoring and the gathering and sharing of biodiversity information are:

1. Maintenance and development of biodiversity databases for managing information on KNEs.
2. Reporting on the condition of KNE and Regionally Significant Wetland sites..
3. Preparation of integrated biodiversity chapter for the State of Environment report.
4. Collaboration with regional biodiversity data management initiatives.
5. Progress with identified biodiversity resource investigations.



6. Monitoring and reviewing the Strategy

This section outlines the monitoring and review provisions of the Strategy.

6.1 Monitoring implementation of the Strategy

The Council will report regularly to its Policy and Planning Committee on progress with implementing the Strategy.

Measuring its progress with implementing the KNE programme will also be reported annually as part of the Long Term Plan process under the Local Government Act 2002.

The Council will also report five yearly as part of the Council's state of the environment reporting on biodiversity outcomes undertaken pursuant to section 35 of the RMA. The Council's 5 yearly State of Environment report is a critical vehicle for reporting overall trends in biodiversity across the region, and across land, freshwater and marine ecosystems. Input for the SOE report will be sought from all the various groups working on biodiversity in the region.

6.2 Review of the Strategy

The Strategy is a 10 year document. However, to ensure it continues to be relevant and up-to-date, the Council will commence an interim review:

- Where relevant circumstances have changed to a significant extent since the commencement of the Strategy, including the promulgation of new Government legislation or policy or the review of New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy and the *National Priorities for Protecting Rare and Threatened Native Biodiversity on Private Land*
- Every five years to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Strategy (i.e. 2022).

A review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Strategy will include:

- An assessment of the efficiency of the Strategy in relation to the extent to which Strategy actions were implemented (i.e. did we do what we said we would do)
- An assessment of the effectiveness of the Strategy in relation to achieving the desired outcomes and addressing the priorities
- A report to the Policy and Planning Committee of the Council on the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Strategy.

Progress on implementing the Strategy will be monitored and reported on in a number of ways:

- 'Biodiversity Significant Activity Reports' will be prepared quarterly that address progress with biodiversity functions across the whole of Council's operations;
- The Council's annual report will report against targets and measures set out in the LTP;
- A number of individual programmes are likely to be reported on individually in more specific detail, particularly working with others including Wild for Taranaki, resource investigations or high profile KNE projects and new KNEs identified; and
- The Council's five-yearly State of the Environment report will contain a biodiversity chapter, which will report on the state and pressures on biodiversity across the region. Other chapters will also report on matters pertaining to biodiversity, such as the state land and freshwater resources and biosecurity issues within the region.

The above reporting opportunities will be used by the Council to report on progress with implementing national policies such as the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy, the *National Priorities for Protecting Rare and Threatened Native Biodiversity on Private Land* and any relevant national policy statement.

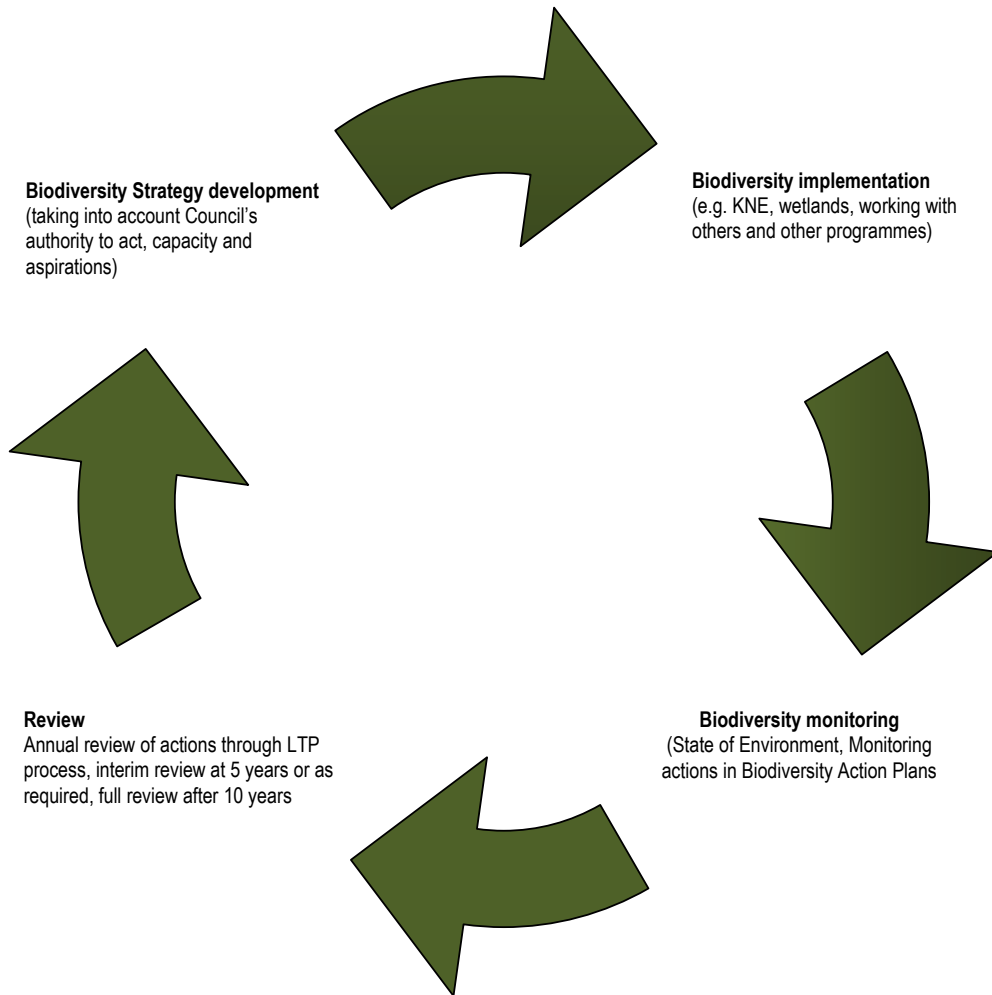


Figure 1: The planning, implementing and reviewing cycle of biodiversity planning



Definition of terms

This section provides the meanings for terms used in the Strategy.

Active management refers to physical works and action on land for the purposes of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity values. Active management includes species recovery programmes, habitat restoration and sustained weed and pest control.

Areal refers to an area.

At risk means a species facing a longer-term risk of extinction in the wild (either because of severely reduced or naturally small population size or because the population is declining but buffered by either a large total population or a slow rate of decline) as identified in the New Zealand Threat Classification System lists.

Biological diversity (biodiversity) means the variability among living organisms and the ecological complexes of which they are a part, including diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.

Capacity refers to the technical and technological ability, skills, knowledge and organisational structure required to undertake management actions, and to collect and interpret information.

Conservation refers to the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their intrinsic values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations.

Ecological context refers to the connectivity of a given site with the surrounding landscape and ecological processes.

Ecosystem refers to an ecological community together with its environment, functioning as a unit, an interacting system of living and non-living parts such as sunlight, air, water, minerals and nutrients.

Ecosystem prioritization means a systematic approach to conservation planning that identifies and prioritizes areas within residual ecosystems for active management. The approach acknowledges limited resources and aims to inform inter-agency and community collaboration in identifying, maintaining and restoring representative areas of the full suite of ecosystems within a region in a healthy and functioning state.

Endangered species means species in danger of extinction and whose survival is unlikely if the causal factors continue operating.

Endemic species refers to an indigenous species which breed only within a specified region or locality and is unique to that area.

Formally protected refers to the application of legal mechanisms, which provide long-term security of a geographically defined area for nature conservation purposes or to maintain biodiversity values. It may be either publicly or privately owned.

GIS refers to geographic information system.

Habitat refers to the place or type of area in which an organism naturally occurs.

Indigenous means native to New Zealand.

Indigenous species means a species or genetic variant found naturally in New Zealand, including migrant species visiting New Zealand on a regular or irregular basis.

Indigenous vegetation means any local indigenous plant community through the course of its growth or succession consisting primarily of native species and habitats normally associated with that vegetation type, soil or ecosystem or having the potential to develop these characteristics. It includes vegetation with these characteristics that has been regenerated with human assistance following disturbance or as mitigation for another activity, but excludes plantations and vegetation that have been established for commercial harvesting.

Introduced species refers to a plant or animal species which has been brought to New Zealand by humans, either by accident or design. A synonym is 'exotic species'.

Invasive species refers to introduced animal or plant species that can adversely affect indigenous species and ecosystems by altering genetic variation within species, or affecting the survival of species, or the quality or sustainability of natural communities.

Invertebrate refers to an animal without a backbone or spinal column, including insects, spiders, worms, slaters, corals, sponges and jellyfish.

Iwi refers to tribe or grouping of Maori people descended from a common ancestor(s).

Kaitiaki refers to a person who is active in the guardianship of the mauri of ecosystems.

Kaitiakitanga refers to the active protection and enhancement of the mauri of ecosystems.

Key Native Ecosystems or **KNEs** refers to terrestrial (land) areas identified by the Taranaki Regional Council as having regionally significant ecological values.

Land environment means a region or area (environmental domain) classified under the Land Environments of New Zealand system.

Land Environments of New Zealand or **LENZ** is a classification of environments mapped across New Zealand's landscape, derived from a comprehensive set of climate, landform and soil variables known to influence the distribution of species.

Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI) refers to an index commonly used to assess stream health: MCI quantifies stream condition with a single number.

Mahinga kai refers to the customary gathering of food and natural materials and the places where those resources are gathered.

Maintenance means 'no net loss' as achieved by the protection of existing areas and habitats and/or the restoration and enhancement of areas and habitats as may be required through biodiversity off-sets or other initiatives.

Native species: See Indigenous species.

Public conservation land refers to land administered by the Department of Conservation for whatever purpose. It excludes land administered under conservation legislation by other parties.

Regionally distinctive species includes both threatened and non-threatened species that are worthy of protection because they are largely confined to the region, are particularly uncommon in this part of the country, or because Taranaki represents the limit of their national distribution range.

Restoration and enhancement means the active intervention and management of degraded biotic communities, landforms and landscapes in order to restore biological character, ecological and physical processes.

Significant Natural Areas refers to natural areas identified as being significant in the *New Plymouth District Plan* and the *South Taranaki District Plan*.

Species refers to a group of organisms capable of interbreeding freely with each other but not with members of other species.

Sustainable use refers to the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity,

thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

Tangata whenua refers to people of the land.

Threatened land environments refers to land environments, defined by Land Environments of New Zealand at Level IV (2003), that have 20 per cent or less remaining in indigenous vegetation cover.

Threatened species means a species facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild and includes nationally critical, nationally endangered and nationally vulnerable species as identified in the New Zealand Threat Classification System lists.

Wetland includes permanently or intermittently wet areas, shallow water, and land water margins that support a natural ecosystem of plants and animals that are adapted to wet conditions.

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Appendix I: Legislative and policy sources authorising the Council’s biodiversity work

Table 3: Legislative and policy sources authorising the Council’s biodiversity work

Source of legitimacy	Summary
Resource Management Act 1991	Principal legislation governing the use of resources and so has a key role in managing biological diversity. A number of sections are relevant, particularly s5, 6(c), 7(d) and s30 (1)(c)(iia) that states that it is a function of regional councils to control the use of land for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing ecosystems in water bodies and coastal waters, and s30(1)(ga) which states that it is a function of regional councils to establish, implement and review objectives, policies and methods for maintaining indigenous biodiversity.
National priorities for protecting rare and threatened native biodiversity on private land	The statement of national priorities was developed by the Ministry for the Environment and DOC to provide local government a national perspective on the biodiversity priorities. The four priorities for the protection of indigenous vegetation are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous vegetation associated with land environments (defined by Land Environments of New Zealand at Level IV) that have 20% or less remaining in indigenous vegetation • Indigenous vegetation associated with wetlands and sand dunes • Indigenous vegetation associated with ‘originally rare’ ecosystem types, and • Habitats of threatened species.
Long Term Plans (LTPs)	The LTP was developed in consultation with the community under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002. Key aspects of relevance are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies flourishing biodiversity as a vital ingredient of a prosperous, healthy and sustainable community • Anticipates the Council expand its role further in maintaining and protecting the region’s biodiversity • Identifies the major role the Council has to play through pest management to tackle the decline of biodiversity • Notes Council’s desire to redirect pest control efforts into biodiversity protection on specific sites as targets on the Self-help Possum Control Programme on the ring plain are met, and • Notes that practical assistance in the form of environmental enhancement grants will be provided for regional initiatives protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki (RPS)	The RPS contains an objective, policies and methods that aim to maintain and enhance the indigenous biodiversity of the Taranaki region, with a priority on ecosystems, habitats and areas that have significant values.

Source of legitimacy	Summary
Regional Freshwater Plan for Taranaki	The Regional Freshwater Plan for Taranaki contains objectives, polices and methods that indicate that the Council will undertake environmental management in a manner that safeguards ecological processes (which would safeguard biodiversity), and significant areas (e.g. Appendix 1A of the Plan for high value rivers and streams, and Appendix II for significant wetlands).
Coastal Plan for Taranaki	The Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki contains objectives, polices and methods that indicate that the Council will undertake environmental management in a manner that safeguards ecological processes (which would safeguard biodiversity values) and identifies a separate management regime for areas of significant conservation value.
Biosecurity Act 1993	This Act provides for the exclusion, eradication and effective management of pests and unwanted organisms. Under this Act local authorities may prepare regional pest management plans.
Pest management strategies	The pest management strategies for Taranaki identify pest species, including those impacting on biodiversity values. Through the strategies rules may apply requiring the land occupier to undertake control. The Council may also access Part 6 [Enforcement] powers under the Biosecurity Act to undertake direct control of pest animals and plants.

Appendix II: Assessment of possible ideas for biodiversity actions against legislation and policy, and Council capacity

As part of the process of developing the first Biodiversity Strategy in 2008, discussions were held internally (with land management officers, pest officers etc) and feedback was sought from key stakeholders (including DOC, district councils, QEII Trust and other community groups involved in biodiversity) on 'good ideas' on what the Council could deliver in relation to biodiversity. Set out in Table 4 below is the 2008 assessment of good ideas for the Council's biodiversity activities having regard to its authority to act, its operational capacity, and its strategic priorities.

Table 4: Assessment of possible good ideas for Council's biodiversity work

Work area	Possible actions (good ideas)	Authorising legitimacy						Council's operational capacity	Strategic priorities for Council's biodiversity work
		RMA	LTP	RPS	FWP	RCP	RPMPs		
Animal pests	Advice and education	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Statutory planning	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Direct control on private land		x	x			x	x	Key action for Biodiversity Plan, particularly for KNEs
	Direct control on public land								No mandate and no capacity, but may work with community groups operating on public land and able to work with DOC to optimise operations on the private/public land interface
	Monitoring of pest numbers		x	x			x	x	Key action for biodiversity strategy
	Monitoring of control effectiveness		x	x			x	x	Key action for biodiversity strategy

Policy and Planning Committee - Review of the Biodiversity Strategy for the Taranaki Regional Council

Work area	Possible actions (good ideas)	Authorising legitimacy						Council's operational capacity	Strategic priorities for Council's biodiversity work
		RMA	LTP	RPS	FWP	RCP	RPMPs		
Pest plants	Advice and education	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Statutory planning	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Direct control on private land		x	x			x	x	Key action for Biodiversity Plan, particularly for KNEs
	Direct control on public land								No mandate and no capacity
	Monitoring of pest plant distributions		x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Monitoring of control effectiveness		x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
Threatened species	Threatened species management, e.g. captive rearing								No mandate and no capacity, DOC role
	Habitat protection for threatened species	x		x			x	Limited	Key action for biodiversity strategy
	Monitoring of threatened species							Limited	Principally DOC role. Limited monitoring undertaken by Council as part of its KNE monitoring and state of environment reporting
Freshwater – rivers, lakes	Advice and education	x	x	x	x		x	x	Existing Council programme
	Statutory planning	x	x	x	x		x	x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement	x	x	x	x		x	x	Existing Council programme
	Monitoring of freshwater biodiversity	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme
	Habitat protection	x	x	x	x		x	x	Existing Council programme
	Working with owners of structures to improve fish passage	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme
	Managing freshwater fisheries								No mandate and no capacity, role of MPI and DOC

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Work area	Possible actions (good ideas)	Authorising legitimacy						Council's operational capacity	Strategic priorities for Council's biodiversity work
		RMA	LTP	RPS	FWP	RCP	RPMPs		
Freshwater - wetlands	Advice and education	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme that could be enhanced for non-significant wetlands
	Statutory planning	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement - significant wetlands	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement - remaining wetlands	x							Possible action
	Working with landowners on legal protection - significant wetlands	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme
	Working with landowners on legal protection - remaining wetlands	x						Limited	Existing Council programme
	Monitoring condition of significant wetlands	x	x	x	x			Limited	Key action for biodiversity strategy
	Determining extent of remaining wetlands	x			x				Existing Council programme
Coastal and marine	Advice and education	x	x	x		x	x	x	Existing Council programme
	Statutory planning	x	x	x		x	x	x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement of coastal plan rules	x	x	x		x		x	Existing Council programme
	Monitoring of consent conditions	x	x	x		x		x	Existing Council programme
	Monitoring of estuarine and rocky shore	x	x	x		x		x	Existing Council programme
	Managing nearshore fisheries								No mandate and no capacity, role of MPI
	Managing areas of significant conservation value	x		x		x		x	Existing Council programme
	Managing fisheries								No mandate and no capacity, role of MPI

Policy and Planning Committee - Review of the Biodiversity Strategy for the Taranaki Regional Council

Work area	Possible actions (good ideas)	Authorising legitimacy						Council's operational capacity	Strategic priorities for Council's biodiversity work
		RMA	LTP	RPS	FWP	RCP	RPMPs		
Work area	Advocating for marine protection, including marine reserves	x		x				x	Action for biodiversity strategy
	Establishment of marine reserves								No mandate and no capacity, role of MPI and DOC
	Management of marine parks and reserves								No mandate and no capacity, role of DOC (and MPI)
Property planning	Developing integrated site specific plans for KNEs and also riparian and hill country farm plans	x						x	Key action for achieving biodiversity gains on KNEs, on farms and in the region's catchments
Working with others	Facilitating community access to biodiversity funds	x	x	x				x	Key action to achieve efficient biodiversity gains
	Working with other agencies		x	x				x	Key action to achieve efficient biodiversity gains
Data management etc	Monitoring state of the environment	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Key action for achieve efficient biodiversity gains
	Maintain and further develop systems for data management for KNEs and biodiversity data	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Key action for achieve efficient biodiversity gains
	Facilitate sharing of regional biodiversity data as appropriate	x	x					Limited	Key action for Biodiversity Strategy

Appendix III: Current state of Key Native Ecosystems

Table 5: Current state of Key Native Ecosystems in Taranaki (as at October 2016)

Indicator	Number (as at Aug 2007)	Number (as at October 2016)
Total number of Key Native Ecosystems	155	218
Number that have some private land	99	173
Number that are fully fenced	55	136
Number in the self-help possum programme	49	105
Number in public ownership with other pest animal programmes	19	99
Number in private ownership or with some form of formal protection agreement	102	124 (98 fully protected, 26 part protected (multiple owners))

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Appendix III: Addressing national priorities

National priorities for protecting rare and threatened native biodiversity on private land have been set by the Government. In relation to the each national priority, the table below identifies strategic priorities adopted in this Plan that will contribute towards meeting the Government's priorities for protecting rare and threatened native biodiversity on private land.

National Priorities:	Council strategic priorities:	Sections in the Plan
1. Indigenous vegetation associated with land environments (defined by Land Environments of New Zealand (LENZ) at level IV) that have 20% or less remaining in indigenous cover	1.1 Key Native Ecosystem programme for those regionally significant sites on threatened land environments 1.2 Building on existing programmes – e.g. riparian programme and self help possum programme both occur on threatened land environments 1.3 Working with others 1.4 Developing systems for gathering and recording information.	5.1, 5.2, 5.3; 5.4
2. Indigenous vegetation associated with sand dunes and wetlands; ecosystem types that have become uncommon due to human activity	2.1 Key Native Ecosystem programme for those regionally significant sites that are either sand dunes or wetlands 2.2 Building on existing programmes – e.g. general education and advocacy for wetlands in general 2.3 Working with others e.g. assisting the Ngati Tara Oaonui Sandy Bay Trust 2.4 Developing systems for gathering and recording information.	5.1, 5.2, 5.3; 5.4
3. Indigenous vegetation associated with 'originally rare' terrestrial ecosystem types not already covered by priorities 1 or 2	3.1 Key Native Ecosystem programme for those regionally significant sites that are 'originally rare' ecosystem types 3.2 Gathering and recording information on 'originally rare' ecosystem types.	5.1, 5.2, 5.3; 5.4
4. Habitats of acutely and chronically threatened indigenous species.	4.1 Key Native Ecosystem programme for those regionally significant sites with threatened species 4.2 Building on existing programmes – e.g. self help possum programme safeguards habitat important for kereru 4.3 Working with others on sites important for threatened species, e.g. supporting kiwi projects in east Taranaki 4.4 Developing systems for gathering and recording information on threatened species on private land.	5.1, 5.2, 5.3; 5.4

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Biodiversity Strategy
for the
Taranaki Regional Council

The abridged version

Taranaki Regional Council
Private Bag 713
Stratford

February 2017

Document number: 1821449

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Over the life of the Strategy, the Taranaki Regional Council aims to achieve the following:

Vision

The full range of Taranaki's indigenous ecosystems and species are maintained in a healthy and fully functioning state, from the mountain to the ocean depths and from protected areas to productive landscapes. Agencies, community groups and individuals work cooperatively in partnership, taking an integrated, efficient and cost effective approach that is based on sound science. People living in Taranaki value and better understand biodiversity so that we can all enjoy and share in its benefits, as the foundation of a sustainable economy and society.

(refer section 3)

Four priorities

We will achieve the vision by implementing the following strategic priorities for action:

Private Key Native Ecosystems (KNEs)

Description

Work programmes to support private landowners with KNEs (regionally significant sites) to maintain and protect the full suite of ecosystems within the region

Key actions (over duration of the Strategy)

- Continue to identify KNE representing the full suite of ecosystems within the region
- Prepare at least 10 biodiversity plans per annum for privately owned KNEs
- Work with and support biodiversity plan holders to improve the condition of priority KNEs

Building on existing Council programmes

Increased 'biodiversity focus' for other Council programmes contributing to the protection of healthy functioning native ecosystems

- Enhance the biodiversity capacity and focus of Council officers
- As part of the Riparian Management Programme, establish wildlife corridors from the mountain to the sea
- Expand the Self-help Possum Control Programme, to support community driven pest initiatives, including landscape predator control

Working with others

Facilitate and support the efforts of others in the community contributing to biodiversity outcomes as part of a collective regional effort

- Implement programme to support land occupiers and community groups contributing to biodiversity outcomes in KNEs
- Implement landscape predator control programme
- Provide servicing and support for Wild for Taranaki
- Implement programme using environmental enhancement grants to support iconic or significant biodiversity initiatives
- Develop shared services arrangements with key agencies and biodiversity entities where there are mutual benefits

Information management and gathering

Contribute to the community's management and development of information systems to promote public awareness and actions based upon sound scientific information

- Maintain and develop Council's biodiversity databases
- Monitor and report on Taranaki's biodiversity through its state of the environment monitoring programmes
- Work with other agencies and biodiversity entities to promote and share biodiversity data capture

(refer section 4)

(refer section 5)

Outcomes

Key outcomes delivered by the Strategy by 2027 that contribute to the vision are:

- More than 25,000 ha (>18%) of Taranaki's remnant native ecosystems on private land is subject to active management to protect and enhance biodiversity, through the KNE programme, other council programmes and by working with others
- Including the public conservation estate, 60% (170,000ha) of Taranaki's remnant native ecosystems are formally protected
- Intensively farmed catchments (the ring plain and coastal terraces) are retired and vegetated to create wildlife corridors from the mountain to the sea
- In the Egmont National Park and intensively farmed catchments, possums and predators are being maintained at very low levels (over 32% of the region) to protect remnant native ecosystems and indigenous wildlife
- Egmont National Park is pest-free and characterised by high quality habitat protection and species richness for both the Park and surrounding areas
- Wild for Taranaki and community groups are widely supported and resourced to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of biodiversity initiatives and outcomes for the region
- Biodiversity policy in the region is informed by strong science and robust information.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document is entitled the Biodiversity Strategy for the Taranaki Regional Council (the Strategy).¹

The purpose of the Strategy is to set out the Taranaki Regional Council's (the Council) priorities and programme of action to be implemented for the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity in the Taranaki region.

1.2 Scope and background

This Strategy is a non regulatory document that has been prepared by the Council to part of a 'whole of council approach' for biodiversity in the Taranaki region.

The Strategy will assist the Council to implement the biodiversity objective, policies and methods of the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki*. However, the Strategy outlines work programmes across all sections of the Council and across all legislative responsibilities, including under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), the Local Government Act 2002, and the Biosecurity Act 1993. In so doing, it addresses Council aspirations and responsibilities for biodiversity on land, in freshwater, within the coastal environment, and offshore.

The RMA defines 'biological diversity' as "...the variability among living organisms, and the ecological complexes of which they are a part, including diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems".

That definition incorporates three key elements:

1. *Genetic diversity*: This is the genetic variation between individuals of a single species or within a population of a single species. Genetic diversity is important for the long-term survival of a species because it increases the adaptability and, therefore resilience of a species to external changes.
2. *Species diversity*: This is the variety of species within a specific geographic area (sometimes referred to as 'species richness').
3. *Ecosystem diversity*: This is the variety of ecosystem types or different assemblages

(combinations) of species. Ecosystem diversity is closely related to variation in the "non-living" (physical) components of the environment such as soil, nutrients, light, temperature, water which interact with biota to form distinct ecosystems.

Unless the context indicates otherwise, for the purposes of this Strategy the term 'biodiversity' refers to indigenous biodiversity. Although described as separate dimensions, the three types of diversity outlined above are, in fact, inter-dependent. That is, all must be present for any one to be maintained long term. For example, species biodiversity is reliant on genetic diversity and genetic diversity is reliant on ecosystem diversity.

The Strategy includes a vision, which is our stake in the ground against which to rally action and to measure success against. The "How" part of this strategy outlines the first steps in the action plan. We are identifying where our key biodiversity areas and habitats are located now, we are prioritizing projects so that key habitats and species are stabilised, and then we will work towards ensuring they are enhanced, healthy and functioning.

Achieving our vision might seem a long way off, but impacts on our indigenous biodiversity have been a long time in the making and as a community we are realistic about the challenge ahead. It has taken more than 200 years to create the biodiversity problems we have today, so it's going to take a while to make progress towards fixing them.

1.3 Structure of the Strategy

The Strategy has been prepared in six sections as follows;

Section One introduces the Strategy, including its purpose, scope and structure.

Section Two sets the scene in relation to biodiversity. It includes what is happening with Taranaki's biodiversity and the Council's roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities of other key players are also identified.

Section Three sets out the Council's vision or goals for managing indigenous biodiversity.

¹ This Strategy is the second document of its type. It is the outcome of a review on the first Strategy which was adopted in 2008 following extensive targeted consultation.

Section Four identifies four priority areas (and explanation) for the Council to achieve the Strategy's vision for biodiversity. The four priority areas relate to:

1. the implementation of the Key Native Ecosystems programme
2. enhancing the biodiversity component of other existing Council programmes
3. working with others, and
4. improving biodiversity information gathering and management.

Section Five sets out, in relation to each priority area, the suite of key actions being undertaken or proposed to be undertaken by the Council in relation to maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity.

Section Six outlines the monitoring and review provisions of the Strategy.

A definition of terms and acronyms used in the Strategy, and appendices containing supporting information are presented at the back of the Strategy.

The largest remnant concentrations of indigenous forest in the region occur in the Egmont National Park, and the steeper parts of the eastern hill country



2. The Taranaki context

2.1 What is happening with Taranaki's biodiversity?

Taranaki is a unique part of New Zealand with a wide variety of indigenous species, habitats and natural features.

Before humans settled here, almost the entire region would have been covered in dense forests, rich in bird life. Clearance of vegetation cover started with early Māori and continued with the arrival of Pākeha leaving a legacy of widespread modification of the natural ecosystems.

Forest clearance, wetland drainage, and stream realignments have been necessary for the development of the region. However, development has had a considerable impact on indigenous biodiversity.

Little remains of the original forests, and other natural habitats, like wetlands, have been greatly diminished and modified. The Egmont National Park and the hill country to the east contain the only sizeable remnants of natural vegetation. The highly modified ring plain and coastal terraces now have only a few fragmented remnants.

Taranaki's remaining biodiversity is still vulnerable to a range of threats, particularly ongoing habitat loss and modification of the landscape, and browsing and predation by invasive introduced species. It is often difficult to attribute declines in biodiversity to specific threats, but it is recognised that the adverse impact from one threat can be exacerbated by the effects of other threats acting together, i.e. habitat fragmentation combined with invasive species.

Despite extensive modification, Taranaki contains a great diversity of landscapes, habitats, plants, animals, and areas of high biodiversity value. There are areas in Taranaki which support a diverse and significant range of indigenous species and terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecosystems, including the Egmont National Park,

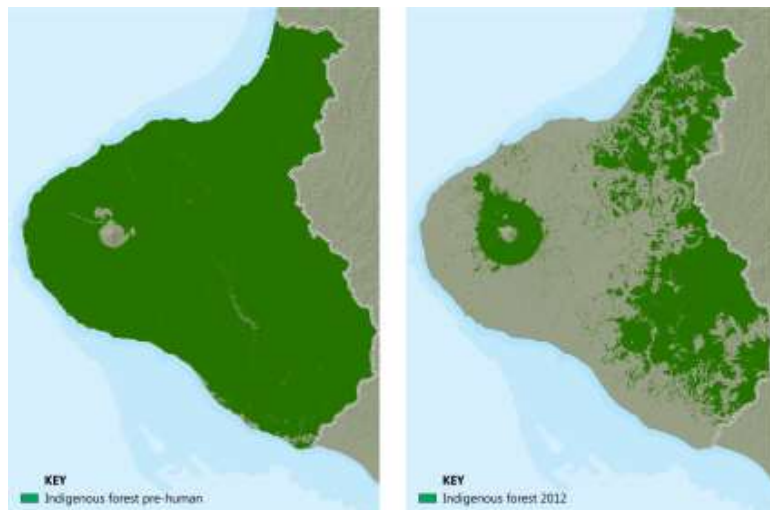
Parininihi, Lake Rotokare, and the Sugar Loaf Islands. Many of these sites are in very good condition.

Several endemic species which are nationally threatened or regionally distinctive have remnant populations in the region. These include the Western North Island brown kiwi, whio (blue duck), gold-striped gecko, *Notoreas* moth (*Notoreas perornata*), and the *Powelliphanta* 'Egmont' land snail.

Commercial forests and farmland are also important to regional biodiversity as these areas have wetlands, and plantings for erosion and sediment control and riparian protection.

Though the rich range of species that used to thrive in our region is greatly reduced and fragmented, nationally significant fragments of land and wildlife remain.

For further information refer to the biodiversity chapters in the Councils state of the environment report 2015 – *Taranaki as One*.



It is estimated that prior to human settlement most of Taranaki was covered in indigenous forest, shrubland and wetland vegetation (left.) Today, remnant vegetation covers about 40% of the region (right).

Key facts

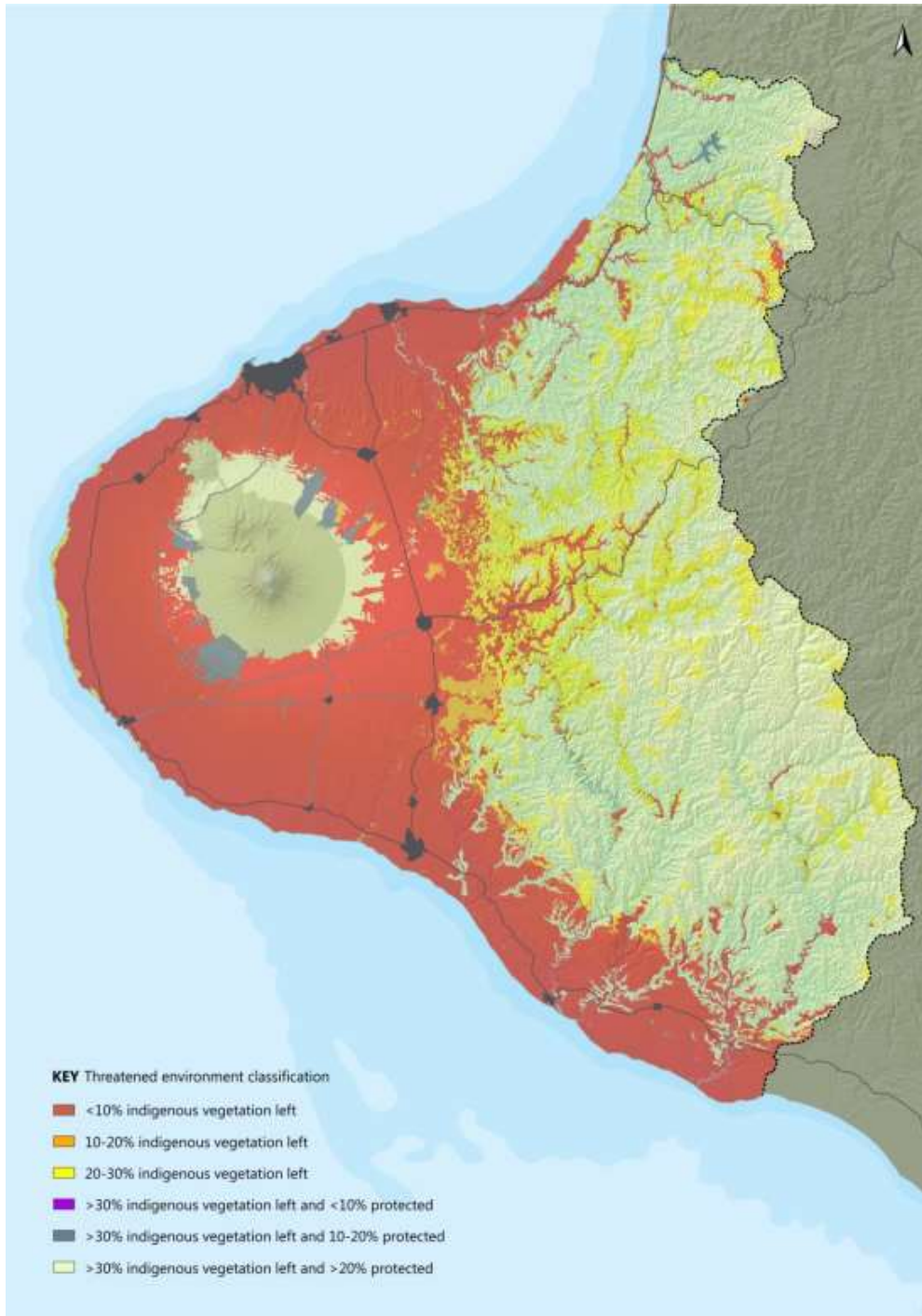
- 40% of Taranaki is indigenous forest or shrubland (compared to 24% nationally)
- Largest remnant concentrations of indigenous forest in the region occur in Egmont National Park, and the steeper parts of the eastern hill country
- 21% of Taranaki is legally protected, including Department of Conservation reserves, local purpose reserves and QEII covenants. This equates to approximately 50% of Taranaki's indigenous forests and shrublands
- Some environment types (Figure 1) are particularly threatened in that there is less than 20% of the original indigenous vegetation remaining in the area
- 8.2% of Taranaki's original wetlands remain
- 17% of New Zealand's 270 threatened or at-risk terrestrial fauna species, subspecies, or unique populations are present in Taranaki
- Taranaki has 37 indigenous bird species, two bat species, eight reptile species, and 54 plants that are nationally threatened or at-risk
- Eastern Taranaki is considered to be a stronghold for the Western North Island taxon of the Brown Kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*)
- Taranaki has six species of threatened or at-risk terrestrial invertebrates, including the Notoreas moth (*Notoreas perornata*), which is 'nationally vulnerable'. One endemic large land snail species (*Powelliphanta 'Egmont'*) is found only in Taranaki
- Eighteen species of indigenous freshwater fish are present in Taranaki. Ten of these species are classified as nationally 'threatened' or 'at risk'. Although they live in freshwater, many indigenous fish species have a marine stage in their life-cycle
- Some indigenous species are considered 'regionally distinctive' because Taranaki is the national stronghold for the species, the species is particularly uncommon in the region, or the species does not exist either further north or further south of Taranaki. Regionally distinctive species are not necessarily nationally threatened.



New Zealand dotterel.



The nationally 'at-risk' gold stripe gecko is more widespread in Taranaki than in any other region.



Approximately 52% of the region's land environments are classified as 'acutely' or 'chronically threatened' in that there is less than 20% of indigenous vegetation remaining in those areas. The most threatened environments are located on the intensively farmed ring plain, coastal terraces, and alluvial valley floors in the eastern hill country.

2.2 Taranaki Regional Council's authority to act

The Taranaki Regional Council (the Council) has a number of statutory roles, responsibilities and powers relating to biodiversity management. Of particular note are the statutory mandates provided for under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), the Biosecurity Act 1993, and the Local Government Act 2002.

2.2.1 Resource Management Act 1991

Under Section 30(1)(ga) of the RMA, Taranaki Regional Council functions include:

"The establishment, implementation, and review of objectives, policies and methods for maintaining indigenous biological diversity".

Under the RMA the Taranaki Regional Council is responsible for controlling use and development of the coast, fresh water, air and land for soil conservation purposes. Council objectives, policies, rules and other methods relating to these functions are set out in the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* (2010) and a suite of regional coastal, freshwater, land and air plans.

What does maintaining indigenous biodiversity entail?

An amendment to the RMA in 2003 established a unique function that refers broadly to the establishment and implementation of methods (not just narrow regulatory control) and includes an objective (maintenance) within the function itself. That is, not only do local authorities have to manage natural resources so as to avoid, remedy or mitigate effects on the biodiversity of its region, they must (in theory) establish and implement methods to *maintain* biodiversity.

That is an ambitious task for two related reasons:

- First, maintaining biodiversity in the face of the threats faced will likely require more than managing the negative externalities of resource use and will require active intervention by councils, other agencies, and the communities they represent.
- Second, whether biodiversity is maintained will depend on a range of parties and actions outside of a local authority's control (including for example, how well the Department of Conservation manages its estate and species recovery programmes).

There needs to be a close link between the RMA functions and LGA tools and priority setting processes (refer section 2.2.3).

Section 30 regulatory functions by themselves are likely to be insufficient to deliver the *maintenance* of biodiversity (only an avoidance of, or reduction in, adverse impacts) other, additional, actions may be necessary to fully deliver the section 30(1) (ga) "maintenance" function. These will likely centre on tools and mandates provided under other legislation (discussed in sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 below).

2.2.2 Biosecurity Act 1993

Under the Biosecurity Act 1993 a regional council has the *power* to prepare regional pest management plans and regional pathway management plans.

Such plans contain rules requiring owners of land to eradicate, manage or contain plant or animal pests or otherwise manage pest pathways. Plans must also set out sources of funding for methods that may be proposed to address a pest issue.

While regional councils do not have a mandatory function requiring them to control pests for biodiversity (or other) purposes, before preparing pest and pathways plans regional councils must be satisfied that a number of tests can be met. One of these is that the pest to be managed under the plan is capable of causing adverse effects on one or more aspects of the New Zealand environment including:

- The viability of threatened species of organisms
- The survival and distribution of indigenous plants and animals
- The sustainability of natural and developed ecosystems, ecological processes and biological diversity².

Thus the Biosecurity Act provides a mandate and a set of powers and tools for pest control that aims to protect biodiversity.

The powers and tools available to regional councils under the Biosecurity Act are also available to government agencies/Ministers.

² See section 71 (d) of the Biosecurity Act.

2.2.3 Local Government Act and associated legislation

The 2012 amendment to the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) narrowed the statutory purpose of local government and the role of local authorities. It did not, however, affect the role of councils in biodiversity since that role is prescribed by separate statute (i.e. the RMA) – despite biodiversity protection not being a “core service” in section 11A.

The key relevance of the LGA is that it provides, in the form of Long Term Plans (LTPs), the framework for the direction and priorities of each local authority. Through LTPs councils secure funding for non-regulatory (operational) biodiversity protection methods (with specific measures subject to the work programming/budgeting and community consultation process).

As noted earlier, proactive non regulatory measures (e.g. incentives for landowners and community groups, education and awareness raising, pest control, stock exclusion etc) are a critical component of delivering on the ambitious RMA function of maintaining biodiversity (something that will often require more than just managing the negative externalities).

This is the conundrum and principal source of tension in biodiversity management. Operational measures are required to deliver on the “maintain biodiversity” function of regional councils under the RMA, but the nature and extent of such measures remains, of necessity, a matter for regional council/community to determine under the LGA processes.

Of note regional councils may also use section 85 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 to provide for rates remission for land that has high biodiversity value where they have a policy to do so under section 109 of the same Act.

2.3 Other agencies’ statutory mandate

A large number of agencies and groups (in addition to regional councils) have statutory or voluntary roles affecting biodiversity management. The key agencies/groups and their roles are outlined briefly below. These roles are identifiable from the functions listed in legislation or from the programmes that agencies implement.

2.3.1 Department of Conservation

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is the principal central government agency involved in the conservation of biodiversity. Its role is broad and multifaceted operating under a number of different statutes, including the *Conservation Act 1987*, the *National Parks Act 1980*, the *Wildlife Act 1953* and the *Reserves Act 1977*. DOC’s statutory responsibilities can be grouped as follows:

- Legal protection of land and marine areas for conservation purposes (i.e. creation and extension of a terrestrial and marine public conservation estate) including the on-going management of that estate. In Taranaki, DOC is responsible for 146,973 hectares of Crown land (or 21% of the region).
- The pro-active protection of species and populations on, and affecting public conservation land and, to some extent, more broadly. Threatened species recovery programmes in Taranaki include recovery of the Western North Island brown kiwi and the whio (blue duck) in Egmont National Park and adjacent farmland. Part of the DOC species recovery programme is to support the re-establishment of kōkako in Taranaki.
- Promotion of conservation off the public conservation estate through funding and advocacy.

2.3.2 District councils

There are three district councils in Taranaki - New Plymouth District Council, Stratford District Council and South Taranaki District Council.

Under the RMA, the district councils have a role for controlling the effects of use and development and protection of land, including for the purpose of the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity.

Each district council has objectives, policies and actions or methods of implementation in their district plans in relation to indigenous vegetation generally or significant natural areas (SNAs) specifically. Most

councils have funds available for private landowners for the protection of significant natural areas, e.g. the NPDC Heritage Protection Fund targeted at helping landowners with fencing of natural areas to help facilitate covenanting with QEII. Each district council also manages a number of council owned reserves and undertakes direct management of plant and animal pest threats within parks, reserves and other council administered lands.

2.3.3 Ministry for Primary Industries

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has three roles relevant to the maintenance of biodiversity.

- *Fisheries management* (including the four freshwater species in the quota management system) – controlled under the Fisheries Acts 1983 and 1996 and various regulations
- *Indigenous forest management* to ensure sustainable harvest – under Part IIIA of the Forests Act 1949 (as amended in 1993).
- *Biosecurity/pest management* – leadership of the national biosecurity system. This includes certain pre and post border roles that are important to maintaining biodiversity. (Note that new measures aimed at managing pests that threaten biodiversity at the national level (such as a pest management plan) would be led by DOC in accordance with the general scheme of the Biosecurity Act).

The first two of these roles illustrate MPI's role as lead agency for the *sustainable use* of New Zealand's biodiversity.

2.3.4 Fish and Game New Zealand

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council is a statutory but non governmental entity charged under the Conservation Act with managing both sports fish and game. This involves operating a licensing system and well as operational activity to maintain fish and game stocks.

Fish and Game's role extends to advocating for the protection of habitat for those game and sports species (all of which are introduced) and may, according to recent case law, extend to advocating for freshwater habitat protection more generally.

2.3.5 QEII National Trust

The QEII National Trust assists landowners to secure legal protection of private land (usually by covenant with the Trust acting as the perpetual trustee). Although supported both by DOC and local authorities the QEII National Trust is an independent entity and source of advice for landowners that operates under its own governing legislation (the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Act 1977).

Voluntary uptake of QEII covenants provides a method and tool for the protection of areas and habitats of importance to the maintenance of biodiversity.

2.3.6 Science Research Institutes

Landcare Research is a key provider of land cover information, science and research and custodian of various biodiversity relevant data bases (and geospatial information tools) including the National Vegetation Survey (NVS) – to which DOC, regional councils and others also contribute data. NVS is a detailed centralised database of vegetation cover from survey plots throughout New Zealand.

NIWA is the key provider for information and research concerning freshwater and marine environments. NIWA undertake a range of biodiversity research projects and maintaining databases such as the National Freshwater Fish Database. Regional councils, DOC and others contribute to that database.

2.3.7 Trusts and community organisations

Dozens of trusts and other community organisations around the region have established and maintain reserves and/or programmes involving "hands on" conservation work. Most of these will contribute in some way towards maintaining biodiversity.

In Taranaki, examples of trusts and community organisations actively undertaking conservation work include the North and South Taranaki branches of Forest and Bird, Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society, Ngati Tara Oaonui Sandy Bay Society, Taranaki Kiwi Trust and the Patea Planting Trust.

The Council supports several individual trusts within the region that involve broad community involvement and are making a particularly significant contribution to habitat and threatened species protection. These trusts include the Tiaki Te Mauri o Parininihi Trust, Purangi Kiwi (formerly East Taranaki Environment Trust), Lake Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust and the Rapanui Grey Faced Petrel Trust. The Council has worked with each of these trusts over the years, providing technical and funding support alongside a

range of partner organisations, including DOC and district councils.

Of particular note is the 'Wild for Taranaki' branded Taranaki Biodiversity Trust. This independent trust was formed in 2015 following several years of the Council facilitating closer engagement between biodiversity entities within the region. This facilitation work culminated in the preparation of a constitution and election of a trust board in 2015.

While still in its infancy Wild for Taranaki will arguably be the most significant non-government biodiversity organisation in Taranaki and will be responsible for several projects that the Council considers will be iconic within the region, including;

- 'Restoring Taranaki' – facilitating and supporting a collaborative, multi-agency approach to the progressive, staged protection and enhancement of the region at landscape scales;
- 'Wild for Wetlands' – facilitating and supporting the protection and enhancement of the regions wetlands;
- 'Wild for Coasts' – facilitating and supporting the protection and enhancement of the regions coastal environment, and the;
- 'Community Biodiversity Fund' – a programme of strategic fund raising and redistribution to community initiatives that will resource the protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the region.

Eighteen species of indigenous freshwater fish are present in Taranaki. Ten of these species are classified as nationally 'threatened' or 'at risk'. Although they live in freshwater, many indigenous fish species have a marine stage in their life-cycle.



2.4 Overview of statutory roles and responsibilities for biodiversity management in Taranaki

There are certain things that regional councils must do in accordance with their statutory obligations. However, regional councils may choose to deploy additional resources and institute non regulatory programmes and/or regulate using powers available under other legislation. Table 1 below outlines Council's (and other central and local governments) place in the wider legislative framework for biodiversity management.

Table 1: Taranaki Regional Council's place in biodiversity management

	Habitat Quality			Species protection/population management & recovery
	Legal protection of sites	Management of adverse effects of resource use	Operational investment in habitat protection and restoration	
Private (including Maori) land	DOC [Nga Whenua Rahui, Nature Heritage Fund QEII - covenants Territorial authorities [consent conditions/notices, reserves acquisition] Regional councils [Memorandums of Encumbrance]	Territorial authorities Regional councils* MPI [Sustainable forestry permits]	Regional councils [riparian, fish barrier, wetland & KNE programmes] Territorial authorities [SNA programmes]	DOC [Biodiversity advice & condition improvement funding] Regional councils [Direct & 3 rd party funding of habitat protection projects] Regional councils/DOC/ MPI [pest management]
Freshwater environments	-	Regional councils*		DOC – [Wildlife protection MPI [Indigenous forest harvesting] DOC [Wild animal control] MPI [Biosecurity – incursion response]
Marine environments (<12NM)	DOC [Marine reserves]	Regional councils*	Regional councils* [Oil Spill recovery]	DOC – [Freshwater fish and whitebait management] MPI [Fisheries management] MPI [Biosecurity – incursion response]
Marine environments (12NM – 200NM)	DOC [Marine reserves]	Minister for the Environment/EPA	-	MPI [Fisheries management] MPI [Fisheries management] DOC [Marine mammals protection]
Public conservation estate	DOC [Ownership]	Regional councils*	DOC	DOC – Access and concessions system DOC [species recovery, mainland islands, pest control] Regional councils [pest management]

* Mandatory regional council biodiversity functions in *italics*.

3. What we want to achieve

This section sets out the Council's vision for biodiversity in the Taranaki region. It is what we want to achieve and involves four inter-related outcomes:

A vision for biodiversity in Taranaki³

The full range of Taranaki's indigenous ecosystems and species are maintained in a healthy and fully functioning state, from the mountain to the ocean depths and from protected areas to productive landscapes.

Agencies, community groups and individuals work cooperatively in partnership, taking an integrated, efficient and cost effective approach that is based on sound science.

People living in Taranaki value and better understand biodiversity so that we can all enjoy and share in its benefits, as the foundation of a sustainable economy and society.

Taranaki's own unique character and the biodiversity matters of national importance are sustained and enhanced now and into the future.



The kereru or wood pigeon

³ Vision was developed and confirmed following targeted consultation on the 'Biodiversity Strategy – An Operational Strategy to Guide Biodiversity Actions of the Taranaki Regional Council'.

Table 2: Strategic considerations for prioritising Taranaki Regional Council's biodiversity activities

Strategic considerations for prioritising the Council's biodiversity actions	
<p>One of the challenges in achieving our vision for biodiversity is that there is invariably more work than can be achieved with the resources available. Some prioritising of its biodiversity actions and responses actions is necessarily required by the Council.</p> <p>In determining its biodiversity priorities and actions (refer sections 4 and 5 of this Strategy), the Council has had regard to the following strategic considerations.</p> <p>Authority and mandate</p> <p>Community support for the Council's biodiversity work is strongest where it is clearly enshrined in legislation or where it has obtained a social mandate for that work.</p> <p>The following legislation, strategies and plans contribute to authorising the Council's biodiversity related programmes and activities (for further information refer Appendix I):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 Legislation such as the RMA and the Biosecurity Act 🚩 National policy such as the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and the National Priorities for Protecting Rare and Threatened Native Biodiversity on Private Land 🚩 Resource management strategies and plans such as the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki, Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki, and the Regional Fresh Water Plan for Taranaki 🚩 Pest management plans 🚩 Long term plans under the Local Government Act. <p>The Department of Conservation is funded and empowered, in its own right, to manage the public conservation estate. Similarly other agencies identified in section 2.3 above are funded and empowered to undertake their statutory responsibilities. It is important not to duplicate the work of other agencies, but rather to work cooperatively, provide support and add value where appropriate.</p> <p>Operational capacity - what can the Council do?</p> <p>The Council's biodiversity work will be more effective where it builds on existing programmes.</p> <p>In particular, the Council has an opportunity to enhance biodiversity outcomes by utilising its existing operational capacity across a broad range of work areas, including:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 Building on positive working relationships and the goodwill of private landowners built up through the Council's existing biodiversity, land management and pest management programmes 🚩 Recognising that the Taranaki Riparian Management Programme will ultimately lead to restoration of indigenous vegetation and habitat on threatened land environments (the ring plain and coastal terraces), and the creation of wildlife corridors between the mountain and the sea (and the many fragmented forest and wetland remnants in between) 🚩 Incorporating wetlands and remnant bush on private land, particularly on threatened land environments, into the existing land management plans 🚩 Recognising that the current Self-help Possum Control Programme protects remaining indigenous vegetation on threatened land environments and within the iconic Egmont National Park 🚩 Building on the success of the significant wetland and key native ecosystem programmes by expanding support to other sites of significance 🚩 Promoting greater understanding of biodiversity values and threats through existing media and environmental education programmes 🚩 Recognising the biodiversity component of consent compliance and monitoring programmes. <p>Other good ideas - what else should the Council do?</p> <p>There are other good ideas in relation to what the Council could do for the public good, to add value and/or contribute to the Council's vision for biodiversity in the region.</p> <p>'Biodiversity work' spans an extensive suite of possible actions – from planning, advocacy and consent management, to protecting wetlands or bush remnants with covenants, fencing, and pest animal and plant management. While all might be 'good ideas', to make the most efficient use of Council resources available for biodiversity, the actions that the Council chooses to undertake must be strategic and prioritised.⁴</p> <p>Appendix II sets out a list of possible biodiversity actions for the Council based upon the outcomes of targeted consultation undertaken when preparing the first biodiversity strategy action plan in 2008.</p>

⁴ To do otherwise runs the risk of being unable to deliver on community expectations or spreading resources too thinly for effective outcomes, such as focusing on carrying out direct control where a focus on building landowner and community knowledge and capacity to do that control may produce greater results.

4. Priorities for biodiversity

This section sets out four priority areas (and explanation) for the Taranaki Regional Council to achieve the Strategy's vision for biodiversity. The priorities take into account the Council's authorisation for undertaking biodiversity work, the extensive scope for biodiversity work in the region, and the Council's existing capacity, skills and experience (i.e. the strategic considerations outlined in Table 2).

Council's Top Biodiversity Priorities⁵

1. Continue to grow and implement an integrated and co-ordinated biodiversity protection and enhancement programme, that supports private landowners with Key Native Ecosystems (regionally significant sites) representing the full suite of ecosystems within the region.
2. Acknowledge the biodiversity component of existing Council programmes, particularly the provision of education and advice. Bring an increased 'biodiversity focus' to these programmes, especially as they relate to Key Native Ecosystems and other sites or places with regionally significant biodiversity values.
3. Where appropriate, facilitate improved coordination of biodiversity work undertaken by different agencies, trusts and community groups across Taranaki and, in particular, consider and investigate larger landscape scale biodiversity initiatives, while partnering with others.
4. Contribute to the management and development of biodiversity information systems relevant to Taranaki to ensure management decisions are based on sound scientific information and to enable the monitoring of outcomes for biodiversity in the Region and the revision of priorities as necessary.

⁵ In no priority order.

4.1 Private Key Native Ecosystems

Continue to grow and implement an integrated and co-ordinated biodiversity protection and enhancement programme that prioritise support towards private landowners with Key Native Ecosystems (regionally significant sites).

Explanation

All landowners within the region wanting to protect biodiversity on their properties are eligible for advice and information from the Council. However to effectively maintain biodiversity and ecological condition across a full range of indigenous ecosystems in Taranaki, the Council will prioritise its work and funding to sites on private land with regionally significant indigenous biodiversity values.⁶

The *Inventory of Key Native Ecosystems* (2008) has been the first step in identifying sites to be prioritised for biodiversity protection. It recognises that in terms of the Council's vision of maintaining the full suite of ecosystems within the region, some ecosystem types are more vulnerable to use and development than others (e.g. wetlands and lowland forest) or are now very poorly represented in the region. Information on original and residual extent of the region's ecosystems will also be important in helping target engagement with the owners of potential KNE.

Identifying and prioritising sites is a means to ensuring that limited resources are directed to the most important sites first, or sites where the Council can make the most practical difference in a sustainable way. Like elsewhere in New Zealand, much of Taranaki's remaining rare and threatened indigenous biodiversity is found on private land. Many habitat types and species depend upon these remnants for their survival.

The Council will continue to work collaboratively with landowners on issues such as legal protection, fencing,

⁶ Site prioritisation has previously been supported by the community through consultative processes for the Regional Policy Statement, LTP and the previous Biodiversity Strategy. It also reflects the National Priorities for protecting rare and threatened indigenous biodiversity on private land.

revegetation, pest management, monitoring and technical advice and support.

This prioritization contributes to the Council's vision of maintaining a full representative range of ecosystems and habitats by focusing on those most vulnerable or representatively rare in Taranaki.

4.2 Building on existing Council programmes

Acknowledge the biodiversity component of existing Taranaki Regional Council programmes, particularly the provision of education and advice. Bring an increased 'biodiversity focus' to these programmes, especially as they relate to Key Native Ecosystems and other sites or places with regionally significant biodiversity values.

Explanation

Biodiversity work, by its very nature, requires a 'whole of agency' approach. Practically every section of the Council undertakes some sort of biodiversity work, therefore there is an opportunity for existing Council programmes to contribute and/or add value to biodiversity outcomes.

The Council has a number of existing programmes that already contribute to biodiversity outcomes on private land, rivers, streams and wetlands, and in the coastal marine area in the region. The Council will maintain and enhance the 'biodiversity focus' of these programmes to:

1. Take action where there is **urgent and imminent threat** to local populations of indigenous flora and fauna
2. Take action to avoid the incremental loss of habitat in the following order of priority:
 - **protect** what habitats we already have
 - **restore** degraded ecosystems
 - **create** new areas of habitat.

In line with its vision, the Council will bring an increased biodiversity focus to existing programmes, particularly where these are focused on threatened land environments, wetlands, sand dunes, 'originally rare' ecosystems or habitats for threatened species.

4.3 Working with others

Where appropriate, facilitate improved coordination of biodiversity work undertaken by different agencies, trusts and community groups across Taranaki and, in particular, consider and investigate larger landscape scale biodiversity initiatives, while partnering with others.

Explanation

The Council is well placed strategically to add value to the business of biodiversity management on private land in Taranaki. The Council will facilitate better coordination of all the region's various biodiversity related groups, agencies, trusts, iwi and individuals. Greater coordination will contribute to greater efficiencies and biodiversity outcomes for Taranaki.

The RPS signals that the Council will promote integrated management of indigenous biodiversity in the Taranaki region by working with other agencies, community groups, trusts and individuals.

The Council is particularly interested in supporting Wild for Taranaki (Taranaki Biodiversity Trust) as part of its ongoing work supporting other agencies and community groups. It is envisaged that members of Wild for Taranaki will make effective and valuable contributions to some flagship projects that will protect and enhance Taranaki's biodiversity on a regional scale. Wild for Taranaki has identified the following key regional projects:

- 'Restoring Taranaki'
- 'Wild for Wetlands'
- 'Wild for the Coast', and;
- The 'Community Biodiversity Fund'.

These projects along with 'Project Taranaki Mounga'⁷ are considered by the Council to be 'iconic projects' that involve collective regional action. These projects, will amplify the biodiversity work being undertaken by individual agencies and community groups, showcase good biodiversity protection techniques and contribute

⁷ *Project Taranaki Mounga is a ten+ year project involving pest eradication and reintroduction of species over the 34,000ha of Egmont National Park and off-shore islands. It is a collaborative project involving DOC, iwi, the NEXT Foundation and the local community including the Council. The vision of the project is to 'protect our mountain for our wellbeing – Ko Taranaki tooku whakaruruhau'. Project Mounga also recognises the important role of involving the regional community in the control of invasive animals and plants and biodiversity protection and enhancement, in a 'halo' adjacent the national park and outwards to the sea and eastern hill country - connecting up Taranaki biodiversity.*

to a network of 'biodiversity-jewels' in the Taranaki landscape.

The Council also recognizes and supports 'significant' independent trust projects that are highly organized, make significant contributions to biodiversity in their project areas, and provide significant opportunities for local and wider community involvement. These trusts include:

- Lake Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust
- Purangi Kiwi
- Tiaki Te Mauri O Parinihi Trust, and
- Rapanui Grey Faced Petrel Trust
- Taranaki Kiwi Trust.

Opportunities exist to work more collaboratively with the three territorial authorities in the region to achieve greater support of the owners of private land in order to maintain significant biodiversity values. It is also of importance that the Council works closely with the Department of Conservation in the mutual identification of priority areas for active management and maintenance of biodiversity across a full suite of representative ecosystems within the region.

Working with other agencies is particularly relevant to the marine environment where the Council's mandate is focused on the coastal marine area and managing it under the RMA. This alone will not fully achieve indigenous biodiversity outcomes as the management of the coastal marine area rests with the Crown and is carried out by the DOC and MPI. The Council does not intend to take over or duplicate Crown management responsibilities, but could contribute to improved coordination between the agencies.

4.4 Information management and gathering

Contribute to the management and development of biodiversity information systems relevant to Taranaki to ensure management decisions are based on sound scientific information and to enable the monitoring of outcomes for biodiversity in the Region and the revision of priorities as necessary.

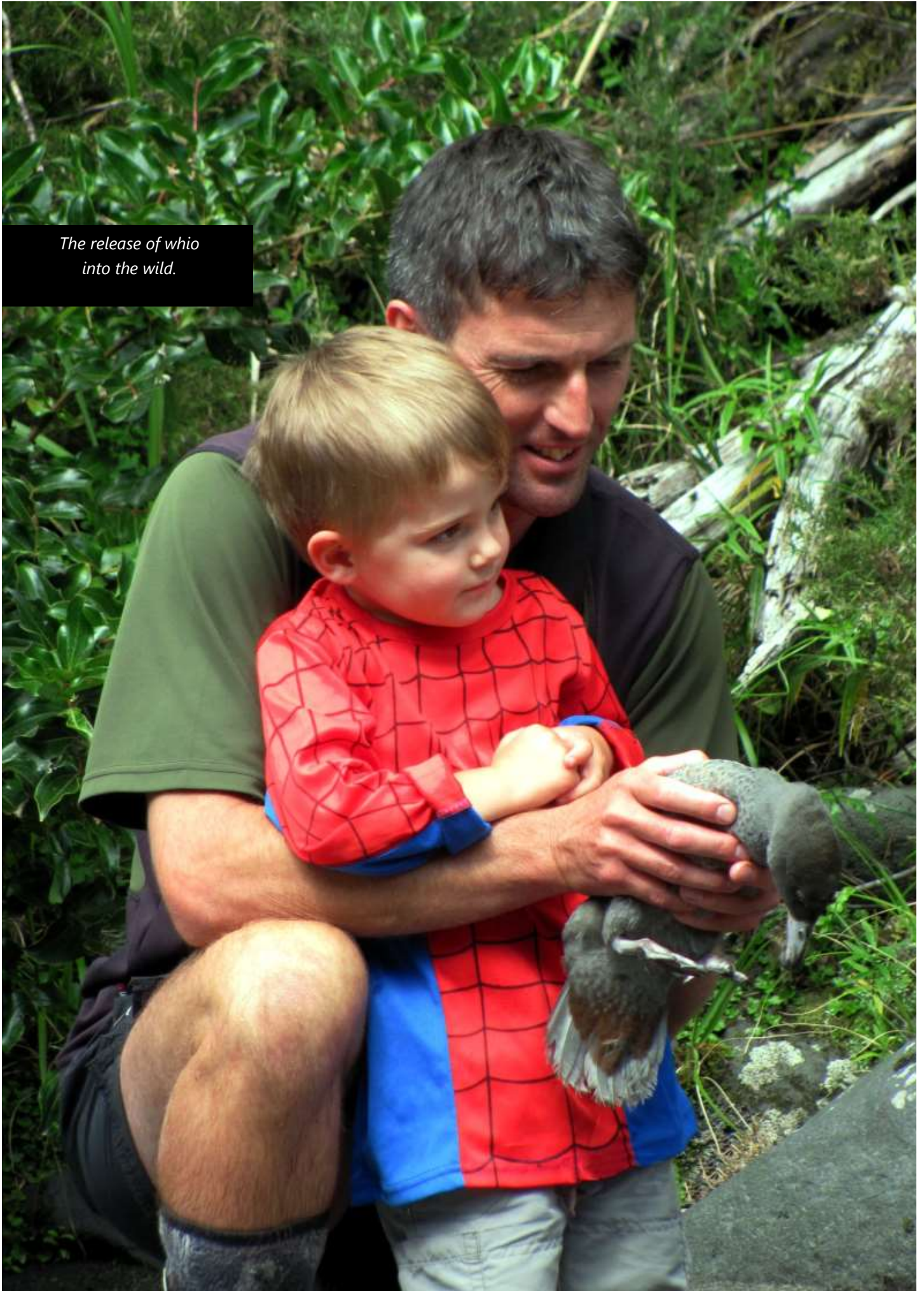
Explanation

Biodiversity management, like all other aspects of resource management, relies on having good systems for gathering and managing data and information. Systems need to be maintained, reviewed and improved for identifying and gathering strategic and relevant biodiversity information. In particular work undertaken with Key Native Ecosystems requires systems for managing information for site identification and prioritization, identification of significant values, threats, planning, management and monitoring information.

The Council has a longstanding philosophy of undertaking resource management from a position of sound scientific information. The biodiversity field is no different. It is important to identify strategic indicators to measure progress with Council policies and to gather information for specific resource investigations to inform decision making. The Council has commenced establishing baseline data in selected indicators and will be measuring changes resulting from biodiversity management and changes within the region generally as part of its state of the environment and operational monitoring.

Working with DOC and others to gather regional species distribution data would be highly beneficial. This data is essential if we, as a region, are to ensure that all species present are represented within priority habitat areas for protection, either on private land or land administered by DOC, and possibly by district councils.

The Council could also support regional initiatives that serve the wider biodiversity community through development of information gathering platforms that can be contributed to by the wider community. Further investigations on the most effective means of supporting community gathered data could be made.



*The release of who
into the wild.*

5. Plan of action –what we want to do

This section sets out the actions either being undertaken or proposed to be undertaken by the Taranaki Regional Council in relation to maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity.

Programmes and activities are structured according to the strategic priority areas identified in Section 4:

1. Key Native Ecosystems programme;
2. Biodiversity in existing Council programmes;
3. Integrating with others working in the biodiversity field; and
4. Information gathering and management.

In the sections that follow, an objective has been identified for each priority area.

In relation to each objective, the key activities, measures and targets to be undertaken or achieved are identified. Most activities are already being implemented by the Council. However, some activities seek to enhance or build on existing programmes or represent a new activity.

The Umutekai Wetland on the outskirts of New Plymouth.



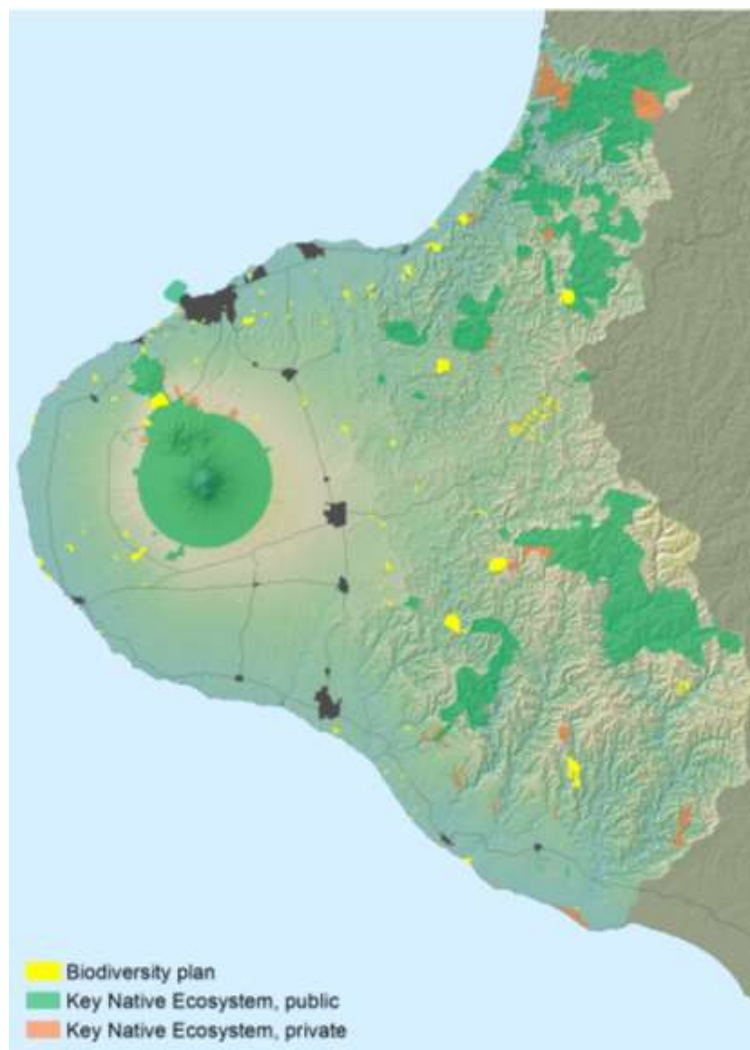
5.1 Key Native Ecosystems programme

5.1.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Key Native Ecosystem programme are:

For the duration of the Strategy, maintain and improve the condition of sites with regionally significant indigenous biodiversity values, primarily on private land and, within the Taranaki region, by:

1. *Identifying sites with regionally significant indigenous biodiversity values – Key Native Ecosystems (KNEs)*
2. *Prioritising privately owned KNEs for site management, particularly sites representing the full suite of ecosystems within the region and other areas of particular ecological significance*
3. *Preparing Biodiversity Plans for priority KNE sites, with an integrated package of actions*
4. *Supporting landowners and community groups with the implementation of biodiversity plans providing ongoing information and management advice.*



Key Native Ecosystems with Council-developed Biodiversity Plans at July 1 2017

5.1.2 Identifying Key Native Ecosystems

An initial identification has been made of regionally significant sites, or Key Native Ecosystems (TRC, 2006). The Key Native Ecosystem inventory included regionally significant sites on land, most regionally significant wetlands and some coastal sites. This work has regularly been updated and is maintained on the Council's GIS system and relevant databases.

5.1.3 Prioritising Key Native Ecosystems for action

As at 1 July 2016, the Council's Inventory of KNEs includes 218 sites, 172 of which are partially or completely privately owned. At that time numerous KNEs were subject to landowner management, with 101 Biodiversity Plans subject to ongoing Council support. The Council is targeting sites where the greatest amount of biodiversity protection could be achieved, alongside willing landowners, in the most cost effective manner.

Over the next ten years the Council will continue to constructively engage with KNE landowners, in order of ecological priority. The focus is to bring as many KNE under biodiversity management as possible, to a level as agreed with well informed landowners.

5.1.4 Preparation of Biodiversity Plans for Key Native Ecosystems

A planned approach to the management of KNE sites is important to ensure that landowner management actions are effective and efficient.

The Council will continue to incrementally extend its KNE biodiversity planning programme throughout Taranaki. The Council has developed much experience with preparing '*Biodiversity Plans*'. These 'site led' plans vary according to the complexity of management needs at a particular site and capacity of its owners. Developing a property-specific biodiversity plan of the required management actions will:

- provide the landowner with a clear idea of the values of the site, actual and potential threats to those values, and what management is required to sustainably manage the site for biodiversity purposes
- define respective roles and responsibilities (landowner, Council and others) to ensure responsibilities are allocated for the various management actions, and
- assist landowners to access funds from the various funding pools available (e.g. QEII, TRC Environmental Enhancement Grant, district council heritage funds, Wild for Taranaki, Biodiversity Condition Fund etc).

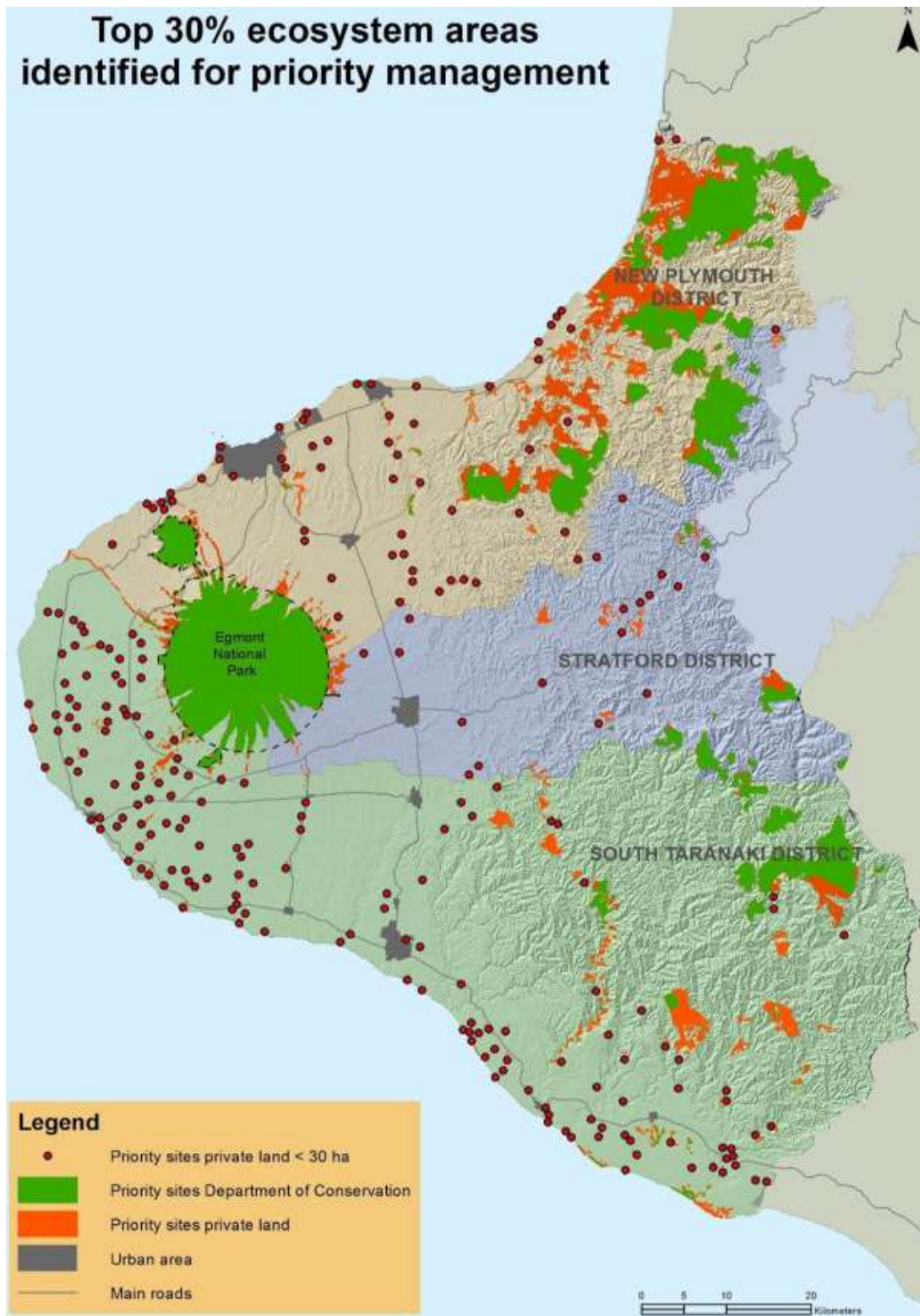
Implementation of initial Biodiversity Plans, typically over a five-year timeframe, provides the opportunity to increase landowner knowledge around site management and the opportunity for Council to assist with initial biodiversity protection and control of threats. Revised plans may be prepared for subsequent management beyond 5 years, in order to take stock of achievements and to set out an ongoing maintenance regime for the landowner, alongside ongoing advice from Council officers.

In addition to site-led Biodiversity Plans there is scope to develop plans that include wider consideration of ecosystems and threats at the landscape scale.

With some plans, liaising with other agencies is a critical part of the planning process, as those other agencies may already have developed a relationship with the landowner. It is important to streamline the management of biodiversity at certain sites to avoid doubling up of effort. Other agencies or community groups may also be helpful in terms of information gathering, monitoring progress, funding, volunteer support etc.

5.1.5 Implementing biodiversity plans and providing supporting information, advice and assistance

The key to effective implementation of Biodiversity Plans for KNEs will be the Council working with and developing a good relationship with the landowner. The Council's assistance and support to implement Biodiversity Plan recommendations should facilitate and empower the landowner to undertake the necessary management steps. The Council will also liaise with other agencies where appropriate to support the landowner in their management of a KNE.



Top 30% ecosystem areas prioritized for biodiversity plans

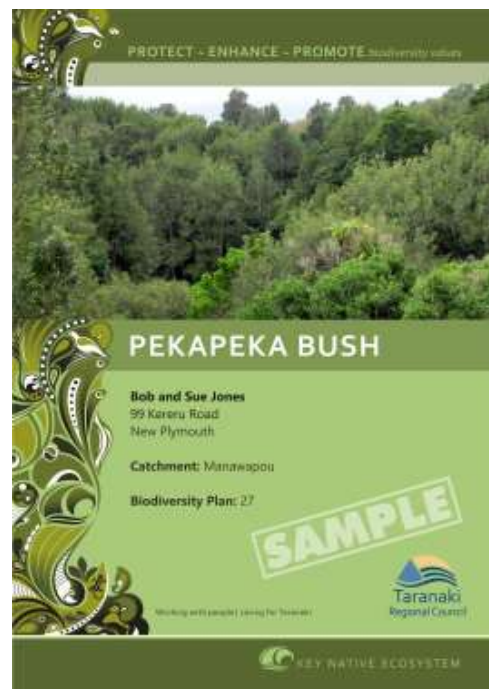
5.1.6 Measuring and reporting progress with the KNE programme

The Council will report regularly to its Policy and Planning Committee on progress with implementing the KNE programme through quarterly reports. Measuring its progress with implementing the KNE programme will also be reported annually as part of the Long Term Plan process under the Local Government Act 2002 and five yearly as part of the Council's state of the environment reporting on biodiversity outcomes undertaken pursuant to section 35 of the RMA.

Key performance indicators for the KNE Programme are:

1. Number, or area (ha) of KNEs added to inventory
2. Number of KNEs with a Biodiversity Plan and area (ha) covered by site specific and landscape scale plans
3. Progress with management recommendations from the Plans
4. Change in the number, or area (ha) of KNEs under formal protection (legal covenants, Council Memorandums of Encumbrance, or rules in district or regional plans)
5. Number of KNEs, or area (ha) under a sustained animal pest control programme (i.e. including area within the self help possum control programme)
6. Number of KNEs, or area (ha) under a sustained weed control programme
7. Number of KNEs that are fully fenced or otherwise stock proof
8. Number of KNEs in receipt of biodiversity funds (from a range of sources – Council funds, district council funds, QEII, central government funds etc)
9. Change in biodiversity condition of specific sites that are being monitored through Biodiversity Plans
10. Change in biodiversity indicators across representative KNE sites (refer Section 5.4 actions).

A biodiversity plan is prepared in consultation with the landowner, providing them with a clear idea of what is required to protect a KNE's biodiversity values. It also details what work the landowner can perform and areas where Council staff or other groups may help.



5.2 Enhancing biodiversity component in other Council programmes

5.2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Council's biodiversity work generally are:

For the duration of the Strategy, to enhance the biodiversity focus of existing Taranaki Regional Council programmes and activities by:

1. *Building biodiversity capacity and awareness across the Council*
2. *Promoting biodiversity outcomes through policy development and review*
3. *Increasing peoples awareness and changing attitudes and behaviour through public information, advice and communications*
4. *Promoting biodiversity outcomes through the Sustainable Land Management Programmes*
5. *Promoting biodiversity outcomes through pest management programmes*
6. *Exercising legislative powers to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity from use and development of natural resources.*

5.2.2 Building in-house capacity within the Council

Maintenance of indigenous biodiversity covers a whole spectrum of activities across the entire Council's functions. Recognising biodiversity as part of the culture and ethos of the Taranaki Regional Council enables staff to identify and take up opportunities for undertaking biodiversity work within their own work area.

5.2.3 Policy development and review

The Council develops and reviews policies under the RMA and the Biosecurity Act. The Council will seek to integrate biodiversity actions into its other RMA and biosecurity plans. There are many areas of policy that could be reviewed to give a greater biodiversity focus or to provide the systems to streamline biodiversity actions.

5.2.4 Information, advice and communications

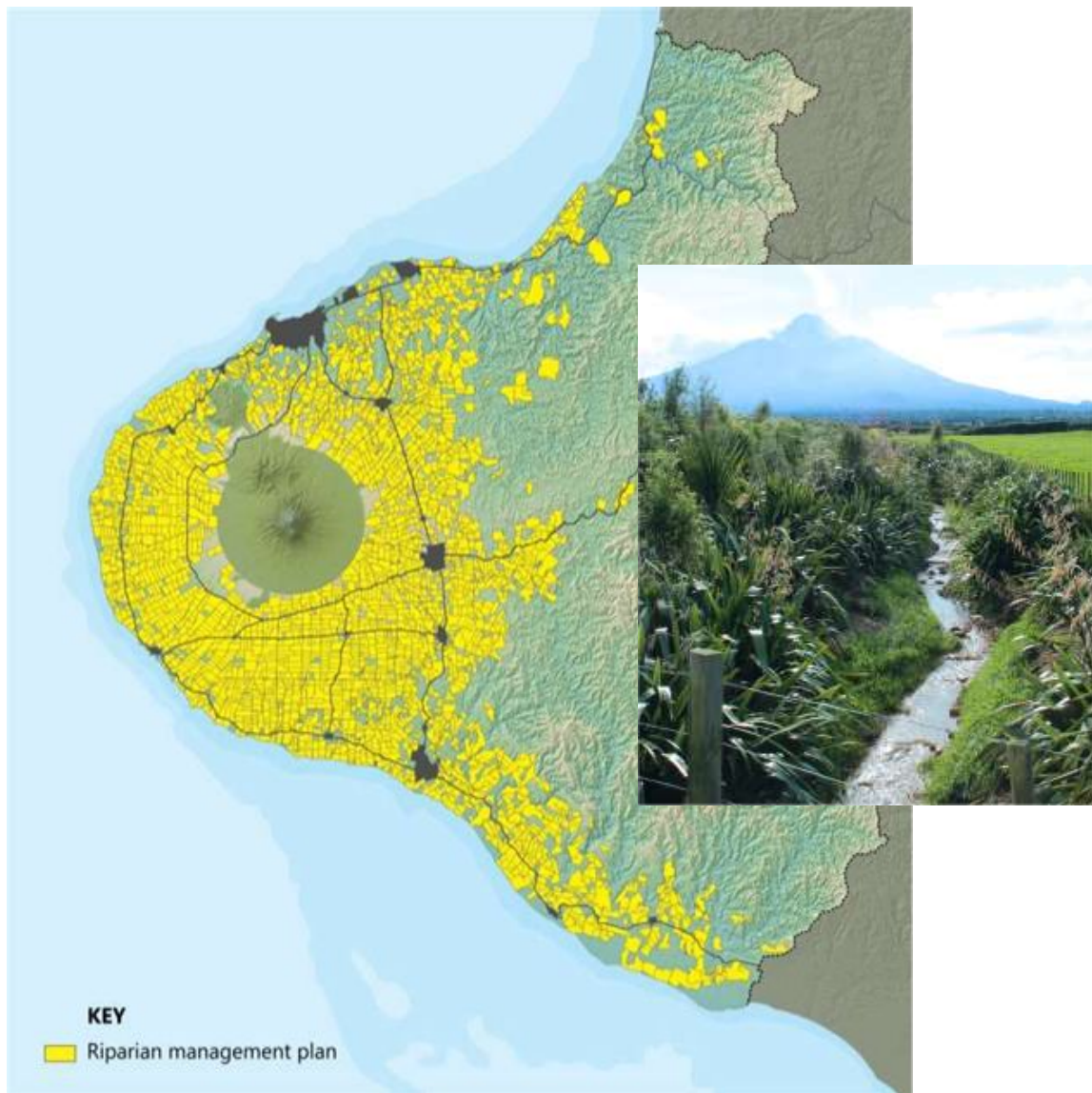
Increasing people's awareness, capacity to act, and changing attitudes and behaviours so that biodiversity is appropriately valued is critically important. The provision of information, advice, education and communications are key methods used by the Council to raise public awareness and understanding of issues and subsequently to lead to behavioural change. The Council will undertake biodiversity communication activities in accordance with the *Environment Services Communication Plan*.



5.2.5 Sustainable land management programmes

The Council's sustainable land management programmes provide landowners with advice and information on riparian restoration on the ring plain and sustainable management of the hill country. The Taranaki Riparian Management Programme, in particular, is transforming the Taranaki landscape by creating ecological corridors, from the mountain to the sea, through stock exclusion and riparian planting along Taranaki waterways traversing intensively farmed land on the ring plain and coastal terraces.

The Council's environmental enhancement grant funding may be used for the protection of significant biodiversity within the region. Sustainable land management programmes are important components of the Council's freshwater, terrestrial and coastal biodiversity work. In recent years a shift in focus has accentuated the biodiversity benefits of these programmes.

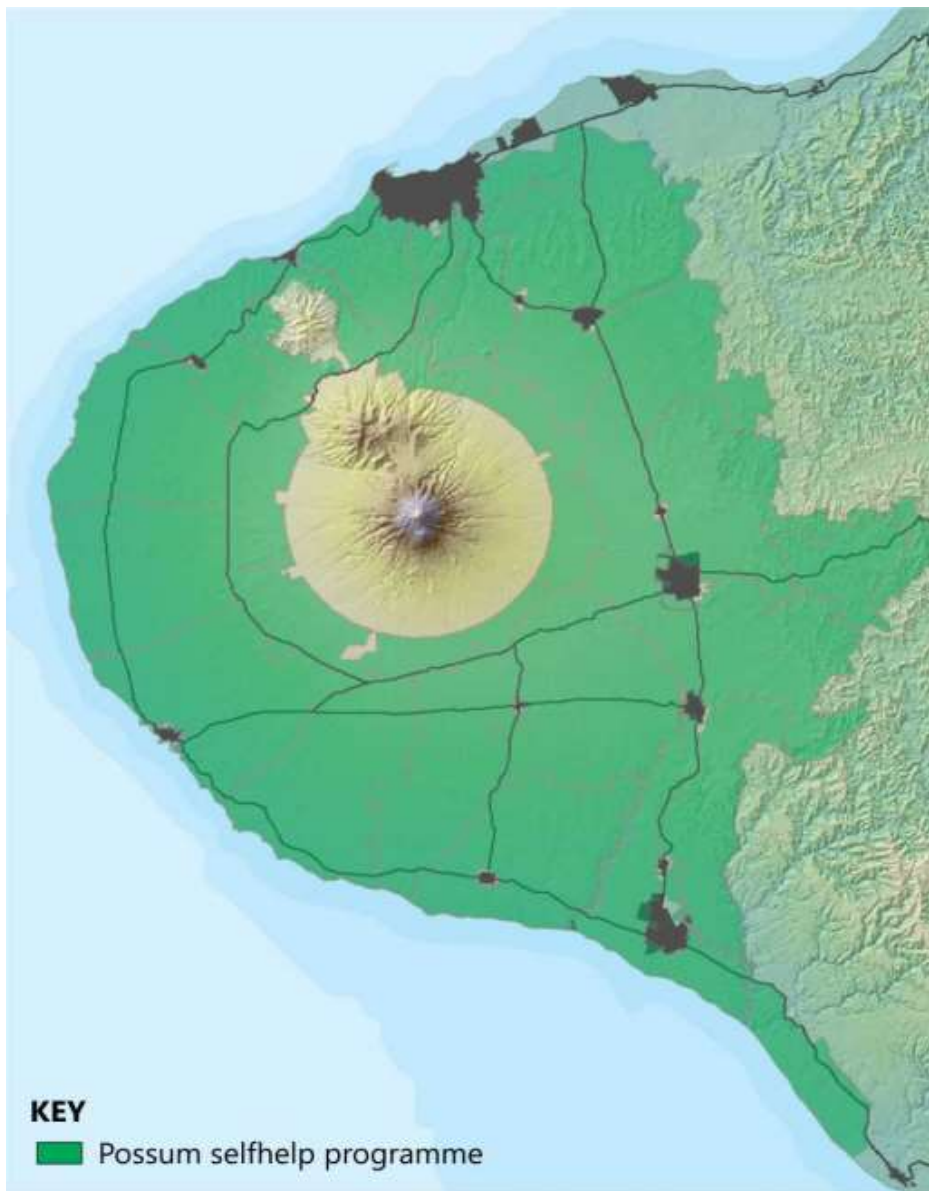


Riparian management plans covering almost all of the ring plain and coastal terraces create potential wildlife corridors in the region – from the mountain to the sea.

5.2.6 Pest animal and plant management programmes

The Council's pest management programmes focus on invasive animals and plants that pose a problem to both agriculture and the natural environment. The Council's self help possum control programme covers the majority of the ring plain with the aim of maintaining possum numbers below 10% residual trap catch (RTC). This is an important and valuable contribution to safeguarding biodiversity on threatened land environments. However, the Council also manages other ecological pests within the region through a site-led approach, including predators (rodents, mustelids, hedgehogs, cats) and browsers (pigs, goats and deer).

There is an increasing interest within the national and regional community for landscape scale predator and browser control, or even predator free status, to protect biodiversity as well as land productivity.



By June 2016, the Self-help Possum Control Programme covered approximately 32% of the region.

5.2.7 Consenting and enforcement

The Council exercises legislative powers under the RMA and the Biosecurity Act. Consenting and enforcement is an important component of the Council's overall biodiversity work whereby biodiversity outcomes can be promoted through the processing, monitoring and enforcing of resource consents, or through the enforcing of rules developed under pest management plans.

5.2.8 Measuring and reporting progress with enhancing biodiversity in existing programmes

The Council will report regularly to its Policy and Planning Committee on the progress of biodiversity achievements of existing programmes through quarterly reports and as part of the Long Term Plan process under the Local Government Act 2002 and five yearly as part of the Council's state of the environment reporting on biodiversity outcomes undertaken pursuant to section 35 of the RMA.

Key performance indicators for enhancing biodiversity in existing programmes are:

1. Trends arising from digital media monitoring
2. Number of riparian property plans or comprehensive farm plans prepared
3. Length of stream bank where riparian vegetation has been fenced and restored⁸
4. Trends in the number of consents granted for piping or realigning small streams for land improvement purposes (as a contra indicator)
5. Change in hill country land that has been retired
6. Amount of indigenous vegetation remaining in the region
7. Amount of wetland habitat remaining in the region
8. Trends in assessment of ecological condition at managed forest and wetland sites
9. Number of regionally significant wetlands covenanted or formally protected.
10. Number of properties in Self-help Possum Control Programme with residual trap catch levels below 10% post treatment
11. Number of structures in streams that are a barrier to fish passage⁹
12. Amount of money allocated from the Council's environmental enhancement grant.

⁸ Refer to targets relating to dairy farms for preparation and implementation of property plans in the Sustainable Dairying Accord.

⁹ Dams, Weirs and Other Barriers to Fish Passage in Taranaki (2001).



The Council's Education Officer leads students on a journey of conservation discovery as part of the Rainforest School at Pukeiti.



The Council's Land Management Officers work with farmers in the hill country to promote sustainable land management practices including the retirement of remnant wetlands and bush.

5.3 Working with others

5.3.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Council in working with others are:

To contribute to co-ordination and help build capacity for the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous vegetation and the habitats of indigenous species within the region by:

- 1. Establishing and participating in biodiversity forums*
- 2. Establishing protocols with key conservation agencies and community groups involved in biodiversity*
- 3. Working with and supporting other agencies and community groups to improve biodiversity outcomes related to iconic and significant projects*
- 4. Working with iwi on biodiversity management*
- 5. Working with other key conservation agencies and community groups involved in biodiversity to add value to the business of biodiversity management in Taranaki*
- 6. Advocating and lobbying to other agencies and organisations to promote biodiversity outcomes for the region.*



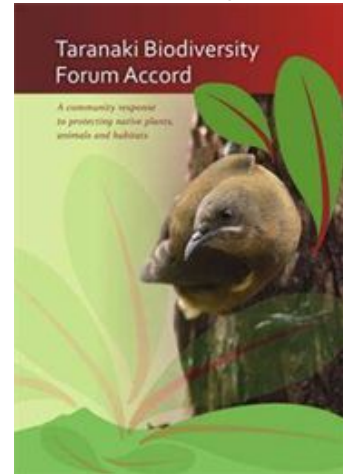
5.3.2 Biodiversity forums

Taranaki is one of a number of regions where a regional biodiversity forum is being used for promoting networking, information dissemination and integrated management, including assessing partnership options for the integrated delivery of services and funding.

The Taranaki Biodiversity Trust, branded 'Wild for Taranaki', includes the Council and arose from biodiversity forum activity.

Wild for Taranaki builds on the work of the former Taranaki Tree Trust, which administered funding and published guidelines for restoration planting. Wild for Taranaki aims to identify significant partnering projects, where regional biodiversity groups can work together to achieve and demonstrate landscape scale biodiversity protection within the region. Wild for Taranaki is also seeking to regularly run community events and workshops, coordinate the receipt and redistribution of biodiversity funding to support initiatives within the region, plus maintain a database of existing community biodiversity projects.

The Council may participate in other forums, or platforms for collaboration and information sharing, with individual government agencies and non government organisations or groups with a topical interest.



5.3.3 Protocols with others

Improving communication with other agencies, groups, trusts or individuals involved in biodiversity work will primarily be undertaken on an informal basis. However, there are specific occasions where more formal protocols or agreements, e.g. memorandums of understanding (MOUs) could help clarify roles and responsibilities.

Through establishing protocols (informal or formal) with community groups working on biodiversity, the Council has the opportunity to focus on capability building and identifying practical ways of supporting community initiatives.

Identifying ways to make private and community initiatives more viable, effective and durable will be the challenge for the Council, but in the long term, probably the most effective means of stretching limited resources. Such initiatives might include Council officers providing technical ecological input to habitat protection programmes and projects, or help with developing sustainable administrative capacity within community groups.



Council Environment Officer working with Conrad O'Carroll from Tiaki te Mauri O Parininihi Trust.

5.3.4 'Iconic' and 'significant' projects

The Council works with other agencies or community groups on a small number of 'big-ticket' projects that contribute to the protection of a network of 'biodiversity-jewels' in the Taranaki 'crown', particularly those that showcase Taranaki's biodiversity and the value of communities and different groups working together. These projects are referred to as either iconic or significant projects.

'Iconic' biodiversity projects, projects of the Wild for Taranaki Trust and Project Mouna, are recognized by the Council to be collaborative initiatives that will amplify the biodiversity work being undertaken by individual community groups or agencies. These projects will help develop and showcase good biodiversity protection and enhancement techniques, and connect up a network of control of invasive animals and plants for biodiversity protection at the regional scale.

'Significant' biodiversity projects include the Tiaki te Mauri O Parininihi Trust's Parininihi project where the Council has supported in intensive possum and rat control to protect ecosystems and to benefit kiwi and improve the potential return of kōkako to the region.

The Council has also provided technical and financial support to the Lake Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust in South Taranaki, whose work has included eradicating introduced mammals and constructing a predator-proof fence around 230 hectares of remnant forest and wetland around Lake Rotokare. This has led to an improvement in many indigenous plant and animal populations. The tieke (saddleback) and whitehead, previously lost from the area, have both been successfully reintroduced to the Reserve.

The Council also works with the Purangi Kiwi, a restoration trust that targets possums, goats, and stoats on more than 13,000 hectares in north-eastern Taranaki in efforts to improve habitat condition and to secure and enhance species, including a notable population of the Western North Island brown kiwi. A core area of more than 1,000 hectares is extra-intensively controlled for rats and possums. This is to prepare a habitat suitable for reintroduction of kōkako to the region.

The Rapanui Grey Faced Petrel Trust and the Taranaki Kiwi Trust are species-lead initiatives that are also considered to be significant within the region. They have both proven to be sustainable and are well organized in mobilizing community effort in providing protection for their focus species.

Over the life of this Strategy, the level of Council involvement in iconic or significant projects will be assessed on a case by case basis taking into consideration:

- The project being based on sound scientific/ecological information
- The project covering sites and areas recognised as having regionally significant biodiversity values
- Strong and sustainable community and landowner support and active involvement
- The ability for the Council to assist by providing technical support and/or leveraging funds from the community or central government
- The ability of the project to become a public showcase of Taranaki's biodiversity (i.e. educational opportunities, level of public access etc), and
- The benefits of investing ratepayer resources.

5.3.5 Working with iwi

Māori are interconnected with the natural environment. As kaitiaki, Māori have a unique and important role in the protection, management, restoration and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity.

The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are the legal foundation for continued Māori connection with indigenous biodiversity, in particular in regard to the retention of rangatiratanga or sovereignty over resources and taonga. This recognises the diverse range of interests that tangata whenua have with biodiversity ranging from governance to protection, to customary and commercial use.

Of importance to tangata whenua is the ability to maintain and sustain Mātauranga Māori (Māori traditional knowledge) through biodiversity. Mātauranga Māori includes traditional biodiversity protection mechanisms tapu (ban) rahui (temporary ban) and noa



Opening ceremony of the kiwi kōhanga at Rotokare 2012.



Including iwi in monitoring of consents – e.g. Fonterra outfall discharge.

(lifting of the ban). Traditionally, these tools provided for sustainable use of indigenous resources and ensured that food, fibre and medicines in its many varieties would always be in plentiful supply.

Customary use describes traditional Māori use, practice, and knowledge carried out through the use of tikanga (customs), kawa (protocols) and Mātauranga Māori, as well as contemporary uses of biological resources. For example, native species are an important source of materials for carving, weaving, and rongoa (medicine). Alongside customary use, the growing commercial interests of iwi and hapū in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, and eco-tourism, are all associated with successful biodiversity management. Customary use is integral to sustaining relationships with traditional areas and maintaining Mātauranga Māori.

The Council recognises the importance of developing partnerships with iwi to progress biodiversity protection and enhancement. The Council is in the process of developing and formalising relationships with iwi. This will help to better engage with iwi on biodiversity matters. Both the Council and iwi have 'kaitiakitanga' roles to play in the management of biodiversity and opportunities to work together will need to be sought.

5.3.6 Working with others

In addition to 'iconic' or 'significant' projects in Taranaki, many agencies, community groups and individuals have an interest in biodiversity and it is sensible and more efficient to work collaboratively with others. Along with other

agencies, the Council provides funding to private landowners or to trusts for biodiversity projects on private land. Between 2008 and 2013, the Council allocated a total of \$1,857,295 through the Environmental Enhancement Grant. The New Plymouth District Council also allocated \$138,083 through its Natural Heritage Fund and DOC allocated \$882,646 through the Community Conservation Partnerships Fund (formerly the Biodiversity Condition Fund).

The Council could also play a role in setting up and running information gathering platforms that the whole community could feed information into. The Council is not the only agency or group interested in gathering biodiversity information, and indeed, it is sensible and more efficient to work collaboratively with others to both identify information needs and gather information.



Working closely with the many other organisations and individuals is the most effective means of stretching limited resources.

5.3.7 Advocacy

A key tool at the Council's disposal for biodiversity work is advocacy – at both the regional and national level. The Council will identify specific opportunities for advocacy to promote biodiversity outcomes for Taranaki.

5.3.8 Measuring and reporting progress with working with others on biodiversity programmes

The Council will measure and report the progress with working with others on biodiversity projects annually as part of the Long Term Plan process under the Local Government Act 2002 and five yearly as part of the Council's state of the environment reporting on biodiversity outcomes undertaken pursuant to section 35 of the RMA. A system will be developed for gathering this information, and will incorporate case studies to illustrate examples of the Council adding value through facilitating greater networking and communication between agencies and community groups.

Key performance indicators for working with others are:

1. Establishment and support for the Taranaki Biodiversity Forum and Wild for Taranaki initiatives
2. Number of community groups undertaking work to maintain biodiversity and area in hectares covered
3. Level of Council funding distributed to Taranaki landowners and community biodiversity initiatives.
4. Level of funding realised and re-distributed to biodiversity initiatives within the region by Wild for Taranaki
5. Submissions made to other agencies to advocate for biodiversity outcomes.
6. Number of formal partnerships/protocols/memorandums established.
7. Progress with significant and collaborative regional biodiversity projects (recognising and acknowledging the different levels of commitment and contributions to projects).



The regionally extinct tīeke (saddleback) has been successfully re-introduced at Lake Rotokare through the combined efforts of a large number of organisations and individuals led by the Lake Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust.



5.4 Monitoring and information management and sharing

5.4.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Council in biodiversity monitoring and information management and sharing are:

To develop and manage efficient and effective systems for gathering and managing data and information on indigenous biodiversity in the Taranaki region by:

1. *Gathering monitoring information on the effectiveness of the Council's management actions relating to biodiversity;*
2. *Gathering state of the environment monitoring information on terrestrial, freshwater and coastal biodiversity to inform future reviews of Council policy;*
3. *Exploring and supporting opportunities for the consolidation and sharing of biodiversity information between interested parties about indigenous biodiversity in the region; and*
4. *Undertaking or commissioning biodiversity resource investigations as appropriate.*

5.4.2 Operational monitoring and information management

The Council maintains a number of databases that it uses to manage its work. Furthermore, many areas of work are digitalised and represented spatially in a GIS. There are different types of information that need to be managed for either further analysis or to record information on management actions undertaken at regionally significant wetlands, KNES, and other regionally significant biodiversity sites.

5.4.3 State of biodiversity in Taranaki

The Council gathers information on biodiversity as part of its State of Environment (SoE) reporting under the RMA.

The state of the region's terrestrial biodiversity is largely monitored through four programmes outlined in the *Terrestrial Biodiversity Monitoring Plan for Taranaki*. These programmes monitor the extent and condition of forest, wetland and coastal ecosystems, the pressures on them and Council and community efforts for improving the regions biodiversity. Monitoring sites include both managed sites (such as KNEs with biodiversity plans) and unmanaged sites. Additional general condition monitoring is also conducted at other managed KNE and Regionally Significant Wetlands through regular condition assessments. Freshwater and coastal biodiversity are separately monitored for under other consents and SoE related programmes.



5.4.4 Consolidating and sharing regional biodiversity data and information

In addition to the Council, other parties have a significant role and are active in biodiversity management in the Taranaki region. Many other agencies, groups and organisations therefore gather and maintain information that may be of interest to others.

To promote the effectiveness and efficiency of our respective efforts the Council will work with others to explore ways to incorporate information gathered by other groups.

5.4.5 Biodiversity resource investigations

On a case-by-case basis, the Council will carry out one off specific resource investigations identified as necessary for establishing a solid scientific baseline of biodiversity information and to inform Council's management decisions.

5.4.6 Measuring progress with working with biodiversity information gathering and management

The Council will measure and report the progress with biodiversity information gathering and management annually as part of the Long Term Plan process under the Local Government Act 2002 and, five yearly as part of the Council's state of the environment reporting on biodiversity outcomes undertaken pursuant to section 35 of the RMA. The Council's five-yearly State of Environment report will also be a critical vehicle for reporting overall trends in biodiversity across the region, and across land, freshwater and marine ecosystems. Input for the State of the Environment report will be sought from all the various groups working on biodiversity in the region.

Key performance indicators for monitoring and the gathering and sharing of biodiversity information are:

1. Maintenance and development of biodiversity databases for managing information on KNEs.
2. Reporting on the condition of KNE and Regionally Significant Wetland sites..
3. Preparation of integrated biodiversity chapter for the State of Environment report.
4. Collaboration with regional biodiversity data management initiatives.
5. Progress with identified biodiversity resource investigations.



6. Monitoring and reviewing the Strategy

This section outlines the monitoring and review provisions of the Strategy.

6.1 Monitoring implementation of the Strategy

The Council will report regularly to its Policy and Planning Committee on progress with implementing the Strategy.

Measuring its progress with implementing the KNE programme will also be reported annually as part of the Long Term Plan process under the Local Government Act 2002.

The Council will also report five yearly as part of the Council's state of the environment reporting on biodiversity outcomes undertaken pursuant to section 35 of the RMA. The Council's 5 yearly State of Environment report is a critical vehicle for reporting overall trends in biodiversity across the region, and across land, freshwater and marine ecosystems. Input for the SOE report will be sought from all the various groups working on biodiversity in the region.

6.2 Review of the Strategy

The Strategy is a 10 year document. However, to ensure it continues to be relevant and up-to-date, the Council will commence an interim review:

- Where relevant circumstances have changed to a significant extent since the commencement of the Strategy, including the promulgation of new Government legislation or policy or the review of New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy and the *National Priorities for Protecting Rare and Threatened Native Biodiversity on Private Land*
- Every five years to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Strategy (i.e. 2022).

A review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Strategy will include:

- An assessment of the efficiency of the Strategy in relation to the extent to which Strategy actions were implemented (i.e. did we do what we said we would do)
- An assessment of the effectiveness of the Strategy in relation to achieving the desired outcomes and addressing the priorities
- A report to the Policy and Planning Committee of the Council on the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Strategy.

Progress on implementing the Strategy will be monitored and reported on in a number of ways:

- 'Biodiversity Significant Activity Reports' will be prepared quarterly that address progress with biodiversity functions across the whole of Council's operations;
- The Council's annual report will report against targets and measures set out in the LTP;
- A number of individual programmes are likely to be reported on individually in more specific detail, particularly working with others including Wild for Taranaki, resource investigations or high profile KNE projects and new KNEs identified; and
- The Council's five-yearly State of the Environment report will contain a biodiversity chapter, which will report on the state and pressures on biodiversity across the region. Other chapters will also report on matters pertaining to biodiversity, such as the state land and freshwater resources and biosecurity issues within the region.

The above reporting opportunities will be used by the Council to report on progress with implementing national policies such as the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy, the *National Priorities for Protecting Rare and Threatened Native Biodiversity on Private Land* and any relevant national policy statement.

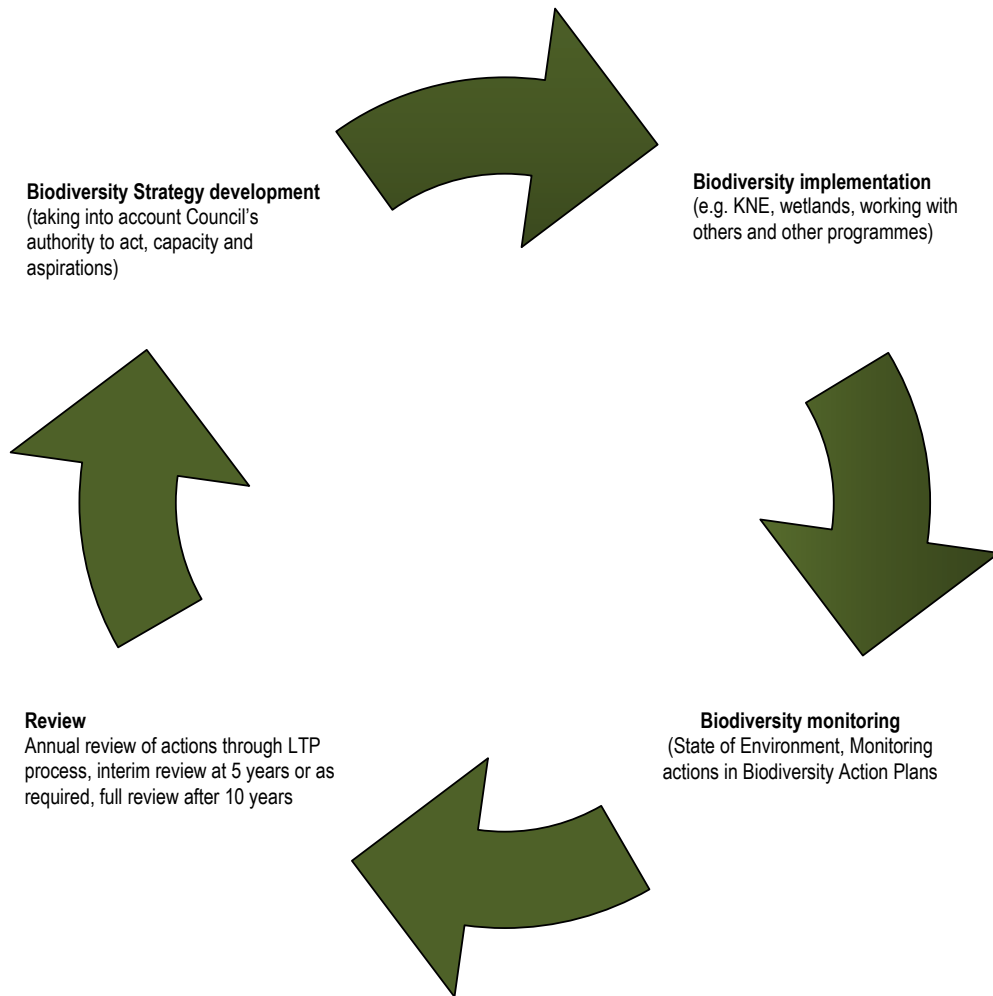


Figure 1: The planning, implementing and reviewing cycle of biodiversity planning



Definition of terms

This section provides the meanings for terms used in the Strategy.

Active management refers to physical works and action on land for the purposes of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity values. Active management includes species recovery programmes, habitat restoration and sustained weed and pest control.

Areal refers to an area.

At risk means a species facing a longer-term risk of extinction in the wild (either because of severely reduced or naturally small population size or because the population is declining but buffered by either a large total population or a slow rate of decline) as identified in the New Zealand Threat Classification System lists.

Biological diversity (biodiversity) means the variability among living organisms and the ecological complexes of which they are a part, including diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.

Capacity refers to the technical and technological ability, skills, knowledge and organisational structure required to undertake management actions, and to collect and interpret information.

Conservation refers to the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their intrinsic values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations.

Ecological context refers to the connectivity of a given site with the surrounding landscape and ecological processes.

Ecosystem refers to an ecological community together with its environment, functioning as a unit, an interacting system of living and non-living parts such as sunlight, air, water, minerals and nutrients.

Ecosystem prioritization means a systematic approach to conservation planning that identifies and prioritizes areas within residual ecosystems for active management. The approach acknowledges limited resources and aims to inform inter-agency and community collaboration in identifying, maintaining and restoring representative areas of the full suite of ecosystems within a region in a healthy and functioning state.

Endangered species means species in danger of extinction and whose survival is unlikely if the causal factors continue operating.

Endemic species refers to an indigenous species which breed only within a specified region or locality and is unique to that area.

Formally protected refers to the application of legal mechanisms, which provide long-term security of a geographically defined area for nature conservation purposes or to maintain biodiversity values. It may be either publicly or privately owned.

GIS refers to geographic information system.

Habitat refers to the place or type of area in which an organism naturally occurs.

Indigenous means native to New Zealand.

Indigenous species means a species or genetic variant found naturally in New Zealand, including migrant species visiting New Zealand on a regular or irregular basis.

Indigenous vegetation means any local indigenous plant community through the course of its growth or succession consisting primarily of native species and habitats normally associated with that vegetation type, soil or ecosystem or having the potential to develop these characteristics. It includes vegetation with these characteristics that has been regenerated with human assistance following disturbance or as mitigation for another activity, but excludes plantations and vegetation that have been established for commercial harvesting.

Introduced species refers to a plant or animal species which has been brought to New Zealand by humans, either by accident or design. A synonym is 'exotic species'.

Invasive species refers to introduced animal or plant species that can adversely affect indigenous species and ecosystems by altering genetic variation within species, or affecting the survival of species, or the quality or sustainability of natural communities.

Invertebrate refers to an animal without a backbone or spinal column, including insects, spiders, worms, slaters, corals, sponges and jellyfish.

Iwi refers to tribe or grouping of Maori people descended from a common ancestor(s).

Kaitiaki refers to a person who is active in the guardianship of the mauri of ecosystems.

Kaitiakitanga refers to the active protection and enhancement of the mauri of ecosystems.

Key Native Ecosystems or **KNEs** refers to terrestrial (land) areas identified by the Taranaki Regional Council as having regionally significant ecological values.

Land environment means a region or area (environmental domain) classified under the Land Environments of New Zealand system.

Land Environments of New Zealand or **LENZ** is a classification of environments mapped across New Zealand's landscape, derived from a comprehensive set of climate, landform and soil variables known to influence the distribution of species.

Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI) refers to an index commonly used to assess stream health: MCI quantifies stream condition with a single number.

Mahinga kai refers to the customary gathering of food and natural materials and the places where those resources are gathered.

Maintenance means 'no net loss' as achieved by the protection of existing areas and habitats and/or the restoration and enhancement of areas and habitats as may be required through biodiversity off-sets or other initiatives.

Native species: See Indigenous species.

Public conservation land refers to land administered by the Department of Conservation for whatever purpose. It excludes land administered under conservation legislation by other parties.

Regionally distinctive species includes both threatened and non-threatened species that are worthy of protection because they are largely confined to the region, are particularly uncommon in this part of the country, or because Taranaki represents the limit of their national distribution range.

Restoration and enhancement means the active intervention and management of degraded biotic communities, landforms and landscapes in order to restore biological character, ecological and physical processes.

Significant Natural Areas refers to natural areas identified as being significant in the *New Plymouth District Plan* and the *South Taranaki District Plan*.

Species refers to a group of organisms capable of interbreeding freely with each other but not with members of other species.

Sustainable use refers to the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

Tangata whenua refers to people of the land.

Threatened land environments refers to land environments, defined by Land Environments of New Zealand at Level IV (2003), that have 20 per cent or less remaining in indigenous vegetation cover.

Threatened species means a species facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild and includes nationally critical, nationally endangered and nationally vulnerable species as identified in the New Zealand Threat Classification System lists.

Wetland includes permanently or intermittently wet areas, shallow water, and land water margins that support a natural ecosystem of plants and animals that are adapted to wet conditions.

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Appendix I: Legislative and policy sources authorising the Council’s biodiversity work

Table 3: Legislative and policy sources authorising the Council’s biodiversity work

Source of legitimacy	Summary
Resource Management Act 1991	Principal legislation governing the use of resources and so has a key role in managing biological diversity. A number of sections are relevant, particularly s5, 6(c), 7(d) and s30 (1)(c)(iia) that states that it is a function of regional councils to control the use of land for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing ecosystems in water bodies and coastal waters, and s30(1)(ga) which states that it is a function of regional councils to establish, implement and review objectives, policies and methods for maintaining indigenous biodiversity.
National priorities for protecting rare and threatened native biodiversity on private land	The statement of national priorities was developed by the Ministry for the Environment and DOC to provide local government a national perspective on the biodiversity priorities. The four priorities for the protection of indigenous vegetation are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous vegetation associated with land environments (defined by Land Environments of New Zealand at Level IV) that have 20% or less remaining in indigenous vegetation • Indigenous vegetation associated with wetlands and sand dunes • Indigenous vegetation associated with ‘originally rare’ ecosystem types, and • Habitats of threatened species.
Long Term Plans (LTPs)	The LTP was developed in consultation with the community under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002. Key aspects of relevance are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies flourishing biodiversity as a vital ingredient of a prosperous, healthy and sustainable community • Anticipates the Council expand its role further in maintaining and protecting the region’s biodiversity • Identifies the major role the Council has to play through pest management to tackle the decline of biodiversity • Notes Council’s desire to redirect pest control efforts into biodiversity protection on specific sites as targets on the Self-help Possum Control Programme on the ring plain are met, and • Notes that practical assistance in the form of environmental enhancement grants will be provided for regional initiatives protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki (RPS)	The RPS contains an objective, policies and methods that aim to maintain and enhance the indigenous biodiversity of the Taranaki region, with a priority on ecosystems, habitats and areas that have significant values.

Source of legitimacy	Summary
Regional Freshwater Plan for Taranaki	The Regional Freshwater Plan for Taranaki contains objectives, polices and methods that indicate that the Council will undertake environmental management in a manner that safeguards ecological processes (which would safeguard biodiversity), and significant areas (e.g. Appendix 1A of the Plan for high value rivers and streams, and Appendix II for significant wetlands).
Coastal Plan for Taranaki	The Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki contains objectives, polices and methods that indicate that the Council will undertake environmental management in a manner that safeguards ecological processes (which would safeguard biodiversity values) and identifies a separate management regime for areas of significant conservation value.
Biosecurity Act 1993	This Act provides for the exclusion, eradication and effective management of pests and unwanted organisms. Under this Act local authorities may prepare regional pest management plans.
Pest management strategies	The pest management strategies for Taranaki identify pest species, including those impacting on biodiversity values. Through the strategies rules may apply requiring the land occupier to undertake control. The Council may also access Part 6 [Enforcement] powers under the Biosecurity Act to undertake direct control of pest animals and plants.

Appendix II: Assessment of possible ideas for biodiversity actions against legislation and policy, and Council capacity

As part of the process of developing the first Biodiversity Strategy in 2008, discussions were held internally (with land management officers, pest officers etc) and feedback was sought from key stakeholders (including DOC, district councils, QEII Trust and other community groups involved in biodiversity) on 'good ideas' on what the Council could deliver in relation to biodiversity. Set out in Table 4 below is the 2008 assessment of good ideas for the Council's biodiversity activities having regard to its authority to act, its operational capacity, and its strategic priorities.

Table 4: Assessment of possible good ideas for Council's biodiversity work

Work area	Possible actions (good ideas)	Authorising legitimacy						Council's operational capacity	Strategic priorities for Council's biodiversity work
		RMA	LTP	RPS	FWP	RCP	RPMPs		
Animal pests	Advice and education	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Statutory planning	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Direct control on private land		x	x			x	x	Key action for Biodiversity Plan, particularly for KNEs
	Direct control on public land								No mandate and no capacity, but may work with community groups operating on public land and able to work with DOC to optimise operations on the private/public land interface
	Monitoring of pest numbers		x	x			x	x	Key action for biodiversity strategy
	Monitoring of control effectiveness		x	x			x	x	Key action for biodiversity strategy

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Work area	Possible actions (good ideas)	Authorising legitimacy						Council's operational capacity	Strategic priorities for Council's biodiversity work
		RMA	LTP	RPS	FWP	RCP	RPMPs		
Pest plants	Advice and education	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Statutory planning	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement	x	x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Direct control on private land		x	x			x	x	Key action for Biodiversity Plan, particularly for KNEs
	Direct control on public land								No mandate and no capacity
	Monitoring of pest plant distributions		x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
	Monitoring of control effectiveness		x	x			x	x	Existing Council programme
Threatened species	Threatened species management, e.g. captive rearing								No mandate and no capacity, DOC role
	Habitat protection for threatened species	x		x			x	Limited	Key action for biodiversity strategy
	Monitoring of threatened species							Limited	Principally DOC role. Limited monitoring undertaken by Council as part of its KNE monitoring and state of environment reporting
Freshwater – rivers, lakes	Advice and education	x	x	x	x		x	x	Existing Council programme
	Statutory planning	x	x	x	x		x	x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement	x	x	x	x		x	x	Existing Council programme
	Monitoring of freshwater biodiversity	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme
	Habitat protection	x	x	x	x		x	x	Existing Council programme
	Working with owners of structures to improve fish passage	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme
	Managing freshwater fisheries								No mandate and no capacity, role of MPI and DOC

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Work area	Possible actions (good ideas)	Authorising legitimacy						Council's operational capacity	Strategic priorities for Council's biodiversity work
		RMA	LTP	RPS	FWP	RCP	RPMPs		
Freshwater - wetlands	Advice and education	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme that could be enhanced for non-significant wetlands
	Statutory planning	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement - significant wetlands	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement - remaining wetlands	x							Possible action
	Working with landowners on legal protection - significant wetlands	x	x	x	x			x	Existing Council programme
	Working with landowners on legal protection - remaining wetlands	x						Limited	Existing Council programme
	Monitoring condition of significant wetlands	x	x	x	x			Limited	Key action for biodiversity strategy
	Determining extent of remaining wetlands	x			x				Existing Council programme
Coastal and marine	Advice and education	x	x	x		x	x	x	Existing Council programme
	Statutory planning	x	x	x		x	x	x	Existing Council programme
	Enforcement of coastal plan rules	x	x	x		x		x	Existing Council programme
	Monitoring of consent conditions	x	x	x		x		x	Existing Council programme
	Monitoring of estuarine and rocky shore	x	x	x		x		x	Existing Council programme
	Managing nearshore fisheries								No mandate and no capacity, role of MPI
	Managing areas of significant conservation value	x		x		x		x	Existing Council programme
	Managing fisheries								No mandate and no capacity, role of MPI

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Work area	Possible actions (good ideas)	Authorising legitimacy						Council's operational capacity	Strategic priorities for Council's biodiversity work
		RMA	LTP	RPS	FWP	RCP	RPMPs		
Work area	Advocating for marine protection, including marine reserves	x		x				x	Action for biodiversity strategy
	Establishment of marine reserves								No mandate and no capacity, role of MPI and DOC
	Management of marine parks and reserves								No mandate and no capacity, role of DOC (and MPI)
Property planning	Developing integrated site specific plans for KNEs and also riparian and hill country farm plans	x						x	Key action for achieving biodiversity gains on KNEs, on farms and in the region's catchments
Working with others	Facilitating community access to biodiversity funds	x	x	x				x	Key action to achieve efficient biodiversity gains
	Working with other agencies		x	x				x	Key action to achieve efficient biodiversity gains
Data management etc	Monitoring state of the environment	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Key action for achieve efficient biodiversity gains
	Maintain and further develop systems for data management for KNEs and biodiversity data	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Key action for achieve efficient biodiversity gains
	Facilitate sharing of regional biodiversity data as appropriate	x	x					Limited	Key action for Biodiversity Strategy

Appendix III: Current state of Key Native Ecosystems

Table 5: Current state of Key Native Ecosystems in Taranaki (as at October 2016)

Indicator	Number (as at Aug 2007)	Number (as at October 2016)
Total number of Key Native Ecosystems	155	218
Number that have some private land	99	173
Number that are fully fenced	55	136
Number in the self-help possum programme	49	105
Number in public ownership with other pest animal programmes	19	99
Number in private ownership or with some form of formal protection agreement	102	124 (98 fully protected, 26 part protected (multiple owners))

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Appendix III: Addressing national priorities

National priorities for protecting rare and threatened indigenous biodiversity on private land have been set by the Government. In relation to the each national priority, the table below identifies strategic priorities adopted in this Plan that will contribute towards meeting the Government's priorities for protecting rare and threatened indigenous biodiversity on private land.

National Priorities:	Council strategic priorities:	Sections in the Plan
1. Indigenous vegetation associated with land environments (defined by Land Environments of New Zealand (LENZ) at level IV) that have 20% or less remaining in indigenous cover	1.1 Key Native Ecosystem programme for those regionally significant sites on threatened land environments 1.2 Building on existing programmes – e.g. riparian programme and self help possum programme both occur on threatened land environments 1.3 Working with others 1.4 Developing systems for gathering and recording information.	5.1, 5.2, 5.3; 5.4
2. Indigenous vegetation associated with sand dunes and wetlands; ecosystem types that have become uncommon due to human activity	2.1 Key Native Ecosystem programme for those regionally significant sites that are either sand dunes or wetlands 2.2 Building on existing programmes – e.g. general education and advocacy for wetlands in general 2.3 Working with others e.g. assisting the Ngati Tara Oaonui Sandy Bay Trust 2.4 Developing systems for gathering and recording information.	5.1, 5.2, 5.3; 5.4
3. Indigenous vegetation associated with 'originally rare' terrestrial ecosystem types not already covered by priorities 1 or 2	3.1 Key Native Ecosystem programme for those regionally significant sites that are 'originally rare' ecosystem types 3.2 Gathering and recording information on 'originally rare' ecosystem types.	5.1, 5.2, 5.3; 5.4
4. Habitats of acutely and chronically threatened indigenous species.	4.1 Key Native Ecosystem programme for those regionally significant sites with threatened species 4.2 Building on existing programmes – e.g. self help possum programme safeguards habitat important for kereru 4.3 Working with others on sites important for threatened species, e.g. supporting kiwi projects in east Taranaki 4.4 Developing systems for gathering and recording information on threatened species on private land.	5.1, 5.2, 5.3; 5.4

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Agenda Memorandum

Date 25 July 2017



**Memorandum to
Chairperson and Members
Policy and Planning Committee**

**Subject: Key Native Ecosystems programme:
Update Two 2017**

Approved by: S R Hall, Director - Operations
B G Chamberlain, Chief Executive

Document: 1868471

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to present for Members' information the second 2017 update on the identification of ten new Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) sites.

Executive summary

- The Council's *Operational Strategy to Guide Biodiversity Actions of the Taranaki Regional Council* ('the Biodiversity Strategy') sets out four strategic priorities, one of which relates to the Council focusing on protecting KNEs on privately owned land.
- The Council's approach to protecting KNEs is ongoing. Officers work with interested landowners and community groups to promote the voluntary protection and enhancement of ecological values associated with these sites. New sites are identified and assessed, in relation to their regional significance, and/or existing information and databases are updated.
- Protection of KNEs is part of the Council's **non-regulatory** work. Protection is implemented through the preparation and implementation of biodiversity plans, the provision of environmental enhancement grant funding, and/or assisting with pest and weed control.
- Council officers have recently investigated a further ten sites as noted in this memorandum and recommend they be adopted as a KNE. All the sites are assessed as significant in accordance with criteria set out in the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* (2010), i.e. rarity and distinctiveness, representativeness or ecological context.
- As at 25 July 2017, the Council has identified 235 KNEs (covering approximately 122,020 hectares). A total of 189 of these sites are partially or completely privately owned (covering approximately 12,106 hectares). The ten sites referred to in this memorandum comprise 88.2 ha.
- In addition to the 10 new KNEs, an existing large KNE has been split into four smaller sites and another two KNEs have been split into two and expanded. This takes the total KNE count to 240, and another previously Crown-owned KNE has been reclassified as private land. This increases the total sites that are partially, or completely privately

owned, to 193 (covering approximately 14,222 hectares) and new total KNE area to 122,266 hectares.

Recommendations

That the Taranaki Regional Council:

1. receives this memorandum and the attached inventory sheets for Canaan Bush; Dobbs Family Trust; Upper Mangaotuku; Ian and Jean Kurth; Howell's Bush; Kaihuahua; Woodside; Pukemiro, Pukekura Park and Punarima Bush and Wetlands
2. notes that the aforementioned sites have indigenous biodiversity values of regional significance and should be identified as Key Native Ecosystems.

Background

To assist it in giving effect to its statutory functions for indigenous biodiversity under the Resource Management Act 1991, the Taranaki Regional Council (the Council) has adopted *An Operational Strategy to Guide Biodiversity Actions of the Taranaki Regional Council* ('the Biodiversity Strategy'). The Biodiversity Strategy sets out four strategic priorities, one of which relates to the Council focusing on protecting KNEs on privately owned land.

The Council's management approach is to work with interested landowners and community groups, through provision of a property planning service and other assistance, in order to promote the voluntary protection and enhancement of ecological values associated with these sites. The identification of KNEs is ongoing. As the opportunity arises, new sites are assessed in relation to their regional significance and/or existing information, and databases updated.

Council officers have recently investigated ten sites and recommend they are adopted as KNEs. The candidate sites are: Canaan Bush; Dobbs Family Trust; Upper Mangaotuku; Ian and Jean Kurth; Howell's Bush; Kaihuahua; Woodside; Pukemiro; Pukekura Park and Punarima Bush and Wetlands. All these sites have been assessed as significant in accordance with criteria set out in the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* (2010), i.e. rarity and distinctiveness, representativeness or ecological context.

As at 25 July 2017, the Council has identified 235 KNEs (covering approximately 122,022 hectares). A total of 189 of these sites are partially or completely privately owned (covering approximately 12,106 hectares). The ten sites referred to in this memorandum comprise 88.2 ha.

In addition to the 10 new KNE's, an existing large KNE has been split into four smaller sites and another two KNE have been split into two and expanded. This takes the total KNE count to 240, and another previously Crown-owned KNE has been reclassified as private land. This increases the total sites that are partially, or completely, privately owned to 193 (covering approximately 14,222 hectares) and new total KNE area to 122,266 hectares.

KNE site inventory process

Identification of a site as a KNE does not have any extra bearing on the rules or controls that already apply to such sites in regional or district council plans. Identification of sites is undertaken by the Council to focus its **non-regulatory** efforts to work with and support

landowners to protect biodiversity values on their land. Protection is implemented through the preparation and implementation of biodiversity plans, the provision of environmental enhancement grant funding, and/or assisting with pest and weed control.

The *2015–2025 Long Term Plan* includes, amongst other things, a target to maintain and regularly update the Council's Inventory of KNEs. Council officers have recently investigated and consulted with landowners to identify another **ten** sites as KNEs. Information in relation to each of these sites are contained in the inventory sheets **attached** to this item.

Since the beginning of 2017, the inventory sheets have been prepared by way of the Council's automated reporting process, through its IRIS software programme.

Decision-making considerations

Part 6 (Planning, decision-making and accountability) of the *Local Government Act 2002* has been considered and documented in the preparation of this agenda item. The recommendations made in this item comply with the decision-making obligations of the *Act*.

Financial considerations—LTP/Annual plan

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the Council's adopted Long-Term Plan and estimates. Any financial information included in this memorandum has been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

Policy considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations are consistent with the policy documents and positions adopted by this Council under various legislative frameworks including, but not restricted to, the *Local Government Act 2002*, the *Resource Management Act 1991* and the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987*.

Legal considerations

This memorandum and the associated recommendations comply with the appropriate statutory requirements imposed upon the Council.

Appendices/Attachments

Document #1863003: Canaan Bush; #1863009: Dobbs Family Trust; #1863110: Upper Mangaotuku; #1863027: Ian and Jean Kurth; #1859313: Howell's Bush; #1859301: Kaihuahua; #1864599: Woodside; #1866949: Pukemiro; #1876003: Pukekura Park and #1876612: Punarima Bush and Wetlands.

Canaan Bush

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9581	LENZ:	F5.2b Acutely threatened
Ecological District: Egmont	National:	Priority 1 - Threatened Land Environment
Land Tenure: Private		Priority 4 - Threatened Species
Area(ha): 2.7	Regional:	Potential KNE
GPS: 1696258X & 5674781Y	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Chronically threatened 10-20% left
Bioclimatic Zone: Semi-Coastal	Catchment:	Waiwhakaiho (392)
Habitat: Forest Remnant		

Ecosystem Type WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest

General Description

The Canaan Bush KNE is a 2.7 ha remnant of semi-coastal forest adjacent to another 2.1 ha of NPDC owned reserve which borders the Waiwhakaiho river. The ecosystem type is classified as WF13, Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest. The remnant is an example of cutover forest with a reasonable canopy cover and regenerating undergrowth. The site provides good connectivity to other Key Native Ecosystems in the area including Umutekai bush, Welbourn school bush and Dorset road bush.

Ecological Features

Flora

The main canopy of the remnant is dominated by pukatea, tawa, kohekohe, puriri and rewarewa. The lower canopy is dominated by mahoe, pigeonwood and tree ferns. A good mix of seedlings and saplings are present including kawakawa, mapou, pate and kanono. A variety of native ferns are also present in the groundcover, including large numbers of the 'regionally distinctive' jointed fern and the 'at risk' kingfern. The area is classified as an 'Acutely Threatened' land environment (F5.2b).

Fauna

Bird life in the remnant is fairly typical for the margin of the New Plymouth urban area. Native birds such as tui, kereru, fantail, and grey warbler are present. Good habitat exists for native reptiles including epiphytes, loose bark, abundant foliage, leaf litter and forest ground cover. The site will contain a diverse range of invertebrates which may include notable species such as Peripatus.

Ecological Values

Sustainability - Positive	Key ecological processes still influence the site and with appropriate management, it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats. The site has the additional benefit of being formally protected.
Ecological context - High	Provides habitat for regionally distinctive species and is an important link in a corridor of native vegetation along the sides of the Waiwhakaiho river.
Representativeness - High	The ecosystem type is WF13, Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest which is classified as 'Chronically threatened'. There is approximately 16% of this type of ecosystem left in the Taranaki region.

Rarity and Distinctiveness - High Provides habitat for the 'regionally distinctive' jointed fern and the 'at risk' kingfern.

Other Management Issues

Habitat Modification - Low The site is protected by a QEII covenant.

Possum Self-help Possoms are controlled in conjunction with the self help possum control program.

Herbivores - Low The site is securely fenced.

Predators - High Cats, mustelids, hedgehogs and rats.

Weeds - Medium Small numbers of ginger, woolly nightshade and cherry trees around the edges. Other pest plant species are found in the adjacent NPDC owned remnant.



Dobbs Family Trust

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9585	LENZ:	F5.2b Acutely threatened
Ecological District: Egmont	National:	Priority 1 - Threatened Land Environment
Land Tenure: Private	Regional:	Potential KNE
Area(ha): 2.5	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Chronically threatened 10-20% left
GPS: 1703280X & 5671600Y	Protection Status:	QEII Covenant
Bioclimatic Zone: Semi-coastal/lowland	Catchment:	Waiongana (394)
Habitat: Forest Remnant		

Ecosystem Type WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest

General Description

The Dobbs Family Trust KNE is a 2.5 ha remnant of semi-coastal forest located on Hursthouse road, approximately 5km south of Lepperton. The ecosystem type is classified as WF13, Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest. The canopy is dominated by kohekohe and the undergrowth is healthy due to the exclusion of stock. The Dobbs Family Trust KNE is in the Egmont ecological district and provides connectivity to the Te Wairoa and Tarurutangi Swamp KNE's.

Ecological Features

Flora

The canopy is dominated by kohekohe and tawa with pukatea in the wetter areas. The understory is in good condition and contains a range of shrub and fern species.

Fauna

The site provides good habitat for native bird species including tui and kereru. Other native birds recorded from the site include kingfisher and shining cuckoo.

Ecological Values

Sustainability - Positive	In good and improving vegetative condition. Key ecological processes still influence the site. Under appropriate management, it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats.
Ecological context - High	Provides important habitat and good connectivity with other Key Native Ecosystems in the area.
Representativeness - High	The ecosystem type is WF13, Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest which is classified as 'Chronically threatened'. There is approximately 16% of this type of ecosystem left in the Taranaki region.
Rarity and Distinctiveness - Low	No threatened or at risk species have been recorded from the site.

Other Management Issues

Habitat Modification - Low	The site is protected with a QEII covenant.
Weeds - Medium	Weeds at the site include Tradescantia, bamboo, and blackberry.

Predators - High

Possums are controlled in conjunction with the self help possum control program. The native fauna at the site would benefit from a predator control program. Other predators include cats, mustelids, hedgehogs and rats.



Upper Mangaotuku

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9573	LENZ:	F5.2b Acutely threatened
Ecological District: Egmont	National:	Priority 1 - Threatened Land Environment
Land Tenure: Private	Regional:	Potential KNE
Area(ha): 8.2	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Chronically threatened 10-20% left
GPS: 1690807X & 5670312Y	Catchment:	Huatoki (389)
Bioclimatic Zone: Semi coastal		
Habitat: Forest Remnant		

Ecosystem Type WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest

General Description

The Upper Mangaotuku covers 8.2 ha of semi-coastal forest in the Huatoki catchment between Barrett and Frankley roads. The ecosystem type is classified as WF13, Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest. The remnant is part of a larger area of indigenous and exotic forest that is contiguous with the Ratapihipihi scenic reserve. The remnant is an example of cutover old forest with a reasonable canopy cover and regenerating undergrowth. The site provides good connectivity to other Key Native Ecosystems in the area including Omata school bush, Berridge twin bush, Omata Bush, Barret lagoon and the Ratapihipihi Scenic Reserve.

Ecological Features

Flora

The main canopy of the remnant is dominated by pukatea, tawa, kohekohe, puriri and rewarewa. The lower canopy is dominated by mahoe, pigeonwood, tree ferns and young nikau. A good mix of seedlings and saplings are present including kawakawa, mapou, pigeonwood and coprosmas. A variety of native ferns are also present in the groundcover. The area is classified as an 'Acutely Threatened' land environment (F5.2b). Native vegetation in these areas is rare and important for species threatened by habitat loss.

Fauna

Bird life in the remnant is fairly typical for the margin of the New Plymouth urban area. Tui are common and other native birds are present such as kereru, fantail, and grey warbler. Good habitat exists for native reptiles including epiphytes, loose bark, abundant foliage, leaf litter and forest ground cover.

Ecological Values

Sustainability - Positive	Key ecological processes still influence the site and with appropriate management, it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats.
Ecological context - High	The site provides important connectivity with other KNE's in the area and is part of the largest block of tall stature native vegetation on the western outskirts of New Plymouth.
Representativeness - High	The ecosystem type is WF13, Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest which is classified as 'Chronically threatened'. There is approximately 16% of this type of ecosystem left in the Taranaki region.

Rarity and Distinctiveness -
Medium

No 'threatened' or 'at risk' species have been recorded from the site. It is likely that the Mangaotuku steam would provide habitat for the 'regionally distinctive' banded kokopu.

Other Management Issues

Habitat Modification - Low

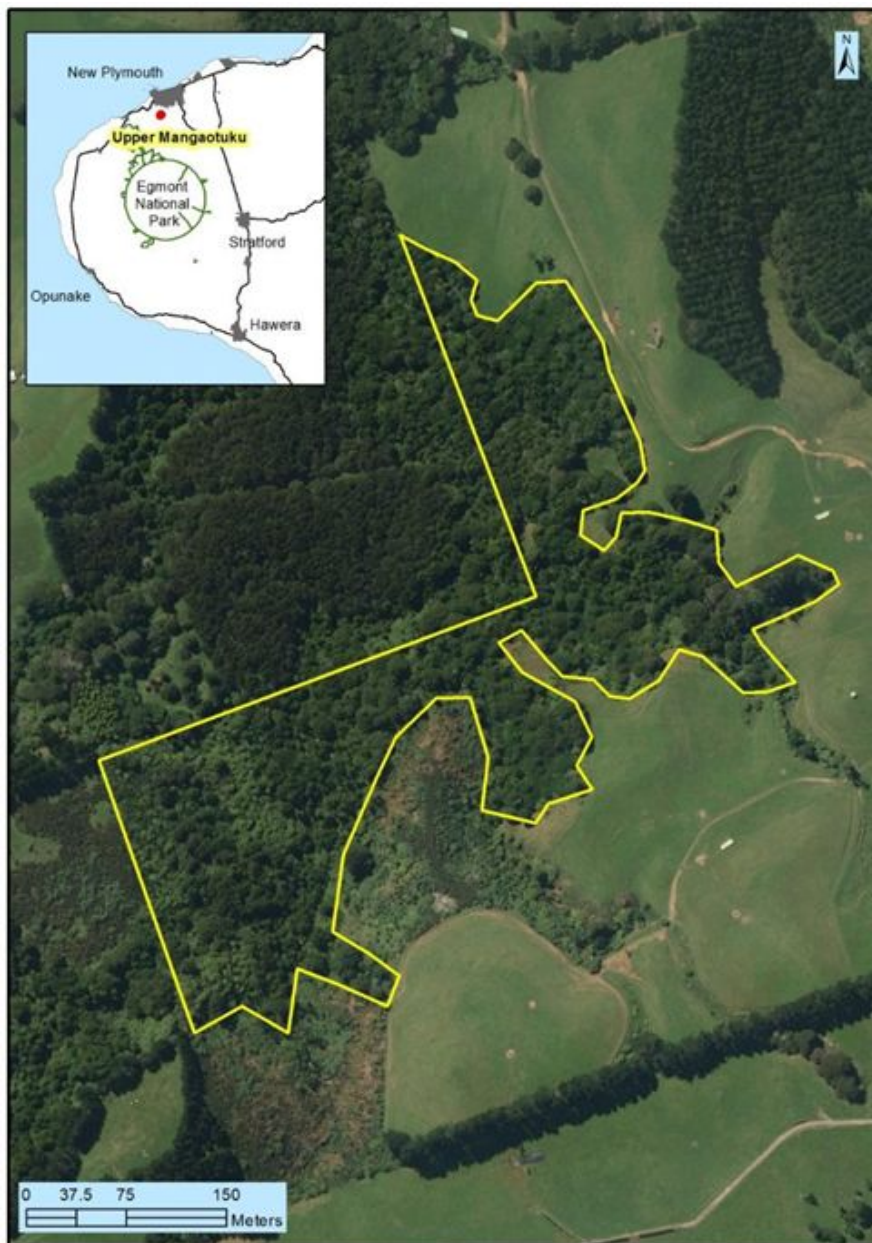
The landowner is working with the QEII trust to establish a covenant on the site.

Predators - High

Possums, cats, mustelids, hedgehogs and rats.

Weeds - High

There are very few weed issues in the more mature areas of the remnant. There are challenging weeds present in the regenerating areas. Weeds include wandering willy, woolly nightshade, gorse and holly.



Ian and Jean Kurth

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9586	LENZ:	F5.2b Acutely threatened
Ecological District: Egmont	National:	Priority 1 - Threatened Land Environment
Land Tenure: Private	Regional:	Potential KNE
Area(ha): 3.8	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Chronically threatened 10-20% left
GPS: 1688960X & 5671593Y	Catchment:	Herekawe (388)
Bioclimatic zone: Semi-Coastal		
Habitat: Forest Remnant		

Ecosystem Type WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest

General Description

The Ian and Jean Kurth KNE is comprised of one existing QEII trust covenanted area and two pending QEII trust covenant areas of semi-coastal bush located along the Mangahererangi stream between Barrett and Sealy roads in the Herekawe stream catchment. The ecosystem type is classified as WF13, Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest. The remnants are examples of cutover forest with a reasonable canopy cover and regenerating undergrowth. The sites provide good connectivity to other Key Native Ecosystems in the area including Ratapihipihi Scenic reserve, Berridge twin bush, Omata bush and Omata school bush.

Ecological Features

Flora

The main canopy of the remnants is dominated by pukatea, kahikatea, tawa, kohekohe, puriri and rewarewa. The lower canopy is dominated by mahoe, pigeonwood and tree ferns. A good mix of seedlings and saplings are present including kawakawa, mapou, pate and kanono. A variety of native ferns are also present in the groundcover, including the 'regionally distinctive' jointed fern. The area is classified as an 'Acutely Threatened' land environment (F5.2b).

Fauna

Bird life in the remnant is fairly typical for the margin of the New Plymouth urban area. Native birds such as Tui, kereru, fantail, and grey warbler are present. Good habitat exists for native reptiles including epiphytes, loose bark, abundant foliage, leaf litter and forest ground cover. The small stream may be suitable for the regionally distinctive banded kokopu or other native fish species.

Ecological Values

Ecological context - High	The sites provide good connectivity to other Key Native Ecosystems in the area including Ratapihipihi scenic reserve, Berridge twin bush and Omata School bush.
Rarity and Distinctiveness - Medium	Contains the 'regionally distinctive' jointed fern.
Sustainability - Positive	Key ecological processes still influence the site and with appropriate management, it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats.
Representativeness - High	The ecosystem type is WF13, Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau,

podocarp forest which is classified as 'Chronically threatened'. There is approximately 16% of this type of ecosystem left in the Taranaki region.

Other Management Issues

Habitat Modification - Medium

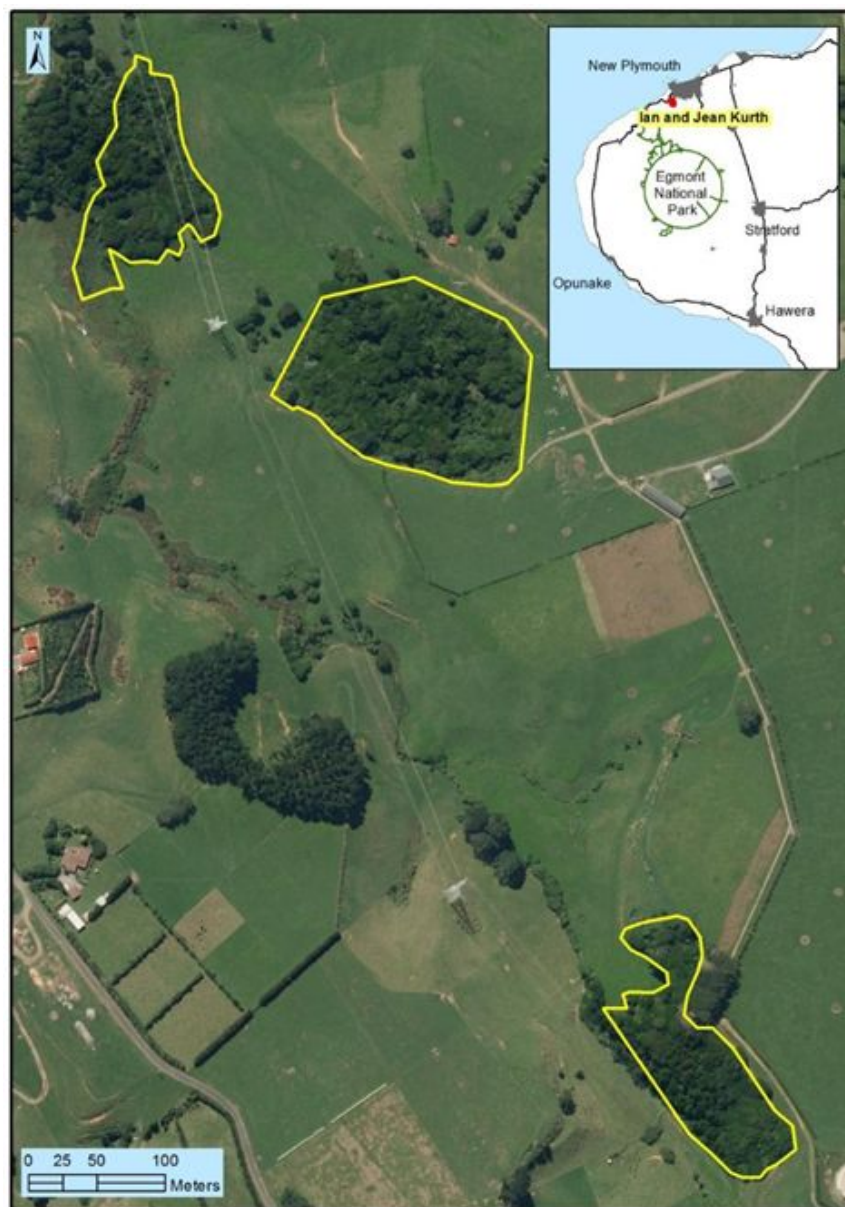
Once covenants are established on all three areas the potential for habitat modification will be greatly reduced.

Predators - High

Possums, cats, mustelids, hedgehogs and rats.

Weeds - High

A large old mans beard infestation in the established QEII covenant area is the main weed threat. Other weed species include woolly nightshade, ginger, and Japanese honeysuckle found along the edges of the remnants.



Howell's Bush

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9588	LENZ:	F7.2a At risk
Ecological District: North Taranaki		F5.2a Acutely threatened
Land Tenure: Private	National:	Priority 1 – Threatened Land Environment
Area(ha): 7.3		Priority 4 – Threatened Species
GPS: 1731192X & 5693223Y	Regional:	Potential KNE
Bioclimate Zone: Semi-Coastal	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Chronically threatened 10-20% left
Habitat: Coastal/Forest Remnant	Protection Status:	QEII Covenant
	Catchment:	Waikaramarama (934)
Ecosystem Type	WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest	

General Description

Howell's Bush is located on privately owned land 15km North East of Urenui near the end of Pukearuhe Road in North Taranaki. The terrain of the bush remnant is mainly a steep gully and gully sidling of the Waikaramarama stream and stream tributary. The site is located adjacent and partly connected to the Pukearuhe Scenic Reserve and also includes an area of steep hillside vegetation to the east. The area is in the North Taranaki Ecological District.

Ecological Features

Flora

The canopy of the forest in the lower main gully area is a mix of puriri, kohekohe, tawa, rewarewa, mahoe and tree ferns etc. The lower canopy is dominated by mahoe, pigeonwood, kawakawa, hangehange and tree ferns. The upper area basin canopy is dominated by mahoe and nikau with a scattering of rewarewa and karaka. The area is partly classified as and 'Acutely Threatened' (F5.2a) and 'At Risk' (F7.2a) land environments.

Fauna

The proposed covenant area provides a small forest habitat for native birds such as tui, kereru, fantail, grey warbler, shining cuckoo and bellbird. Good habitat exists for native reptiles and invertebrates which will include notable species. The Waikaramarama stream in the lower valley provides habitat for, and will contain, notable freshwater fish species such as the 'Regionally Distinctive' banded kokopu.

Ecological Values

Ecological context - High	Provides additional connectivity of priority habitats in the area including the Pukearuhe Scenic Reserve. Provides habitat for 'At Risk' species such as kingfern and likely to contain other priority species such as notable freshwater fish and reptiles.
Rarity and Distinctiveness - Medium	Contains the 'At Risk' kingfern and likely to contain other notable values such as reptiles and freshwater fish.
Representativeness - Medium	Contains indigenous vegetation on 'Acutely Threatened' (F5.2a) and 'At Risk' (F7.2a) LENZ land environments and is a remnant of a Chronically Threatened ecosystem type in Taranaki (WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest).

Sustainability - Positive

In good vegetative condition. Key ecological processes still influence the site. Under appropriate management, it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats.

Other Management Issues

Habitat Modification - Medium

Modified in some areas where stock have grazed although mainly intact.

Herbivores - Medium

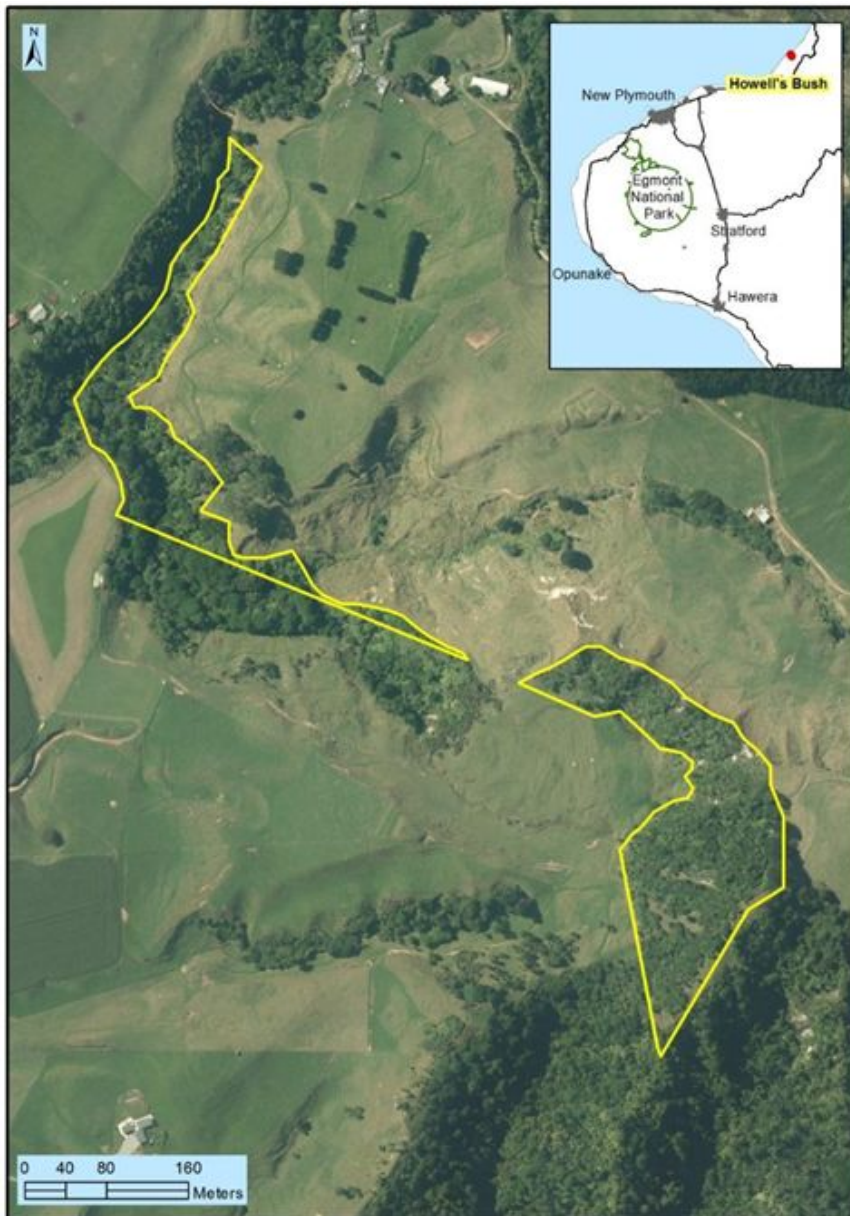
Stock currently have access to the gorge margin although will be excluded in future if covenanted and fenced. Possum sign was common and will be having some impact on forest canopy health.

Predators - Medium

Rodents, mustelids, possums, cats and hedgehogs will be impacting on flora and fauna values at the site.

Weeds - Medium

Occasional patches and individual weeds such as pampas, inkweed, gorse, wattle etc.



Kaihuahua

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9587	LENZ:	F5.2a Acutely threatened
Ecological District: North Taranaki	National:	Priority 1 - Threatened Land Environment
Land Tenure: Private		Priority 4 - Threatened Species
Area(ha): 2.4	Regional:	Potential KNE
GPS: 1729273X & 5689542Y	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Chronically threatened 10-20% left
Bioclimatic Zone: Semi-Coastal	Protection Status:	QEII Covenant
Habitat: Coastal/Forest Remnant	Catchment:	Waiiti (401)
Ecosystem Type	WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest	

General Description

Kaihuahua is located approximately ten kilometres northeast of Urenui in North Taranaki. The terrain of the small 2.4ha semi coastal bush remnant is mainly a gully and gully sidling of an unnamed tributary of the Waiiti stream and includes a small mounded hill top pa site. The site is located close to larger areas of habitat and the Pukatea KNE is within 1.5km of this site. The area is in the North Taranaki Ecological District.

Ecological Features

Flora

The canopy of the forest remnant is a mix of puriri, kohekohe, tawa, rewarewa, titoki, pukatea, mahoe and tree ferns. The lower canopy is dominated by mahoe, pigeonwood, kawakawa and hangehange. Groundcover is abundant in areas and includes the 'At Risk' kingfern and 'Regionally Distinctive' fern *Deparia petersenii*. The area is classified as an 'Acutely Threatened' (F5.2a) land environment.

Fauna

The proposed covenant area provides a small forest habitat for native birds such as tui, kereru, fantail, grey warbler and bellbird. Good habitat exists for native reptiles and invertebrates which will include notable species. The Waiiti stream tributary flowing through the forest provides habitat for, and will contain, notable freshwater fish species such as the 'Regionally Distinctive' banded kokopu.

Ecological Values

Ecological context - High	Provides additional connectivity of priority habitats in the area including the Pukatea KNE. Provides habitat for 'At Risk' species such as kingfern and likely to contain other priority species such as notable freshwater fish and reptiles.
Rarity and Distinctiveness - Medium	Contains the 'At Risk' kingfern and likely to contain other notable values such as reptiles and freshwater fish.
Representativeness - High	Contains indigenous vegetation on 'Acutely Threatened' (F5.2a) LENZ land environment and is a remnant of a Chronically Threatened ecosystem type in Taranaki (WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest).
Sustainability - Positive	In good vegetative condition. Key ecological processes still influence the site. Under appropriate management, it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats.

Other Management Issues

Habitat Modification - Low	Modified in some areas with very old historic pa site earthworks.
Herbivores - Medium	Possum sign was common and will be having some impact on forest canopy health.
Predators - Medium	Rodents, mustelids, possums, cats and hedgehogs will be impacting on flora and fauna values at the site.
Weeds - Medium	Occasional patches and individual weeds such as woolly nightshade, inkweed and gorse.



Woodside

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/7011	LENZ:	F5.2b Acutely threatened
Ecological District: Egmont	National:	Priority 1 - Threatened Land Environment
Land Tenure: Private		Priority 2 - Sand Dunes and Wetlands
Area(ha): 2.55		Priority 4 - Threatened Species
GPS: 1687319X & 5670997Y	Regional:	Potential KNE
Bioclimatic Zone: Semi-coastal	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Chronically threatened 10-20% left
Habitat: Coastal/Forest Remnant	Protection Status:	QEII Covenant
	Catchment:	Tapuae (386)
Ecosystem Type	WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest	

General Description

Woodside is located on private land approximately 3km south west of New Plymouth in North Taranaki. Woodside consists of a small semi coastal forest remnant and wetland on the slopes of a small hill and gully system in the Tapuae Stream catchment. The remnant provides good connectivity with other Key Native Ecosystems nearby such as Twin Bush KNE and Omata School Bush and is located in the Egmont Ecological District.

Ecological Features

Flora

The Woodside KNE contains a very good example of semi coastal forest. The forest canopy consists of tawa, miro, pukatea, kahikatea, rewarewa, puriri and kohekohe. Also present are some excellent examples of the 'Regionally Distinctive' waiwaka, jointed fern and tawhirikaro. The area is classified as an 'Acutely Threatened' land environment (F5.2b). Native vegetation in these areas is rare and important for species threatened by habitat loss.

Fauna

Native birdlife recorded in and around Woodside include the New Zealand pigeon/kereru, grey warbler/riroriro, fantail/piwakawaka, tui and morepork/ruru. Notable freshwater species are present in the small tributary of the Tapuae Stream within the forest including 'At Risk' species such as longfin eel. The site is likely to contain other notable species such as the banded kokopu and notable native reptiles and invertebrates.

Ecological Values

Ecological context - High	Enhances connectivity between fragmented indigenous habitats and KNE's in the area such as Berridge Twin Bush, Tapuae Wetland etc.
Rarity and Distinctiveness - High	Contains the 'At Risk' longfin eel and 'Regionally Distinctive' banded kokopu, jointed fern, swamp maire/waiwaka and Tawhirikaro.
Representativeness - High	Contains vegetation on an 'Acutely Threatened' land environment (F5.2b) and is a remnant of a regionally threatened ecosystem

Sustainability - Positive (WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest).
In very good vegetative condition and likely to remain resilient to existing or potential threats.

Other Management Issues

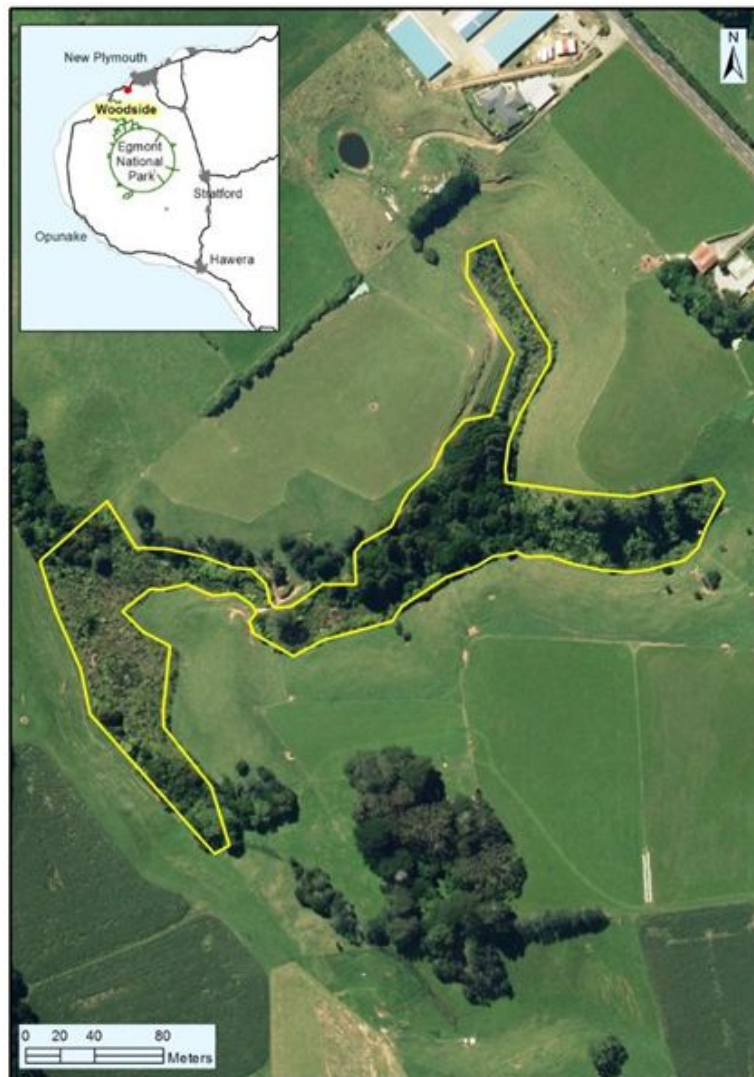
Habitat Modification - Low Protected by QEII covenant conditions.

Herbivores - High Currently fenced and stock proof although vulnerable to stock browsing if fences were breached. Currently under good possum control although vulnerable if possum numbers were high.

Possum Self-help The site is within the possum self help area.

Predators - Medium Current predator control will be helping reduce the risk from predators such as rats, mustelids, possums, feral cats and hedgehogs.

Weeds - High High risk although currently under a successful long running weed control programme. Small localised areas of holly, blackberry and African clubmoss.



Pukemiro

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9574	LENZ:	F5.2a Acutely threatened C1.2a Acutely threatened D2.1b Chronically threatened
Ecological District: North Taranaki		
Land Tenure: Private		
Area(ha): 2.72	Regional:	Potential KNE
GPS: 1718097X & 5682863Y	Protection Status:	DOC Covenant
Bioclimate Zone: Coastal	Catchment:	Onaero (398)
Habitat: Coastal/Forest Remnant		
Ecosystem Type		

DN2: Spinifex, pingao
grassland/ sedgeland

WF13: Tawa, kohekohe,
rewarewa, hinau, podocarp
forest

WF8: Kahikatea, pukatea forest

General Description

The Pukemiro Historic Reserve is administered by Te Runanaga O Ngati Mutunga and is located approximately 2km West of Urenui in the North Taranaki Ecological District. The site is a small (2.7ha) coastal forest next to Onaero river mouth and state highway 3. The site contains two waahi tapu Pukemiro and Puketapu with associated urupa. The site also adjoins the Onaero River Scenic Reserve (9.1ha) which is administered by Department of Conservation.

Ecological Features

Flora

A large portion of the site is located on a land environment classified as 'Acutely Threatened' (less than 10% of this type of indigenous vegetation left remaining in Taranaki). The main canopy is a mix of Kohekohe, Pukatea, Mahoe, Titoki, Kowhai, Rewarewa, Lacebark, and is generally in good condition. The understory and ground cover is in good condition and is made up of a wide number of shrub species Kawakawa, Kanono, Rangiora, Red Mapou, Hangehange along with a wide range of ferns including Mamaku. Of note is the presence of the regionally distinctive Tawhirikaro (*Pittosporum cornifolium*) and Waiwaka (*Syzygium maire*).

Fauna

Native birdlife recorded in and around the site includes the New Zealand pigeon, Grey warbler, Fantail, Silvereve, Tui and Sacred kingfisher.

Ecological Values

Representativeness - High	Contains indigenous vegetation that is underrepresented in Taranaki, upon a land environment classified as 'Acutely Threatened' and 'Chronically Threatened' (F5.2a, C1.2a, D2.1b LENZ)
Ecological Context - Medium	Provides additional habitat and greater connectivity with other Key Native Ecosystems in this area such as Okoki pa, Kaipikari Leov and Kaipikari Luxtons.
Rarity and Distinctiveness - High	This site provides core habitat for the 'At Risk' Northern blue

penguin. Also contains 'Regionally Distinctive' Tawhirikaro (*Pittosporum cornifolium*) and Swamp Maire Waiwaka (*Syzygium maire*).

Sustainability - Positive

Key ecological processes still influence the site and with appropriate management, it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats.

Other Management Issues

Herbivore Control

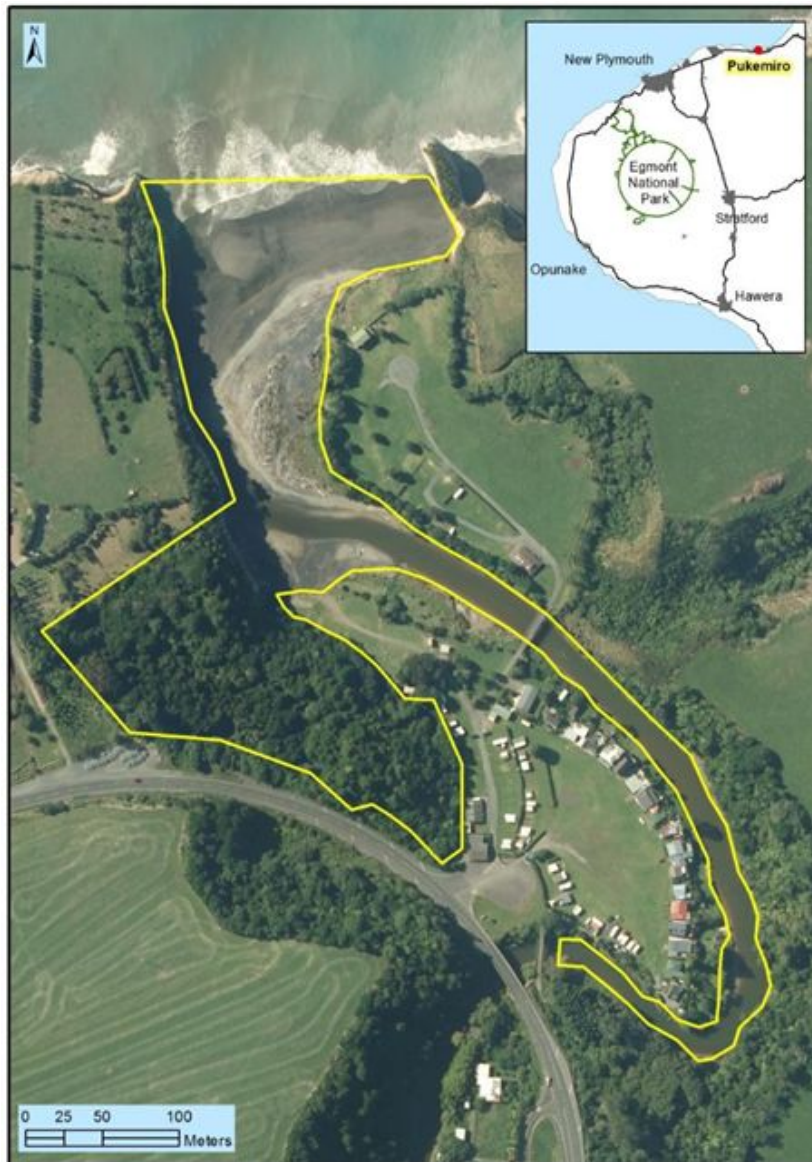
Property lies outside of possum self help programme. Possum control had been carried out in the past by DOC.

Weeds - High

Weed control required on the following: Tradescantia, climbing asparagus, kahili ginger, Woolly nightshade and pampas

Predators - High

Possum, cats, rats, hedgehogs and mustelids. No current predator control.



Pukekura Park

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9578	LENZ:	F5.2b Acutely threatened
Ecological District: Egmont	National:	Priority 4 – Threatened Species
Land Tenure: District		Priority 1 – Threatened Land Environment
Area(ha): 46.1		Priority 2 – Sand Dunes and Wetlands
GPS: 1693579X & 5675126Y	Regional:	Potential KNE
Bioclimatic Zone: Semi-Coastal		State of Environment Site
Habitat: Forest Remnant/Wetland	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Chronically threatened 10-20% left
	Protection Status:	Local Government
	Catchment:	Huatoki (389)
Ecosystem Type	WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest	

General Description

Pukekura Park is an iconic and well utilised green space located within the urban heart of New Plymouth. It is owned and managed by the New Plymouth District Council. The park consists of both planted and natural native trees and shrubs along with many exotic specimens and includes healthy remnants of mature semi-coastal forest with abundant understorey in places. Modified waterways, wetlands and man-made lakes are present along the length of the park and provide habitat for a variety of bird and fish species.

Ecological Features

Flora

The long history of the park can make it difficult to know which established native trees were remnants of the original forest and which were planted. The most extensive native dominated remnant occurs at the Brooklands end with mature kohekohe, puriri and tawa dominating. Large groves of the At Risk and regionally distinctive king fern are present throughout the park as is an impressive diversity of other ferns and fern allies.

Fauna

Tui are the most noticeable native bird within the park although kereru, piwakawaka, kotare, riorio, ruru and pukeko are also present. Little shags, little black shags and black swans are commonly seen in the modified pond areas. The Threatened North Island kaka is a seasonal visitor. The At Risk and Regionally Distinctive goldstripe gecko is present in Pukekura Park and would benefit from predator control. Diverse and extensive habitat also exists for other native reptiles. Three species of introduced Litoria frogs have been recorded within the park and although not native are indicators of environment quality. Native freshwater crayfish/koura, banded kokopu and longfin eels are present in the streams and lakes.

Ecological Values

Sustainability - Positive	Key ecological processes still influence this site. Under appropriate management it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats
Rarity and Distinctiveness - High	The Park is home to many Threatened, At Risk and Regionally Distinctive plant and animal species including the goldstripe gecko, little black shag, longfin eel, king fern and jointed fern.
Representativeness - High	Several habitats are represented within the park including wetlands, lakes, streams and mature remnants of native semi-coastal forest. The land environment is classified as Acutely Threatened (F5.2b) making the site particularly important for threatened biodiversity. At an ecosystem level there is less than 20% of this type of semi-coastal forest left in Taranaki.
Ecological context - High	New Plymouth has around 8.2% indigenous vegetation remaining within its urban area. This is the highest percentage of all New Zealand cities. Pukekura Park contributes a significant part of this and provides an important ecological link to other reserves and forested catchments within the city.

Other Management Issues

Possum Self-help	The Park is part of the Urban Possum Control programme.
Habitat Modification - Medium	Parts of the Park have been extensively modified through the damming of natural streams to create the main lakes. An extensive track network and mature planting (>100years) of both natives and exotics are also part of the Parks modifications. That said there are still sizable areas of mature natural semi-coastal forest and in general, the native and exotic plantings compliment these remnants.
Herbivores - Low	The Park has little to no issues with herbivores. Possums are controlled and no stock, goats, deer or pigs have access to the site.
Predators - High	Although some control is currently undertaken by NPDC, predators are still evident within the Park. Both Norway rats and ship rats are present in the bush and along the stream and lake margins and numerous cats from the surrounding residential houses frequent the area. Stoats, weasels and hedgehogs are also likely to be present. Aggressive exotic bird species such as rosella and myna will also be having an impact on native bird populations.
Weeds - Medium	Weed invasion is patchy in the park with some areas more heavily infested than others. Some of the main problem weeds include Tradescantia, wild ginger, climbing asparagus and selaginella. Giant gunnera is present on the dam along the nearby Straun Walk. Oxygen weed is a problem in the main lakes.



Punarima Bush and Wetland

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9567	LENZ:	F5.2c Acutely threatened
Ecological District: Manawatu Plains	National:	Priority 2 – Sand Dunes and Wetlands
Land Tenure: Private		Priority 1 – Threatened Land Environment
Area(ha): 10.1ha total (0.8 + 4.5 + 4.8)	Regional:	Potential KNE
GPS: 1718846X & 5616286Y		State of Environment Site
Bioclimatic Zone: Lowland	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	At risk 20-30% left
Habitat: Forest Remnant/Wetland	Catchment:	Tangahoe (348)

Ecosystem Type MF7.3: Tawa, pukatea, podocarp forest
WL19: Raupo reedland

General Description

Punarima Bush and Wetland is located approximately 8km East of Hawera off Meremere Road in South Taranaki and lies within the Manawatu Plains Ecological District. The site is made up of remnant native vegetation in the upper reaches of three unnamed tributaries of the Tangahoe river and includes two lowland bush remnants and a raupo and carex dominated swamp.

Ecological Features

Flora

The bush remnants are dominated by tawa and rewarewa with mahoe and mamaku in the subcanopy. A variety of ferns and seedlings are present on the forest floor with patches of parataniwha in the damp areas. Mature specimens of red beech and mangeao not native to this area have been planted in the larger of the two bush remnants along with some eucalyptus. The wetland, although likely to have originally been covered with more swamp forest species, is now dominated by raupo and carex.

Fauna

Common native bird species observed in the area include tui, wood pigeon/kereru, grey warbler/riroriro, Australasian harrier/kahu and fantail/piwakawaka. Freshwater fish species such as longfin eel/tuna may be present in the wetland areas.

Ecological Values

Rarity and Distinctiveness - Low	No threatened or at risk species have been recorded from the remnants although a couple of scattered individual trees of the regionally distinctive ngaio are present in the farmland between the two bush remnants.
Ecological Context - Medium	Provides additional habitat and greater connectivity with other Key Native Ecosystems in the area such as Scott Bush and Tarere Forest extension.

Representativeness - High	The land environment is classified as Acutely Threatened (F5.2c). Indigenous vegetation at sites like these is underrepresented in Taranaki, and especially within the Manawatu Plains Ecological District. At an ecosystem level there is less than 30% of this type of forest left in the region and wetlands are at less than 10% of their former extent.
Sustainability - Positive	Key ecological processes still influence this site. Under appropriate management it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats.

Other Management Issues

Herbivores - Medium	The property lies outside of the Possum Self Help area. Stock have had internment access to all the remnant areas although improved fencing should reduce the frequency of this.
Weeds - Medium	Weed issues appear to be limited to localised areas. The main weed in the bush areas is banana passionfruit and crack willow in the wetland.
Predators - High	Rats, cats, hedgehogs, possums and mustelids will be present. Currently there is no predator control at the site.



Agenda reports

Policy & Planning Committee, July 2017

Item 5

[Freshwater recreational bathing quality report summer 2016-2017](#) (4.1 MB)

Item 6

[Coastal bathing beach water quality report summer 2016-2017](#) (3.6 MB)