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**Project title: Environmental Educator**  
**Strategy area: Environment**

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## 1. The Proposal

It is proposed that an Environmental Educator position be established at the Treehouse Visitor Centre to support the educational roles of the Botanic Gardens of Wellington and replace the services formerly offered by World Wildlife Fund (WWF-NZ).

The services the Botanic Gardens position will offer the community include:

- Curriculum and basic horticultural education for schools that would complement the Greater Wellington ‘Take Care’ and Enviroschools programmes
- Filling the horticultural and plant conservation ‘gap’ between the public education components of various Council-sponsored activities, including the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, the Marine Education Centre, the Zoo and waste minimisation programmes (see Appendix for illustration)
- Horticultural and environmental education for ethnic communities
- Specialist horticultural and conservation education
- Stronger partnerships with other education providers
- Modelling for community projects, training for teachers, supporting existing Parks community programmes and developing community outreach programmes
- Integration of education and interpretation within the gardens to ensure the articulation of clear, simple and strong messages relating to environmental sustainability and plant conservation

Without this position, Botanic Gardens of Wellington cannot fill the key role of horticultural, environmental and conservation education within the community. This is a key gap at a time when Wellington has identified environmentally sustainable development as a key tenet in the future of the city.

## 2. Strategic Fit

This proposal fits directly with Strategic Priority 19: Partnerships with stakeholders. Environmental education is a key element of partnerships with stakeholders, because it provides the community with the knowledge they need to be an effective partner for environmental improvement. While businesses and government agencies are also important stakeholders, the wider community offers huge potential to improve environmental outcomes through household behaviour. This attention to “sustainable living” was highlighted by the Sustainable Development Framework approved by the Council in 2004.

This proposal includes increased environmental education delivery to schools at all levels and will also enable improved engagement with iwi, community groups, residents, and visitors—all important stakeholders in the future of Wellington’s environment.

The proposal also will contribute in part to the objectives of Strategic Priorities 6 (Energy/Water Efficiency and Conservation) and 17 (Biodiversity Action Plan).

### 3. Relationship to Existing Activities

Currently no Council funding has been directly provided within C560 Botanic Garden Services to meet these objectives. Since 1991, WWF-NZ provided environmental services for 3,000 or more children annually, but this service has now ceased following their loss of funding for this programme.

There is contestible Ministry of Education funding through the Learning Outside The Classroom (LEOTC) programme. However, this funding is highly contestable (two joint bids by WWF-NZ and Council some years ago were not successful). This funding is also targeted quite narrowly at curriculum based programmes. By supplementing the Ministry of Education’s curriculum, the Council can promote the active engagement of the community in achieving environmental outcomes.

This position and role would complement the environmental education activities of Greater Wellington and other Council business units, as shown in the Appendix. It would also complement the other strategic partnerships in the environmental arena, such as the Kai-to-Compost programme with city restaurants and bars.

It is possible that this position could provide some co-ordination of the presently disparate activities of Council business units, giving more coherence to Council’s overall environmental education programme.

### 4. Proposal Costs

<i>Outline project costs per year</i>										
Project Component	Operating expenses									
	\$000									
C560	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
<i>Educator</i>	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46
<i>Resource materials</i>	20	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
<i>Delivery staff(cas)</i>	6	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
<i>Cost recovery</i>	-6	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9
<i>Total</i>	66	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70

- Educator – NZEI rates for this grade are \$ 43,000 – 50,000 per annum
- Materials resources- teaching manuals, development of website material, classroom resources such as magnifying glasses, viewing containers, stationery, potting mix, pots, computer lease
- Additional resources from year 2 reflect more community involvement. It is expected that external funding would also be needed to support community programmes
- Delivery staff – casual staff for delivery. Cost 16hrs/wk @ \$20.00/hr x 24 weeks. (Discussions with other gardens indicate that the main EE position has never been and shouldn’t be seen as a recoverable cost, but delivery personnel and consumables such as paper, copying, drawing materials, potting mixes are recoverable costs)

- Cost recovery – year 1: 2000 children x \$3.00, year 2 onwards: 3000 children x \$ 3.00. It is likely there will be some variation according to the type of programme taken up, eg self guided or EE delivered. (Range for other facilities is \$ 1.50 – \$ 3.50). Specialised programmes to be cost neutral or positive return.

## 5. Project Outline

Since 1991 environmental education services have been provided at the Treehouse Visitor Centre by WWF-NZ. These programmes have focussed on primary school children and have ranged across a wide range of environmental issues linked to the national curriculum. Numbers through this programme have varied but averaged 3000 pupils. In recent years this has included programmes run through Otari-Wilton's Bush.

Demand for these services has increased from the formal school based programmes through to more targeted education and interpretation programmes for garden visitors. The Gardens are ideally situated to run a range of programmes and also co-ordinate awareness programmes being run throughout the Parks & Gardens estate and the Council; for instance, weed dumping, sustainable horticulture, recycling, water use and so on.

Both the Botanic Garden and Otari can deliver effective messages relating to plant diversity, threatened species, weed management, and generic material relating to plant culture and horticulture. They are also uniquely placed to deliver messages about sustainability and focus on sustainable practices. These are becoming major focus areas for botanic gardens worldwide, as they reinforce through educational programmes that almost every facet of life is ultimately sustained by plants.

Other Council environmental education activities, such as its sponsorship of the Enviroschools programme, could be co-ordinated as part of this role.

### **Year One:**

Provision and delivery of core education programmes for schools.

At present many schools do not participate in programmes because

1. they do not have the financial or human resources to do so
2. external providers have limited resources that can be applied on site
3. the schools may not fit higher level programme criteria
4. the higher level programmes offer more than the schools need or wish to commit to.

There remains a need for simple horticultural education with regard to the curriculum for primary schools which is currently not being fulfilled elsewhere. Botanic Garden and Otari staff undertook the roles of educators in late 2005 and provided an excellent service. However it is time consuming and distracts skilled horticultural staff from their core duties. While it may be argued that education is a core responsibility of staff, current funding does not permit an extension of duties to sustained horticultural education.

Targets:

- a) 2000 children attend Wellington Botanic Garden and Otari for curriculum focussed delivery

**Year Two:**

Consolidation of the developed teaching programmes, expansion and creation of partnerships with other education providers, development of programmes for ethnic communities, and investigation of community outreach programmes in association with other Parks Unit and Wellington City Council sponsored programmes

1. There is demand from ethnic communities for education relating to the New Zealand environment: what we do, why we do it and how we do it
2. The Botanic Gardens have specialist resources available to support horticultural, environmental and conservation education programmes
3. Horticultural, environmental and conservation interpretive material relating to the Botanic Gardens and the Wellington community will be developed in partnership with other providers

Targets:

- a) 3000 children attend Wellington Botanic Garden and Otari for curriculum focussed delivery
- b) A seminar programme for ethnic communities, emphasising horticulture, environmental sustainability and conservation
- c) A seminar series for the wider community, focussing on awareness of environmental sustainability and conservation

**Year Three:**

Continue with programme consolidation and begin implementation of outreach programmes, particularly with disadvantaged communities. Continue to develop programmes relating to community conservation and sustainability programmes

1. Conservation programmes should not only foster action but also provide environmental information which support and give meaning to programmes which may include weed control, pest plant identification and eradication, holistic habitat development and/or restoration.
2. Reinforce the necessity of plants and plant diversity to the very existence of life.
3. Start delivery of specialist horticultural education services. The Botanic Garden is particularly strong in Integrated Pest Management and has much it can offer the community in practising sustainable horticulture

Targets:

- a. 3000 children
- b. A seminar programme for ethnic communities, emphasising horticulture, environmental sustainability and conservation
- c. A seminar series for the wider community, focussing on awareness of environmental sustainability and conservation
- d. Children's holiday programme, with a focus on environment and conservation
- e. 'Masterclasses' in applied horticulture

The Botanic Gardens of Wellington not only work increasingly closely with other Botanic Gardens in New Zealand but have been closely involved with the establishment of the Botanic Gardens of New Zealand and Australia, who have established environmental education programmes relating to schools and communities. The Botanic Gardens are also linked to Botanic Gardens Conservation International, whose core conservation activities relate to environmental education.

Botanic Gardens, through environmental education, are placed to play key roles in delivering of outcomes relating to several international efforts, including Agenda 21, the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, and the Convention on Biodiversity.

The risks of postponement are:

- Environmental education delivery to a wide and diverse audience does not occur
- Significant resources such as the Treehouse and Otari Interpretive centre remain under-utilised
- The Council is not able to deliver one of its key strategic priorities (Environmental Partnerships with Stakeholders) and consequently fails to develop allies to deliver its other environmental objectives
- The Council is not seen to support its Sustainable Development Strategy

## **6. Conclusion**

The Wellington Botanic Garden and Otari-Wilton's Bush are key educational institutions that can provide education and interpretative programmes for visitors and residents of all ages. This would give Council the opportunity to increase environmental engagement with the community, empowering potential allies towards the achievement of community and Council outcomes for the environment.

This proposal would fill a gap (identified in the Appendix) in providing horticultural and conservation education within Wellington, by continuing a programme previously run by WWF-NZ. It would complement existing environmental education programmes by other agencies, and could complement and even co-ordinate Council's existing education-related activities undertaken by other business units.

## Appendix: Current and Proposed WCC Environmental Education and Partnership Activities

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION						
Topic:	Energy	Solid Waste Minimisation	Biodiversity / Landscape	Water Conservation	Water Quality (Liquid Waste Management)	Air Quality
<i>A few schools, intensively</i>	<b>Enviroschools</b> topics chosen by schools					
<i>Some schools (as approached)</i>		<b>WCC Waste Minimisation Officer / Landfill</b>		<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	
<i>Many schools</i>	Possible co-ordination role across Council education activities ←		<b>Botanic Gardens Environmental Educator</b>	Possible co-ordination role across Council education activities →		
<b>GWRC “Take Action”</b> initial focus on water 41% of city schools have completed 8-12 year-olds						
<i>Businesses</i>	<b>GWRC “Take Charge”</b>			<b>GWRC “Take Charge”</b>		
<i>Community groups</i>	Possible co-ordination role across Council education activities ←		<b>Botanic Gardens Environmental Educator</b>	Possible co-ordination role across Council education activities →		
					<b>GWRC “Take Care”</b> streamcare	
<i>General public</i>	Possible co-ordination role across Council education activities ←		<b>Botanic Gardens Environmental Educator</b>	Possible co-ordination role across Council education activities →		
	<b>Energy Management Plan</b>		<b>CCOs and Supported Trusts (Zoo, KWS, MEC)</b>			

<b>OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS</b>						
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Energy</b>	<b>Solid Waste Minimisation</b>	<b>Biodiversity / Landscape</b>	<b>Water Conservation</b>	<b>Water Quality (Liquid Waste Management)</b>	<b>Air Quality</b>
<i>Community groups</i>	<b>Energy Management Plan</b> eventually		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>WCC Volunteer Co-ordinator</b></li> <li>• <b>WCC Community Planting</b></li> <li>• <b>WCC Environmental Grants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Project Kaiwharawhara</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<b>Project Kaiwharawhara</b> (with GWRC)	
<i>Businesses</i>	<b>Energy Management Plan</b> eventually	<b>Kai-to-Compost</b>		<b>Wellington Water Management Plan</b>	<b>Trade Waste Activities</b>	
----- <b>Sustainable Building Guidelines</b> -----						
<i>Other agencies (EECA, Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Education, Department of Conservation)</i>	<b>Healthy Housing</b> With EECA and DHB and possible NGO	Various	Various	<b>Wellington Water Management Plan</b> with GWRC and other TAs	Various	Various
<i>General public</i>	<b>Energy Management Plan</b> eventually			<b>Wellington Water Management Plan</b>		
	<b>Travel Demand Management</b>					<b>Travel Demand Management</b>