

## APPENDIX

### About Greater Wellington Regional Council

Located in our capital city and including the Wairarapa and Kāpiti Coast, Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) is one of the largest and most diverse regional councils in New Zealand. We have core roles across public transport provision, environmental protection, regional leadership and co-ordination, and bulk water supply.

Greater Wellington has had an evolving formal relationship with six mana whenua partners for over three decades:

- Ngāti Kahungunu represented by Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa;
- Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga represented by Ngā Hapū o Otaki;
- Ngāti Toa Rangatira represented by Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Inc.;
- Rangitāne represented by Rangitāne o Wairarapa Inc.
- Taranaki Whānui represented by the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust.
- Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai represented by Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai Charitable Trust.

Protection of our region's natural environment delivers a multitude of wider benefits for the economy, our wellbeing, and our communities. Greater Wellington delivers a range of pest animal and plant control services that protect the productive capacity of our agricultural sector, the quality of potable water to our residents, and the opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and harvest kai for our families. We manage large areas of land for water collection, biodiversity, and public access, which share unfenced boundaries with public conservation land.

However, we are facing significant challenges, several of which are directly undermining our ratepayers' investment in these activities.

### Issues of significance (8) for us to partner on

#### 1. Harmonise treatment of feral ungulate control in legislation

Populations of feral ungulates (deer, pigs, and goats) continue to build up in parts of the Wellington region. They destroy native vegetation due to browsing, trampling and subsequent erosion, and are also having significant impacts on pasture, crops, new plantings, and forest across private and council land.

While Greater Wellington controls feral ungulates at designated sites, we are constrained by inconsistent and operationally ineffective sections within the **Wild Animal Control Act 1977**

(WACA) in relation to powers of entry for control purposes. Feral ungulates roam indiscriminately across property boundaries, and due to these inconsistencies Greater Wellington may only control them where we have landowner permission or Ministerial approval to do so. Feral deer, goats and pigs know their safe havens and readily retreat there when they come under control pressure.

Greater Wellington seeks to retain the power to list deer, pigs, and goats in our Regional Pest Management Plan, create rules related to their control, and deal with infringements. Working with DOC, mana whenua, the Game Animal Council, hunters, and conservation groups may provide the opportunity to develop a strategic approach that meets the needs of hunters and protects the biodiversity and productivity of the region. In addition, Greater Wellington seeks the review and amendment of at least section 16 of WACA allowing Greater Wellington to enter property in an operationally efficient manner to give effect to that pre-agreed strategic approach.

## REQUEST

We ask that Government:

- a) includes Greater Wellington / regional council representatives in a collaboration with others to develop a strategic approach to feral ungulate control.
- b) amends the Wild Animal Control Act (especially s16) to allow Greater Wellington to enter property to give effect to a pre-agreed strategic approach to ungulate control.
- c) ensures that regional councils retain the ability to list feral ungulates in Regional Pest Management Plans

## **2. Control feral ungulates on public conservation land (Remutaka and Tararua Forest Parks) bordering Greater Wellington Water Collection Areas**

Greater Wellington's Hutt and Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Areas (WCAs) share unfenced boundaries with the Tararua and Remutaka Forest Parks respectively. These WCAs are important sources of high-quality raw water to the four cities of the region and are critically valuable areas of biodiversity (Key Native Ecosystems). Both Greater Wellington and Wellington Water expend significant annual funding to protect the values of these areas.

However, both organisations' investments of time and resource are devalued by continual reinfestation of deer, pigs, and goats from the adjoining Tararua and Remutaka Forest Parks.

Greater Wellington hunters cull approximately 20 deer per annum in the steep headwaters of the Hutt Water Collection Area. These technically challenging operations are limited by Greater

Wellington being denied permission to shoot animals once they cross over into public conservation land.

We believe that Government should be a responsible landowner and good neighbour.

#### REQUEST

We ask that Government

- d) delegates authority to Greater Wellington to control feral ungulates on the Tararua Forest Park land adjoining the Hutt Water Collection Area, as part of regular KNE control activities.

In the Remutaka Forest Park a 2022-23 feasibility study found that increasing goat control to achieve zero density populations on the Greater Wellington WCA/ public conservation land boundary was a practicable target and would protect raw water supplies and ecosystem values.

#### REQUEST

We ask that Government

- e) provide ongoing and increased funding for DOC to partner with Greater Wellington to achieve zero goat density populations on the Remutaka Forest Park boundary to the Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Area.

### 3. Nationwide monitoring and control of Canada geese populations

Canada geese were introduced to New Zealand by the Acclimatisation Society, and until 2011 they were controlled by Fish & Game under the Wildlife Act. At that point, their status changed to “unprotected”, and no single organisation was responsible for managing populations to sustainable levels. At the time DOC committed to monitoring the “arrangements developed by the farming community”, and the need or otherwise for regulations. No such monitoring has occurred. Since then, anyone has been able to control Canada geese, if they do it humanely. With no single point of leadership, no-one has done it effectively. These highly mobile and intelligent birds now roam the landscape and consume large quantities of grass and foul wetlands, paddocks, sports fields, parks, and amenity areas. Despite public concern at these obvious impacts, control measures often generate public backlash.

#### REQUEST

We ask that the Government:

- f) reviews the regulatory regime for the control of Canada Geese, setting clear outcomes and responsibility to the appropriate government department.
- g) increases the priority and resourcing for the Canada Geese inter-agency working group, with a clear direction towards a coordinated and robust programme of nationwide control.

#### **4. Fund and enable design of the proposed Wainuiomata Eco-sanctuary.**

New Zealand has several critically endangered forest species requiring predator free habitat; and there is no longer room on our offshore islands to ensure these species' long-term security. There is a solution here in our region - the large (3,313ha) and habitat- rich Wainuiomata Water Collection Area less than an hour's drive from the Wellington CBD.

A feasibility study has shown that once this area is predator-fenced and pests eradicated, it could provide sufficient habitat to shift the threat status of kākāpo, rowi kiwi and hihi and aid the recovery of biodiversity across up to 40,000ha of the Remutaka Range.

The feasibility study identified that the project is challenging but technically feasible. There is a practical route on which a fence can be constructed and once fenced, pests can be eradicated and kept out of the area.

The site is operated as a water supply facility under a service agreement with Wellington Water. The proposed eco-sanctuary could be managed in tandem with the area's water supply function.

Taranaki Whānui is the mana whenua of the site and support the proposal.

In 2021 the total cost was calculated as \$41,414,752 over the ten-year period. The cost to operate the sanctuary after year ten is calculated as \$2,561,402 per annum in current dollars. Based on preliminary enquiries, we believe there is significant potential for third party (philanthropic) funding contributions. However, the project will rely on an upfront capital investment and ongoing Government support.

#### **REQUEST**

We ask that Government

- h) provide new funding to enable the Department of Conservation to partner with Greater Wellington and Taranaki Whānui to complete detailed design and obtain resource consents for the proposal. This information would then inform a development of a future Business Case for a Budget funding request.

## **5. Continue to support Predator Free and expand in Wellington.**

Predator Free Wellington is on a mission to make Wellington the world's first predator free capital city; and through Predator Free 2050, Government is a key partner in this groundbreaking initiative. PFW has just celebrated completion of Phase 1 – predator eradication on Miramar Peninsula and are building on that success in Phase 2 (Island Bay to CBD), home to 60,000 people. This work will complement that of existing Predator Free groups, which now exist in every suburb in Wellington City.

Predator Free 2050 has a key role in driving the science for predator eradication across NZ. Only by bringing together the knowledge and insights, philanthropy, community networks and technical implementation expertise can we expect to achieve this super-lofty goal. Along the way we are upskilling our rangatahi and bringing our communities together with a common goal and sense of purpose.

### **REQUEST**

We ask that Government

- i) continues to invest in and support Predator Free 2050 as a key partner in the rollout of Predator Free across the Wellington region.

## **6. Progress a Cat Management Act to protect New Zealand's biodiversity and agriculture and safeguard pet cats.**

To advance the goals of Predator Free 2050, we need to solve the problem of cats. One of our favourite pets, and very effective killing machines, cats across New Zealand are ripping their way through our native birds, lizards, and insects.

Cats are also one of the most common carriers of the parasite which causes toxoplasmosis, a disease which presents serious health risks to humans, sheep, and native wildlife.

Lack of a consistent approach to cat management is undermining any meaningful progress towards resolving this problem. Rather than one overarching piece of legislation, we have 67 different bylaws from our various territorial authorities, or no management at all. GW supports development of a Cat Management Act that would include mandatory microchipping, registration of microchipped cats and mandatory desexing of cats.

Like other regional councils, GW controls pest cats under the Regional Pest Management Plan, giving us the power to control them on designated sites. Compulsory microchipping and registration would enable us to differentiate between pest and pet cats, optimising our investment in pest control. Compulsory desexing of cats would reduce stray and feral populations, reducing pressure on native wildlife, public nuisance, and the welfare of the cat populations themselves.

## REQUEST

We ask that the Government:

- j) introduce a national Cat Management Act with the mandated registration and desexing of pet cats to protect our wildlife, agriculture, and the welfare of cats themselves.

## **7. Support a new vision of partnership in implementing Kaipupuri taonga ki te ao whānui framework for te taiao in the Wellington region.**

The framework has been developed by the *Mauri Tūhono ki te Upoko o te Ika* working group, with representatives from Greater Wellington, mana whenua, Department of Conservation, and community members with a range of expertise in restoring te taiao.

The purpose of the framework is to inspire big shifts in how we care for te taiao across the Wellington region. It calls for te taiao to be at the heart of our decision making and for us to restore our relationships as we do this. It provides guidance for how this could happen, pointing towards a vision of te taiao flourishing in Te Upoko o te Ika a Maui, but with the challenge that, for us to see positive changes in te taiao first we must change ourselves.

It will be a way for Government agencies and councils to work together in upholding their treaty relationships with mana whenua in this region. It could also become a platform for collaboration on initiatives of mutual interest, such as Te Mana o Te Taiao and the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity. Information about the framework can be found at [maurituhono.org.nz](http://maurituhono.org.nz).

The working group will launch the *Kaipupuri taonga ki te ao whānui* framework at the end of November. The next stage of the project will be to design a pathway for implementing the vision of the framework. This provides an opportunity for strengthening relationships between Government agencies, mana whenua, councils, and communities in our region, so that we work “shoulder to shoulder” towards realising the vision.

The framework also provides an excellent example for government agencies to shape their own policies and strategies for restoring te taiao. It reflects many of the values and principles highlighted in the National Science Challenge's [Me Tū-ā-Uru](#)<sup>1</sup> report and action plan.

## REQUEST

We ask that Government

- k) continues to actively support the implementation of this framework, working with mana whenua and Greater Wellington to make significant shifts in how we care for te taiao.
- l) consider how the framework can inform agencies' own work for te taiao.

### **8. Fund iwi and hapū Māori to undertake climate risk assessments, adaptation planning and emergency response and recovery activities.**

Empowering Māori is one of the five key principles in New Zealand's emissions reduction plan. The national adaption plan recognises the importance of embedding Te Tiriti across the climate response.

In the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle in Hawkes Bay and Tairāwhiti, iwi leaders stepped up to lead recovery processes for their communities. They led both the immediate response to provide for basic needs, and then the longer-term design and resourcing of the recovery process. Mana whenua relationships around the motu saw iwi leaders send practical, grounded aid flowing through to their people.

This took place against a backdrop of a delayed Government response, which did not meet the needs of people in a crisis. In Te Karaka, hundreds of people were marooned on a hill in dire need of water, food, shelter, and communications with family outside the area. In Hawkes Bay, communities suffered loss of life, their homes and irreplaceable whareniui and urupa.

In many cases, but not all, small towns and villages across NZ are home to mainly Māori people. Their hapū and iwi need long-term, reliable funding to build their capacity and capability in addressing the impacts of climate change, such as increased temperatures and extreme rainfall. This should include Government's development of the Māori Climate Platform to empower Māori to adapt. Māori can bring their long-held knowledge of the area to inform adaptation solutions in their role as kaitiaki, which all communities benefit from.

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<sup>1</sup> This action plan presents a vision for a healthier natural environment, and for healthier long-term human and environmental relationships. <https://www.metuauru.co.nz/>. Prepared by New Zealand's Biological Heritage National Science Challenge, Adaptive Governance and Policy Working Group.

Our mana whenua partners have acknowledged that climate change will exacerbate existing inequities experienced by Māori and threaten both the tangible and spiritual components of well-being. They also note that our indigenous biodiversity, mahinga kai and taonga species are more vulnerable to environmental change, and they are well-placed to partner in adaptation planning if appropriately resourced.

#### REQUEST

We ask that Government provides long-term, reliable funding for mana whenua to exercise tino rangatiratanga to:

- a) build their capacity and capability in preparing for the impacts of climate change and applying iwi and hapu expertise and perspectives at the readiness level.
- b) lead their community response to its impacts and developing capability to enable a shared and coordinated approach to recovery.