

2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION ATTRACTIONS

What's included here

Nature is one of Wellington's biggest attractions. In Zealandia – the Karori Sanctuary, the proposed Marine Education Centre and the Wellington Zoo, the city has a range of facilities that play an important part in wildlife conservation, educating people about nature and attracting visitors to the city.

These are complemented by other attractions such as Otari / Witon's bush, other botanical gardens and the Taputeranga Marine Reserve.

Why it's important

These facilities play important conservation roles, protecting native and exotic flora and fauna. They inform and educate, attract visitors, and their existence creates economic incentives for the city's environment to be protected and enhanced.

Contribution to community outcomes

This activity contributes to the following community outcome: 'Wellington will protect and showcase its natural landforms and indigenous environments'.

What we'll provide – our levels of service

We will provide funding support to the Zoo and the Karori Sanctuary in their role of protecting and nurturing the city's native plant and bird life and making significant contributions to wildlife conservation.

The Sanctuary has a 500-year vision of restoring pristine native forest and bird life in a valley just minutes from the city and

telling the history of this land through interactive displays at the visitor centre.

We own the Zoo land (it is part of the Town Belt) and provide ongoing funding to allow it to maintain and enhance its visitor experience. The Zoo attracts more than 180,000 visitors each year, including many school groups. It has more than 400 animals living in family groups in habitats designed to be as similar as practicable to their natural environments. It also manages a breeding programme for endangered species.

Over the next three years:

- The interactive visitor centre will open at the Karori Sanctuary. We support the Sanctuary by providing land, contributed funding to support daily operations and governance costs, as well as a \$9.9 million loan for the development of the new interactive visitor facility. The Trust experienced delays in securing funding and soil instability at the site caused further set backs. We have since stepped in and have increased the level of contingency funding by \$480,000 for the visitor and education centre. It is expected that with the completion of the visitor centre, visitor numbers will grow and the Sanctuary's operations will become self funding. The visitor centre is expected to open in 2010.
- We will continue to redevelop the Wellington Zoo into an interactive, unique, dynamic, and accessible visitor experience. In 2007 we agreed a ten year capital upgrade programme to modernise facilities at the zoo and provide visitors with a place to connect with wildlife through interactive experiences. Upgrades planned to be completed for the coming three years include completing the animal hospital, upgrading the 'monkey island' and Sunbear

enclosure, making alterations to the lions den to allow greater interaction between male and female lions, and building a native precinct titled 'Meet the locals,' and several other smaller projects. All buildings and precincts constructed as part of the upgrade programme will be future proofed and built in line with sustainable building practises.

- We will work with the Wellington Marine Conservation Trust to determine whether it is feasible to establish a new marine centre at the former 'Maranui Depot' site in Lyall Bay. The site lies to the landward side of Queens Drive, towards the western point of Lyall Bay, and is owned by the Council. The Trust has undertaken some initial scoping and concept work which indicates that this site might be suitable for the centre to be built there. The Trust aims to develop a world-class attraction that educates residents and visitors about Wellington's unique marine life. We have committed to support the Trust by providing up to a maximum of \$450,000 – being 50 percent of the estimated cost for the feasibility study. The Trust will pay the remaining 50 percent. The study will provide detailed information regarding the exact costs and operations of the project, which will help the Council decide its future level of involvement, if there is any, beyond the feasibility phase.

How we'll measure our level of service and performance

We'll know we are succeeding when annual visitor numbers for the Karori Sanctuary (68,500) and Wellington Zoo (182,000) are achieved. Our performance measures are detailed on the next page.