

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 STRUCTURE OF THIS PLAN

This management plan is divided into four main sections;

- (1) introduction,
- (2) background,
- (3) goals, objectives and policies, and
- (4) implementation.

*Section 1* describes how Otari-Wilton's Bush fits into the city-wide context for reserve management planning.

*Section 2* provides a physical description of Otari-Wilton's Bush including its key physical and natural features. A historic outline is also provided.

*Section 3* describes the themes of each goal and issues and opportunities are discussed. Objectives relating to each goal are then listed, and their implementation is described through policies and implementation actions. The final section summarises all the implementation actions described in Section 3.

## 1.2 THE STATUS OF THIS PLAN

This section describes the practical and legal status of this Plan, the planning process and how it fits into the Council's wider planning programme for parks and open spaces.

### 1.2.1 RESERVE AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING IN WELLINGTON

#### **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. Otari-Wilton's Bush sits primarily under this Strategy, and this management 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;
- *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 management 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 cultural and natural heritage of Otari-Wilton's Bush strongly positions it within Wellington's nature-based tourism attractions.

This management plan is also 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.

#### **Outer Green Belt Management Plan (2004)**

The Outer Green Belt follows the ridges to the west of the city from the South Coast to Colonial Knob. The Outer Green Belt Management Plan is a 'cluster management plan' that sets management objectives and policies for the whole area, rather than for specific reserves in it. These policies are consistent with 'Capital Spaces: Open Space Strategy for Wellington (1998)'. The vision is that the Outer Green Belt is a continuous green belt, in which indigenous vegetation is restored and an informal recreation network is widely accessible.

Otari-Wilton's Bush sits within the *Outer Green Belt* cluster management plan, where it has been identified for management in accordance with its own specific management plan. The general objectives and policies for the Outer Green Belt will apply, but they will be interpreted with respect to the Scenic Reserve status of Otari-Wilton's Bush.

#### **Botanic Garden Cluster**

Otari-Wilton's Bush also sits within the *Botanic Gardens of Wellington* cluster. Four gardens, each with a different botanic emphasis, form this cluster:

- Otari-Wilton's Bush
- Wellington Botanic Garden
- Bolton Street Memorial Park
- Truby King Park

A strategic vision has been developed for the Botanic Gardens of Wellington:

*To enhance people's awareness and appreciation of plants and their environment, provide appropriate recreational opportunities, and manage and protect our diverse cultural and natural heritage.*

*(Combined Management Plan: Wellington Botanic Garden, Anderson Park, Bolton Street Memorial Park, January 2002)*

The vision for Otari-Wilton's Bush sits within the context of this strategic vision for the Botanic Gardens.

Other relevant strategies and Council programmes include Wellington Wet and Wild: Bush and Streams Restoration Plan (2001) which includes policies and priorities for the protection of natural regeneration and revegetation, enhancement of key natural areas of the city valued by the community, and managing streams as complete ecosystems and recognising their role within wider ecological processes.

Project Kaiwharawhara, is a significant project falling out of Wellington Wet and Wild. Project Kaiwharawhara is a stream catchment restoration project and is centred around Otari-Wilton's Bush. The project is driven by a community stream plan, and is a collaborative effort between community, Wellington City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council. The vision for Project Kaiwharawhara is to protect and enhance the natural landscape, ecosystems, and recreation areas, and for the stream to be the focus for local communities.

## **National Strategies and Legislation**

The management of Otari-Wilton's Bush must also take relevant national strategies and legislation into consideration. These include the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (2000), New Zealand Historic Places Act (1993), Resource Management Act (1991), Local Government Act (2002), and of course the Reserves Act (1977).

### **1.2.2 THE RESERVES ACT 1977**

Otari-Wilton's Bush is classified as a Reserve under the Reserves Act (1977). The Act requires that management plans be developed that provide for and ensure the use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection, and preservation of the reserve for the purposes for which it is classified. The Act also states that the management plan shall be kept under continuous review, so that the plan is adapted to changing circumstances or in accordance with increased knowledge.

Most of the Otari-Wilton's Bush management area is classified as Scenic Reserve. For any additional areas that this management plan recommends for inclusion, and where existing parcels of land within the management area are unclassified, then this Plan will have the status of a draft management plan only, until such time as the areas are gazetted as part of Otari-Wilton's Bush.

This plan replaces the 1996 Management Plan: *Otari Native Botanic Garden*.

### **1.2.3 RELATIONSHIP WITH TANGATA WHENUA**

Wellington City Council recognises the importance of the mana whenua relationship and has a formal memorandum of understanding with Wellington Tenth Trust and is developing one with Te Runanga o Toa Rangatira. Wellington City Council also takes into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, in accordance with Resource Management Act (1991), including recognition of the role of Tangata Whenua as kaitiaki of the natural environment. Actions taken under this Plan will reflect these principles and are intended to provide opportunities for discussion and to develop partnerships.

### **The Port Nicholson Block Claim**

On 17 May 2003, the Waitangi Tribunal presented the report on Wellington and its environs, *Te Whanganui a Tara me Ōna Takiwā*, to the claimants and their nearly 1,000 supporters at Pipitea Marae. This very significant document will form the background to subsequent claim settlement negotiations between the claimants and the Crown. These negotiations are between the Crown and claimants. As such, Local Government is a third party to negotiations and any settlement outcome that may impact on the operation of Otari-Wilton's Bush is a matter for negotiation between the Crown and Iwi.

### **1.2.4 FUTURE REVIEW OF THIS PLAN**

This plan may be reviewed at any time in accordance with increased knowledge and/or changing circumstances. The term of this management plan is expected to be 10 years, and the implementation plan is for 5 years.

Any review of this management plan must be carried out in accordance with the Reserves Act (1977).