

Existing policies and mechanisms for Wellington City

Council Strategies

In 2006 the Council approved seven strategies including a new **Environmental Strategy** that provides high-level statements about the Council's long-term environmental intentions for Wellington. The Biodiversity Action Plan sits directly under the City Council's **Environmental Strategy**. It is identified as a key implementation action of the Strategy, and addresses the city's need for a coherent plan to address biodiversity issues.

This plan is prepared in the context of the following Council outcomes:

- Making Wellington *more liveable*, where Wellington's natural environment is more accessible to all for a wide range of social and recreational opportunities that do not compromise environmental values;
- Creating a stronger *sense of place*, where Wellington recognises and protects significant features of its natural heritage;
- *More actively engaged*, where a collaborative participatory approach is pursued for environmental kaitiakitanga (guardianship) by information sharing and establishing partnerships;
- *Better connected*, where Wellington has a network of green space;
- *More sustainable*, where Wellington's environmental impact will be reduced by making efficient use of natural resources;
- *Safer*, including clean water and air to protect public health and ecosystems;
- *Healthier*, with the protection of land and water based ecosystems to sustain natural processes;
- *More competitive*, with a high quality environment attracting more visitors.

This plan also sits in the context of the Council's **Economic Development Strategy**, where a 10 year outcome is to advocate for tourism products that promote Wellington's unique sense of place. The unique natural heritage of Wellington creates strong potential for eco-tourism.

In addition, this plan is influenced by the **Culture and Wellbeing Strategy**, which emphasises enhancing elements of the city's sense of place, including native flora and fauna; and becoming more actively engaged, including access to historical and heritage information, and investing in the city's public environment.

It will give effect to the **Urban Development Strategy** by assisting in the creation of a more sustainable environment. Reducing our ecological footprint and protecting and maintaining a green network throughout the urban environment.

This plan will support the **Social and Recreation Strategy** by encouraging community participation and involvement in biodiversity conservation, continuing close working relationships with community groups involved with restoration and enabling these groups to communicate by providing networking opportunities.

This plan sits alongside Capital Spaces (Open Space Plan), Energy Plans, Water Conservation Strategies, and Solid and Liquid Waste Management Plans. Plans such as the Pest Management Plan sit directly under the Biodiversity Action Plan (see Figure 1).

Capital Spaces (1998) outlines Council's vision for Wellington's open spaces. Open spaces are defined as outdoor places in the city that have ecological, recreational, landscape or heritage values. Ecological values are described as plants and animals and the habitats they live in; in other words, biodiversity values. Reserve management plans sit under Capital Spaces and these either directly or indirectly refer to biodiversity management.

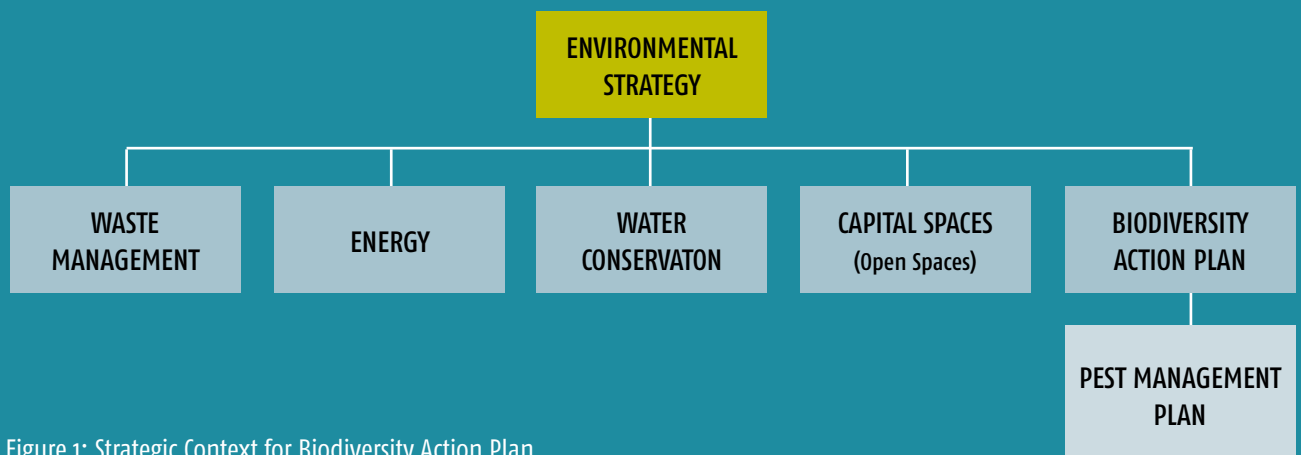


Figure 1: Strategic Context for Biodiversity Action Plan

There are 10 guiding principles of Capital Spaces, four of which relate directly to biodiversity, these are:

- Enhancing natural succession: ...Council will seek to control plant and animal pests and to reintroduce later successional species such as rimu, miro, rata, tawa, kohekohe and hinau.
- Better networks and corridors: Council will seek to create ecological corridors and recreational networks that maximise the value of the open space...
- Protecting threatened species: ... Council will support the reintroduction of native species.
- Protecting the coast and streams: Council will seek to... promote the revegetation of riparian areas with appropriate native species. This will contribute to improving water quality and to enhancing native aquatic habitats.

Wet and Wild: Bush and Streams Restoration Plan (2001) identified a five-year series of operational priorities and targets relating to the restoration of the city's regenerating bush, primary forest remnants and streams. The functioning of this plan finished in 2006. Restoration is one of the four major facets of the Biodiversity Action Plan and it will supersede Wet and Wild and continue a new five year series of operational priorities and targets.

The **District Plan** provides objectives, policies and rules relating to significant areas of Wellington's natural heritage (Conservation Sites), as well as for land valued for its natural character and provision of informal open space (Open Space B 'natural environment' and Open Space C 'inner town belt'). The District Plan also includes the Subdivision Design Guide, which lists criteria for using existing landscape, landform and vegetation. Subdivision applications are assessed against these criteria.

The Council has also recently reviewed the **Code of Practice for Land Development**. The Code of Practice is essentially a toolbox

for development, and the review is including guidelines for the protection and promotion of open space values.

Existing Projects

In addition to the above policies, the Council currently carries out projects that have direct biodiversity outcomes, these include the provision of environmental grants, pest management, threatened plant conservation and multiple revegetation projects using eco-sourced plants. Examples of revegetation projects are: community greening (providing community groups and local residents with free plants), replanting following the removal of exotic vegetation (such as weeds and hazardous trees) and planting in key native ecosystems around the city. Pest management is carried out in accordance with the **Pest Management Plan** (2005). Other projects are carried out under the Parks and Gardens Business Plan. The Wellington Botanic Garden and Otari-Wilton's Bush have specific plans and projects governing the management of indigenous biodiversity within their area. The Council contributes land, funding and expertise to the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary (a haven for birds and plants with a 500-year vision of restoring native flora and fauna, a conservation advocate and an internationally recognised community conservation project) and Wellington Zoo (protecting plant and animal biodiversity by holding and breeding exotic and indigenous endangered species, having direct involvement in local community-based biodiversity projects, working with relevant organisations on health and research projects regarding indigenous biodiversity). The Council also supports the proposed Marine Education Centre (which aims to showcase the unique marine environment, establish a regional coastal plant reserve as well as education programmes and research initiatives).

Voluntary action is a huge contributor to biodiversity management. The Council supports biodiversity volunteers through environmental grants and through the community greening programme.

In 2007 the Council provided 43 volunteer groups with around 15,000 eco-sourced natives to plant across the city. This is in addition to thousands of plants the groups grow in home nurseries. These numbers are increasing every year. In 2002, just 12 groups planted 8,900 plants. The groups prepare the sites for planting and maintain them until the native plants are established. This community contribution is crucial to the successful ongoing management of biodiversity in Wellington City and is increasing every year.