

1. Summary

Our Natural Capital is about Wellington's indigenous biodiversity. These are the species that occur or occurred naturally in Wellington.

Our Natural Capital: Wellington's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is Wellington City Council's vision for the city's indigenous biodiversity. The strategy outlines our vision, goals and objectives, and sets the priorities that give our work direction and purpose, underpinned by a set of guiding principles.

The aim of the strategy is to protect and restore our indigenous biodiversity. In order to protect and restore our indigenous biodiversity we have to connect people with it and carry out research so we can better manage it. These are the four themes under which our biodiversity management guidelines, goals, objectives and actions are grouped.

- To achieve our biodiversity goals, we will aim to protect the ecologically significant areas on both private and public land.
- We will restore these areas, create safe buffer zones around them and connect them together.
- We will reduce pest numbers throughout Wellington City to a point where our native species can survive and expand.
- Throughout the urban environment, we will focus on raising awareness of the issues facing indigenous biodiversity and connecting people to their natural environment. We will enable our community to continue restoration work across all of our reserves and we will support them in these efforts.

We recognise that Wellington is an urban environment and will continue to contain a wide range of species, both exotic and indigenous. As a city, we need to take into account the role of all species in contributing to our cultural identity and our role in protecting species that are threatened in their original habitat. Exotic biodiversity is only considered within this plan where it has a direct role in the survival of indigenous species. The strategy recognises that healthy biodiversity contributes to healthy environments

and that creates healthy people. It also recognises that healthy biodiversity contributes to our economic sustainability - through tourism, by providing a desirable base for businesses, and contributing to our quality of life.

It is the Council's responsibility to recognise, protect, and maintain indigenous biodiversity, but we won't be able to achieve our desired outcomes without working closely with our partners.

Since the 2007 Wellington Biodiversity Action Plan was approved, we have moved from a position of needing to identify much of our significant biodiversity to actively managing it. Our protection and restoration programmes now focus on ecological needs. We continue to question our techniques, and are working to improve our knowledge and refine our approach. The Council's role continues to strengthen, and we are known for being a collaborative organisation. However, we are still facing some major challenges such as the ongoing degradation of our aquatic ecosystems and the development pressures faced through the needs of our growing city.

There are also wider issues that affect the health of Wellington's indigenous biodiversity, including land and water use, waste, response to natural disasters, and transport. While these have an effect on biodiversity and contribute to the success of this strategy, they are dealt with under other plans and policies, as are issues of city-wide resilience.

This strategy ensures that international, national, and regional targets relating to biodiversity are translated into local action, and that Wellington City is positioned as a world leader in urban biodiversity. Our Natural Capital covers biodiversity within Council boundaries and jurisdiction, but acknowledges that biodiversity does not recognise these boundaries.

We will achieve our goal of protecting biodiversity by focussing on the protection of priority biodiversity sites on public and private land and rare, threatened, or locally significant species; controlling pest animal and pest plant species to sufficient levels and eradicating them if possible; and managing the impact of urban growth and human activity on all ecosystems and remaining habitat.

To restore biodiversity, we will increase the number and population size of indigenous species and their habitats and create resilient ecosystems; we will improve aquatic ecosystem health across the city; put restoration programmes in place for rare, threatened or locally significant species and develop ecological networks across the landscape.

People will be connected with biodiversity by making it a common experience for all Wellingtonians; we will

help people to understand the importance and value of biodiversity to their wellbeing; and enable them to take action to protect and restore biodiversity. A range of partners will work with us to achieve a shared vision for Wellington's biodiversity.

We will gain an increased understanding and knowledge of biodiversity, actively share this knowledge and use it to improve our programmes; we will gain a better understanding of our biodiversity management through enhanced monitoring programmes.

Wellington's residents have made it clear that having an attractive and healthy city environment is important to them, and that they'll work alongside us to achieve this.



Above: Tui are a local success story. Due to pest control, their numbers have increased and they are now a common sight in downtown Wellington.

