

## Hawkes Bay Biodiversity Guardians Chairpersons Report 2018

Tena Koutou Katoa

It's my absolute privilege to present to you the very first Biodiversity Guardians Chairpersons report!

*Toitu te marae a Tane mahuta*

*If the land is well*

*Toitu te marae a Tangaroa*

*and the sea is well*

*Toitu te tangata*

*the people will thrive*

This is the whakatauki of New Zealand's draft Threatened Species Strategy and a poignant reminder that as people of Aotearoa New Zealand it is our responsibility to do what we can to secure our biodiversity, to halt the decline and restore habitats that will sustain our indigenous flora and fauna. If we are successful, future generations will benefit.

We all have a role to play, the responsibility doesn't rest solely with government agencies such as Hawkes Bay Regional Council and Department of Conservation or other key supporting agencies, conservation groups and NGO's like Forest and Bird and Kiwi's for Kiwi. We all – each of us – play a role in ensuring a sustainable future for our unique natural heritage.

This is a call to action, one that has been answered in Hawkes Bay through the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. A call that requires us to work together to make positive gains and good management decisions that will ensure species thrive and habitats are rebuilt to support a healthy growing region.

The first stage of answering that call was to address the 6 Priority Actions from the Hawkes Bay Biodiversity Action Plan put together by the Implementation Planning Group (IPG) in 2015/16. These Actions have formed our work for the past year. Below is a summary of where these actions are in terms of completion.

### **1. Ecosystem mapping & ecological prioritisation**

This action directly contributes to the goal under the NZ Biodiversity Strategy to maintain and restore a full range of remaining natural habitats and ecosystems. Good work on the four steps in this action have been undertaken are well on the way to completion.

- Ecosystem mapping has been completed for the Hawke's Bay region.
- Ecosystem prioritisation using a spatial planning tool called Zonation has been completed. Based on representativeness, connectivity and condition, the Top

30% sites were identified. Across the region this equated to 900 terrestrial sites, 10,034 segments of rivers and 77 lakes.

- Zonation working group consisting of the members of the former Implementation Planning Group have completed the desk-top interpretation of the data.
- First 100 (out of 900) terrestrial sites have been selected for piloting 'management prescription development', which is a process and template to develop management plan and estimate costs. A Workshop was held in August which will produce templates for these 100 sites, to help support decision making by HBRC and other stakeholders with an interest in regional biodiversity.

## **2. Development of a cultural framework**

Developing a cultural framework with tangata whenua is important to help identify, map and assess the condition of taonga (treasured) biodiversity sites using Mātauranga Māori values and tools. This action requires a review of works completed in the region to date to understand the current situation and work required before advancing with plans.

We are conscious of the critical role that whanau/hapu/iwi play in meeting the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan so completing this action in a timely fashion is essential. Developing a plan will begin early 2019.

## **3. Establish the Biodiversity Guardians & Foundation**

The Guardians were incorporated on 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2018. Having worked through the process of becoming incorporated. Part of which is to confirm the constitution and rules, a particularly important process requiring a lot of work.

A very successful launch was held which really highlighted to us that our community are engaged and committed to achieving great biodiversity results. Approximately 200 people attended and since then we have signed up over 80 members, 2 NGO's and 3 small business and 3 corporates to become Guardians.

The Biodiversity Guardians and Foundation are working through the process of confirming appointments and trustees. The Chairperson and Treasurer are automatically confirmed to ensure continuity. The Guardians management committee is;

Connie Norgate – Chairperson

Marie Taylor – Deputy Chairperson

Kay Griffiths – Treasurer

Amelia McQueen – Member

Mark Mitchell – Member

Keiko Hashiba – Member

Genevieve Bennett – Secretary

We are all in one way or another, champions of Biodiversity Hawkes Bay. This includes advocating for and supporting the Foundation to grow and administer the endowment fund towards the long-term goal of \$50 million or more.

#### **4. Develop statutory agencies working group**

The Strategy recognises that statutory agencies have an essential role in the delivery of biodiversity programmes - councils, government agencies, iwi organisations and non-government agencies.

A coordinated approach to understanding what that work looks is important. This work will get underway in early 2019.

#### **5. Establish a Biodiversity Forum**

In keeping with the view that Biodiversity is everyone's responsibility we aim to share the load and involve community where we can. Our solution is to hold a Biodiversity Forum once or twice a year which will be a central place where anyone and everyone involved or interested in biodiversity in Hawke's Bay can come together.

The inaugural Biodiversity Forum event will be hosted by the Biodiversity Guardians in conjunction with the Central Hawke's Bay District Council and the Aramoana Environmental & Education Charitable Trust in Aramoana on the 28th October 2018. This event, named the Bio Buzz, will be the closing event of the Central Hawke's Bay Spring Fling and was announced in the Spring Fling mail-out which went to 20,000 households around Hawke's Bay. The event will showcase a range of local restoration projects and also feature speakers from Enviroschools, the local farming community and Iwi.

#### **6. Work alongside private landowners**

The Strategy and Action Plan particularly recognise that landowners - especially farmers - are critical also important to the success of biodiversity in Hawke's Bay, as much of the rare and threatened native biodiversity is on privately owned rural and urban land.

We want to work with the right people to understand their perspective before advancing. Planning has begun for this action with the first task being to collate a contact list of landowners. As with action's 2 & 4, this work is planned for early next year.

#### **Building profile and connecting with our community**

A dedicated website for Biodiversity Hawke's Bay has been developed in collaboration between the Guardians and HBRC Communications team. The new website ([www.biodiversityhb.org](http://www.biodiversityhb.org)) is designed to become a hub for information and notifications where the community, businesses and agencies can access, donate, and signup for membership.

Biodiversity Hawke's Bay are also engaged in a range of activities to build profile and connect to the wider community. This includes activities such as:

- Being a partner with the Hillmac Junior School and Hillmac Intermediate School speech completion which has a theme of Biodiversity in our backyard. Over 15 schools across Hawke's Bay took part in this competition with finals held at the National Aquarium in late August and early September.
- Invitations to speak at the ECO conference on the 8th of September and the National Wetland Symposium on the 26th September
- Participating in the Hawke's Bay show 17 - 19 October.

All of these are opportunities for Hawkes Bay Biodiversity to educate the public, build brand profile and grow membership.

## **Summary**

In summary, everything is shaping up to look great for the future. We are looking to hold the first Guardians AGM in September 2018 at which point the management committee will be confirmed along with a vote for community representatives to join. The first Forum meeting is planned for October and some small grants will be announced toward the end of the year. All other actions are expected to get underway early 2019.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very special thanks to Kay Griffiths and the HBRC legal and financial team who worked diligently on the constitution and rules for the Guardians to become incorporated. Genevieve Bennett and Charles Daugherty for their support and work on the structure, wiring and financial diagrams. And a huge thank you to the Guardians management committee, most of whom undertake this work in their own time based on their enthusiasm and passion for Biodiversity in the Hawkes Bay.

Nga mihi nui

Connie Norgate

Chairperson – Hawkes Bay Biodiversity Guardians