

Working together for nature.

Strategic Direction 2025-2030



Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini.

My strength is not that of an individual but that of the collective.

For over 100 years, the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society has advocated for the indigenous plants, wildlife, and landscapes of Aotearoa New Zealand. Throughout this time, we have learned that to truly speak, stand, and act for nature, we must work together.

Our role has evolved significantly over the past century. We now have over 100,000 members and supporters, own over 1400 hectares across the motu, and manage more than 170 nature restoration projects. What makes Forest & Bird unique is our powerful combination of professional staff and volunteers who do the mahi nationally and locally. Our members and supporters come from diverse demographics, locations, and political backgrounds. Our shared belief that we can, and must, do better for Aotearoa New Zealand's indigenous plants and wildlife unites us all.

As we look to the future, we recognise that effective conservation requires diverse perspectives and collaborative approaches. We are committed to learning and growing as an organisation, especially in working alongside hapū, iwi, and other communities with deep connections to te taiao.

This strategy drives our efforts to protect and restore te taiao over the next five years. We want to inspire and empower New Zealanders to speak, stand and act for our indigenous nature. Together, we will build on our century-long legacy to create a future where Aotearoa New Zealand's unique biodiversity thrives, where guardianship of our natural treasures guides our actions, and where every New Zealander recognises their role in this vital journey.

Kate Graeme
President

Nicola Toki
Chief Executive

OUR WHY

Forest & Bird works for an Aotearoa New Zealand where nature and people flourish together.

What guides our work

Our foundations

We uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi

We honour our intergenerational commitments

We believe a healthy environment forms the foundation for a healthy economy

Our approach

We advocate with nature at the centre

We champion nature-based solutions

Our implementation

We enable action for nature

We connect across the environmental system

We prioritise safety in our nature

Environmental domains we work across

Climate addresses causes and impacts of climate change, emissions reductions, and nature-based adaptation solutions.

Land covers native forests, alpine zones, wetlands, grasslands, species status, habitat conditions, and pest management.

Freshwater includes rivers, lakes, wetlands, aquifers, water quality, habitat health, and Te Mana o te Wai principles.

Marine encompasses oceans, coastal areas, biodiversity, protected areas, fisheries management, pollution, and critical habitats.

Our communities - who we are

Branches

Members

Networks

Supporters

Our focus areas

Nurturing thriving ecosystems

Desired outcome:

We see improved indigenous biodiversity outcomes through our work.

Centring sustainability, effectiveness, and people across the Forest & Bird community.

Desired outcome:

We are a financially and environmentally sustainable organisation that values, develops, and safeguards our people and work environments.

Connecting people and nature through collaborative action

Desired outcomes:

People recognise and act on the connection between their wellbeing and nature's wellbeing.

Our Forest & Bird communities are empowered with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to lead effective conservation action.

Driving change through advocacy and legal action

Desired outcome:

Our advocacy and legal actions have helped secure improvements for indigenous biodiversity across climate, land, freshwater and marine domains.

Forest & Bird works for an Aotearoa New Zealand where nature and people flourish together.

OUR PURPOSE

This section explains Forest & Bird's purpose and our enduring commitment to Aotearoa New Zealand's natural environment and communities that protect nature. It defines why we exist and the core mission that drives all our conservation efforts.



Crown Range Road, Mae Black



Our commitment

At Forest & Bird, we empower communities through grassroots action and national advocacy. We build strategic partnerships that champion indigenous nature conservation across Aotearoa New Zealand. Through collaborative efforts and dedicated advocacy, we drive meaningful and lasting environmental change for present and future generations.

What does this mean?

- **Supporting people to defend nature:** We provide communities with the tools, knowledge, and support they need to protect nature.
- **Volunteer-led conservation:** We mobilise local people to take practical action to restore and protect natural areas across Aotearoa New Zealand.
- **Speaking up for nature:** We advocate for better laws, policies, and decisions that protect our environment at the local, regional, and national levels.
- **Working together:** We collaborate with hapū and iwi, decision-makers, other organisations, and businesses to make a more significant difference for nature.
- **Protecting indigenous species:** We focus on saving Aotearoa New Zealand's indigenous plants, animals and the places they live.
- **Creating lasting solutions:** We tackle environmental problems with approaches that will work for the long term.

Our why

Forest & Bird works for an Aotearoa New Zealand where nature and people flourish together.

What does this mean?

Forest & Bird works to create an Aotearoa New Zealand where:

- The natural environment is healthy and thriving, with people recognising that when nature flourishes, communities do too.
- Natural ecosystems and human activities support each other, creating and maintaining healthy, functioning environments.
- Our native plants, animals, and natural habitats are protected and restored for their own sake, providing a sustainable legacy for all who call Aotearoa New Zealand home, both now and in the future.



New Brighton, Delphine Ducaruge

OUR APPROACH

This section outlines how Forest & Bird champions conservation through our principles, environmental domains, community networks, and how we work. These elements form an integrated framework for our conservation work in Aotearoa New Zealand.



What guides our work

This section outlines the principles that shape how Forest & Bird approaches conservation and what sets us apart. While not every initiative addresses all principles equally, they inform our thinking and actions. We apply them across our work, recognising that different challenges require different emphases within this framework.

Our foundations

We uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi

We are committed to working alongside tangata whenua in ways that honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and contribute to shared aspirations for te taiao. We strive to incorporate mātauranga Māori alongside other approaches, seeking to learn from and support Māori environmental aspirations.

We recognise this is an ongoing journey, and we are committed to continuing to learn and improve how we honour Te Tiriti in our work.

We honour our intergenerational commitments

We acknowledge our origins and recognise our responsibility to generations past, present, and future. Our work builds on previous efforts while ensuring our natural taonga endures. We work alongside hapū and iwi to achieve shared conservation outcomes that benefit future generations.

We believe a healthy environment forms the foundation for a healthy economy

Our prosperity depends on the health of our natural systems. Aotearoa New Zealand's economic wellbeing is intrinsically linked to our unique biodiversity, and functioning ecosystems that provide clean water, fertile soil and climate regulation. By protecting nature, we safeguard the foundation of our sustainable economic future.

What are nature-based solutions?

Nature-based solutions enhance natural processes to provide multiple simultaneous benefits—often more cost-effectively, and sustainably than traditional infrastructure. They support climate resilience through carbon sequestration while enhancing biodiversity and addressing human needs.

Examples include restoring wetlands for flood protection, creating urban forests for heat reduction and air quality, oyster reefs for coastal defense and regenerative agriculture for soil health and water retention.

Our approach

We advocate with nature at the centre

We champion policies that place nature at the core of decision-making. By pressing for stronger environmental protections and implementation and speaking out against harmful practices, we protect indigenous flora, fauna and habitats. Through partnering with organisations, we integrate nature into planning and demonstrate nature's value through robust frameworks.

We champion nature-based solutions

We implement approaches that work with nature, not against it. Our solutions harness natural systems to address environmental challenges and simultaneously deliver multiple ecological, social, and economic benefits. These nature-based solutions can also provide cost-effective alternatives to conventional engineering that support climate resilience and biodiversity.

Our implementation

We enable action for nature

We empower New Zealanders to take meaningful conservation action by providing knowledge and tools, inspiring community protection of local environments, supporting initiatives from personal changes to community projects, and minimising our environmental footprint in all operations.

We connect across the environmental system

We drive lasting change by working across the entire conservation ecosystem. We collaborate with government agencies, private landowners, community organisations, hapū and iwi on shared conservation initiatives. We address the root causes of environmental degradation, influence decision-making at all levels, and transform environmental practices and public attitudes.

We prioritise safety in our nature

From fieldwork to advocacy, we maintain rigorous safety standards that protect our staff, volunteers, and the environments we cherish.

Environmental domains we work across

Forest & Bird's conservation efforts span Aotearoa New Zealand's diverse ecosystems and environmental challenges. We strategically focus on four key domains where our advocacy, community engagement, and on-the-ground projects can make meaningful contributions to Aotearoa New Zealand's ecological health: Climate, Land, Freshwater, and Marine.

Our work recognises that these domains are interconnected, with actions in one area often supporting outcomes across the wider environment.



Climate

This domain addresses both the causes and impacts of climate change on Aotearoa New Zealand's ecosystems. It covers emissions reductions, climate policies, and their relationship to biodiversity, the protection of carbon sinks like forests and wetlands, and nature-based solutions that support adaptation for both natural systems and communities.



Land

The land domain covers Aotearoa New Zealand's native forests, alpine zones, wetlands, and grasslands. This area of focus includes the status of endemic plants and animals, the condition and connectivity of natural habitats, restoration needs for damaged ecosystems, and the management of pest species. This domain spans both public conservation land and privately owned areas with significant ecological value.



Freshwater

Freshwater encompasses rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands, and aquifers throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. This domain includes water quality and ecological flows, freshwater species' and habitats' health and distribution, impacts from surrounding land use practices, and management approaches that align with Te Mana o te Wai principles.



Marine

The marine domain encompasses oceans, coastal areas, and biodiversity relevant to Aotearoa New Zealand. It covers the status of marine protected areas, fisheries management practices, ocean pollution levels, and the condition of critical marine habitats and species. The domain also addresses land-based impacts on marine ecosystems, activities within the marine environment, and conservation efforts extending into the wider Pacific region, including protecting migratory species.

Our communities

Our strength lies in diverse and passionate people from all over the motu.

For us, community refers to groups of people who connect with, care for and advocate for Aotearoa New Zealand's natural environment.

People in our community bring knowledge, passion, and action, helping Forest & Bird speak, stand, and act for nature through practical conservation activities, advocacy work, or sharing our mahi.

Our community is essential to achieving our conservation goals, and together, we work to protect our natural heritage for present and future generations.

Branches

Our branches connect people who care deeply about their local natural environments across the country. These passionate volunteers share knowledge, foster connections to places, and work together on practical conservation projects. Branches create spaces where people can develop their conservation skills, share their love of nature, and contribute to tangible environmental outcomes in their regions.

Members

Our members' shared values and commitment to nature unite them. Members connect through branch activities, conservation events and shared learning opportunities and provide financial support to the organisation. They represent diverse backgrounds, ages, and perspectives but are connected by their care for our unique biodiversity. Their collective voice strengthens our influence and helps shape environmental conversations nationwide.

Networks

Our specialised networks connect people with shared conservation interests across regions. These include our Youth Network for emerging conservation leaders, issue-focused groups building expertise around specific challenges, and the Kiwi Conservation Club, which has connected Kiwi kids to Aotearoa New Zealand's wildlife and wild places since 1988. These networks strengthen our collective impact through focused expertise.

Supporters

Our wider community includes supporters who engage with our work beyond formal membership. They connect through social media, events, volunteer activities, donations, and advocacy. These pathways allow more New Zealanders to develop relationships with nature and others who share their environmental concerns. Our supporters extend our reach and influence, contributing to a movement for environmental care across Aotearoa New Zealand.



 Kiwi Conservation Club, North Taranaki, Lee McCracken

Partners

Our partners are vital to amplifying our impact. We build partnerships with diverse organisations who share our commitment to nature, including government agencies, research institutions, conservation groups, and environmentally responsible businesses. This allows us to combine knowledge, resources, and perspectives, helping us address complex environmental challenges more effectively and create a broader impact for te taiao. Our partners strengthen and extend our work through complementary expertise and reach.

How we work

We organise our conservation efforts through specialised business groups and high-impact programmes to protect and restore nature across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our four work streams

We organise our work through four streams, each supporting a specific focus area. They are:

Conservation Project Delivery works to initiate, support and deliver local and national conservation programmes.
Focus area: nurturing thriving ecosystems

Growing Support builds people's connection with nature and encourages them to increase their active participation.
Focus area: connecting people and nature through collaborative action.

Conservation Policy & Advocacy influence key decision-makers to prioritise nature and hold them accountable.
Focus area: driving change through advocacy and legal action.

Enabling Services ensures that the mechanisms that keep the society effective and aligned work well and sustainably.
Focus area: centring sustainability, effectiveness, and people across the Forest & Bird community.

Practical action to support nature

Forest & Bird delivers conservation impact through our conservation programmes across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our diverse portfolio of more than 170 conservation initiatives spans from quarter-acre urban islands to hundreds of hectares of protected land, creating vital connections between people and places. These programmes form the backbone of our grassroots conservation movement and include larger-scale projects with long-term ecological impacts.

Our conservation programmes:

- Engage local communities in hands-on conservation mahi, building lasting environmental stewardship
- Demonstrate conservation excellence at various scales
- Establish benchmarks for biodiversity recovery nationwide
- Employ innovative, science-based approaches to deliver measurable ecological benefits
- Create models that inspire and guide conservation practice throughout Aotearoa New Zealand
- Safeguard natural taonga for present and future generations

Together, these initiatives protect nature at every scale—from cherished local environments to significant landscapes. We ensure appropriate resourcing across our programme portfolio, recognising that conservation success requires community engagement and strategic impact. Every programme contributes to our vision of thriving ecosystems throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.



 Clare O'Rourke and Henry Neas with rat tracking tunnels, Jessica Armstrong

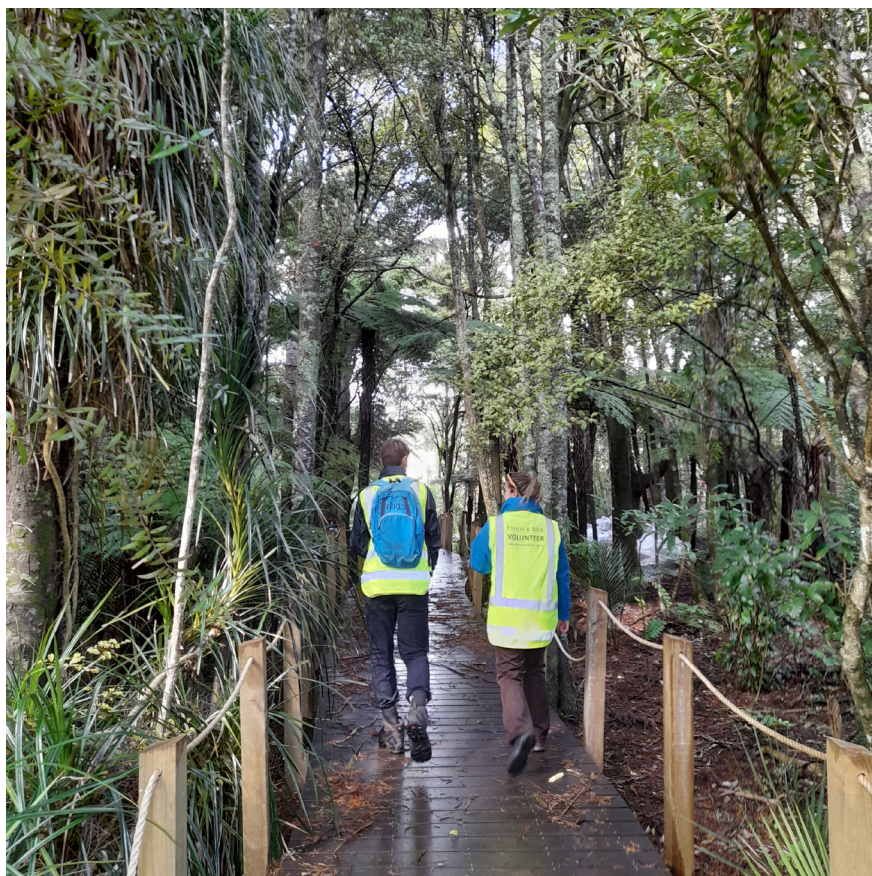
OUR FOCUS AREAS

**At the heart of everything we do is
our why: Forest & Bird works for an
Aotearoa New Zealand where nature
and people flourish together.**



OUR WHY

Forest & Bird works for an Aotearoa New Zealand where nature and people flourish together.



 Ark in the Park, Ellen Rykers

Our 2025-2030 strategy connects this purpose to action through four interconnected focus areas working across Climate, Land, Freshwater, and Marine domains. This creates a holistic conservation approach where our strategy operates as an integrated system where each element reinforces the others.

Focus Areas serve as our guiding commitments, shaping how we allocate resources and make decisions through 2030. These core priorities inform our approach to advocacy, community engagement, and conservation initiatives.

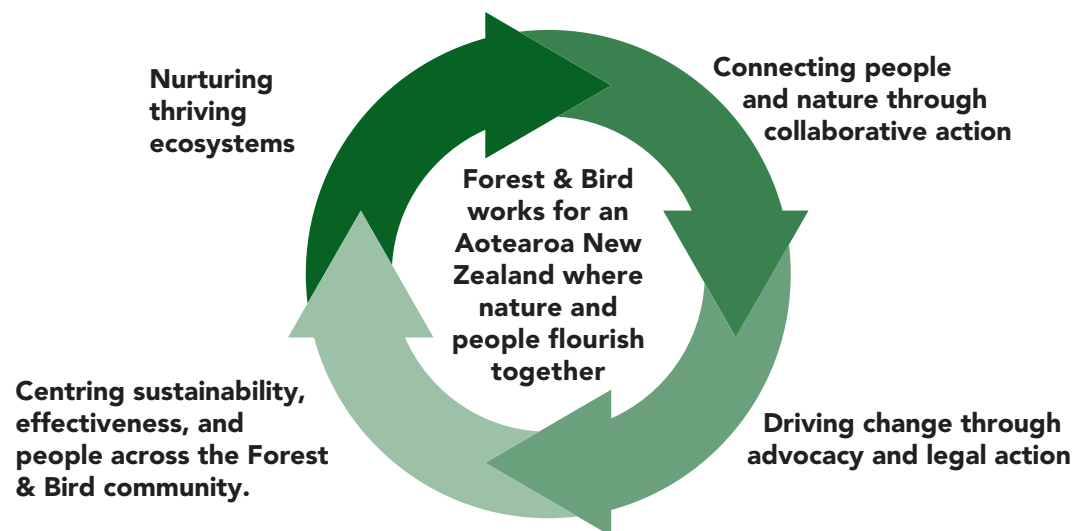
Outcomes represent the specific, measurable impacts we aim to achieve by 2030.

Achievements mark our progress through concrete milestones such as successful campaigns, strategic partnerships, and implemented conservation programmes.

By working simultaneously across all four environmental domains—Climate, Land, Freshwater, and Marine—and aligning with our organisation-wide focus areas, we create a powerful approach to addressing complex environmental challenges. This strategic integration ensures that progress in one area amplifies progress in others, creating momentum toward our ultimate purpose.

We cannot achieve our why without success in all focus areas. Each plays an essential role in creating an Aotearoa New Zealand where nature and people truly flourish together. This is how we turn our vision into reality.

Our focus areas:



FOCUS AREA

Nurturing thriving ecosystems

What we're trying to achieve

Indigenous ecosystems, native species, and natural landscapes flourish across Aotearoa New Zealand, creating a nation where biodiversity thrives, ecological relationships function naturally, and resilient systems sustain themselves. Our work ensures vibrant land, freshwater and marine habitats to support the full diversity of New Zealand's unique flora and fauna in self-sustaining ecological communities. Our conservation programmes demonstrate best practice ecosystem management that others can follow.

Why this matters

This focus area forms the foundation of our "nature and people flourishing together" purpose. Healthy, functioning ecosystems are the prerequisite for all other goals. By prioritising ecological restoration, species protection, and habitat conservation, we build the essential foundation upon which the interconnected wellbeing of people and nature depends.

It is vital for Forest & Bird to be credible and to show we stand by our principles and practice what we advocate. We do this through on-the-ground programmes demonstrating good practice and the benefits of protected ecosystems. This gives us credibility and standing to demand the same of those charged with looking after nature in Aotearoa New Zealand and to drive change through advocacy and legal action.

OUTCOME 1

We see improved indigenous biodiversity outcomes through our work.

ACHIEVEMENT 1

We manage comprehensive restoration programmes that improve biodiversity outcomes across five significant Forest & Bird reserves and four national programmes. Monitoring will be in place in all programmes to track and demonstrate long-term biodiversity health trends.

ACHIEVEMENT 2

Forest & Bird has established comprehensive programmes across key environmental domains, including one freshwater and marine-based initiative. We will complement these with a new climate change programme highlighting indigenous species' potential in carbon sequestration.

ACHIEVEMENT 3

All conservation projects under Forest & Bird's stewardship follow best practice and operate with clearly defined objectives. Practical support and guidance for local reserve projects helps make them sustainable and improves biodiversity outcomes.

ACHIEVEMENT 4

We have at least one large national programme for urban pest control that showcases best practices for pest elimination in urban environments.



 North Taranaki Branch

FOCUS AREA

Connecting people and nature through collaborative action

What we're trying to achieve

We connect the wellbeing of nature to the prosperity of communities while building a strong, diverse movement for environmental stewardship.

Why this matters

We demonstrate how healthy ecosystems contribute to human wellbeing, economic prosperity, and cultural identity while uniting diverse voices in collective action. By fostering inclusive participation and highlighting these interconnections, we create a powerful movement that helps people understand that protecting nature is essential for community health, economic sustainability, and cultural vitality.

Forest & Bird's communities are at the heart of our movement, providing the support and passion that drive change. By bringing together diverse perspectives—indigenous knowledge, scientific expertise, community insights, and business innovation—we develop practical, equitable approaches to environmental challenges that benefit human communities and nature.

OUTCOME 2

People recognise and act on the connection between their wellbeing and nature's wellbeing.

ACHIEVEMENT 5

We have implemented targeted communications campaigns that demonstrate the measurable benefits of healthy ecosystems for society, economy, and cultural identity.

ACHIEVEMENT 6

Our diverse programme of nature connection experiences accommodates different abilities, ages, and cultural backgrounds. These opportunities for meaningful engagement with the natural world integrate te ao Māori and Pākehā perspectives.

OUTCOME 3

Our Forest & Bird communities are empowered with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to lead effective conservation action.

ACHIEVEMENT 7

We have equipped our communities with the tools for success, and they are effectively leading local conservation projects, activities and advocacy campaigns.

ACHIEVEMENT 8

We are fostering the next generation of environmental stewards through inclusive, accessible and engaging conservation-based education.



FOCUS AREA

Driving change through advocacy and legal action

What we're trying to achieve

We champion environmental legislation and practical policy solutions while advocating for better protection of native species and habitats. Our legal interventions challenge harmful developments, weak regulations and poor implementation of environmental law, while our policy advocacy addresses key environmental threats through evidence-based recommendations and community mobilisation.

Why this matters

This focus area strengthens environmental protections through strategic legal and advocacy approaches. Through targeted litigation, submissions on policy proposals, and constructive stakeholder engagement, we remove barriers to environmental protection while building support for stronger conservation measures.

We remain flexible and responsive to emerging environmental challenges, enabling timely interventions when new threats arise. Our approach empowers communities to participate in environmental decision-making while building public understanding and political will for improved environmental standards, benefit human communities and nature.

OUTCOME 4

Our advocacy and legal actions have helped secure improvements for indigenous biodiversity across climate, land, freshwater and marine domains.

ACHIEVEMENT 9

We have advocated for tangible national policy and legislative improvements that strengthen protection for indigenous species and ecosystems across all environmental domains.

ACHIEVEMENT 10

Our advocacy and legal work have driven biodiversity protection and restoration through local and regional initiatives and collaborative partnerships, successfully addressing domain-specific challenges in climate adaptation, freshwater health, marine conservation, and ecosystem management.

ACHIEVEMENT 11

We have promoted integrated approaches recognising the interconnections between climate, freshwater, marine, and terrestrial systems. These approaches value scientific knowledge, including mātauranga Māori, in creating more holistic protection measures for biodiversity.

ACHIEVEMENT 12

We have campaigned to build public awareness and political support for critical biodiversity issues within each environmental domain. We have increased visibility and action on pressing concerns such as climate resilience for vulnerable species, improving freshwater ecosystem health, marine protections, and reducing the impacts of pests, including browsers.

ACHIEVEMENT 13

In our advocacy and legal mahi, we have responded to changing policy and regulatory environments through evidence-based advocacy, strategic legal interventions, strategic alliances with key stakeholders, and efficient resource reprioritisation.



 Hauraki Gulf Alliance petition handover, Lynn Freeman

FOCUS AREA

Centring sustainability, effectiveness and people across the Forest & Bird community

What we're trying to achieve

We know that to achieve our goals, we need to have our own house in order. By investing in our people, financial stability, and environmental practices, we reduce our footprint and develop a team that's engaged, innovative, and aligned with our core purpose.

Why this matters

This approach builds organisational resilience against future challenges while ensuring we remain responsive to our communities' evolving needs.

Our commitment to sustainability extends beyond environmental considerations to encompass social responsibility to our communities, financial viability, and good governance. By valuing diversity, promoting inclusion, and prioritising safety and wellbeing, we create an organisation that thrives through the contributions of people from all backgrounds and experiences, reflecting the rich cultural tapestry of Aotearoa New Zealand.

OUTCOME 5

We are a financially and environmentally sustainable organisation that values, develops, and safeguards our people, communities and work environments.

ACHIEVEMENT 14

Our staff, governance, and communities better reflect the diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand, with improved representation across cultural backgrounds, ages, and experiences. We will support this through inclusive recruitment and retention practices, professional development pathways, diversity initiatives, and the completion of appropriate cultural awareness programmes.

ACHIEVEMENT 15

We will develop and implement a holistic sustainability plan to achieve our targets and goals. It will build on our existing efforts to reduce emissions through energy efficiency, responsible travel, sustainable procurement, and effective waste management practices.

ACHIEVEMENT 16

We embed Health, Safety and Wellbeing thinking and practices into our work through the organisational principle that Safety is in Our Nature.

ACHIEVEMENT 17

We operate with robust financial governance and management practices that ensure our long-term viability and enable us to serve communities for generations. These include diversified revenue streams, responsible financial stewardship, and strategic investment in our core capabilities.

ACHIEVEMENT 18

We will implement a comprehensive people development framework that builds capability, supports career progression, and nurtures leadership at all levels, resulting in improved staff engagement and retention.



 Tarapurui Bushy Park, Joe Potter

