

# Executive Summary

Wellington is shaped by memorable open spaces, including the Harbour, the Town Belt, Mount Kaukau, Wrights Hill, Polhill, the South Coast. We see them almost every day, we drive past them, we walk and play on them, they form an integral part of what we know as Wellington. This strategy is about planning what open spaces we want for Wellington in the future.

## Open Space Concept

Open spaces are generally the outdoor places around us that have:

- *ecological values* such as plants and animals and the habitats they live in;
- *recreational values* that we appreciate and enjoy including formal and informal sport, and active and passive activities;
- *landscape values* including patterns of landform, scenic beauty and sense of place;
- *natural heritage values* inherent in places with cultural or historic significance.

When we look around we find that different parts of Wellington have different values. Consequently we want different open spaces to reflect the different open space values. Wellington City Council's open space concept divides the district into seven different areas and identifies what sorts of open space would be appropriate in each area.

## Guiding Principles

The concept is based on some fundamental principles about open spaces which describe how we might create the open spaces that we are aiming for.

The great majority of the native forest that once covered Wellington was destroyed when the land was cleared last century. However areas of marginal land around Wellington are reverting to a semi-natural low forest dominated by mahoe. Further succession is typically hampered by possum browsing but with active intervention including possum control and the planting of later successional species such as rimu, miro, matai, rata, tawa, kohekohe and hinau, we can assist the continued succession of these forests and restore some of the diversity of the original Wellington forests.

At the same time by planting strips of native species, which have a low flammability, we can provide green breaks which reduce the fire hazard in areas of steep scrub around Wellington.

Generally networks of open space have more value than isolated areas. The larger a natural area, the greater its chance of survival. Similarly recreational networks are more accessible and provide a much wider range of opportunities than isolated recreational areas. The open space concept is based around a series of networks. Although in some instances there may appear to be a conflict between promoting recreational use of open spaces and protecting natural areas, Council believes that through good design and management both objectives are achievable.

Open space is an integral part of managing the shape of Wellington. On a large scale it contains the urban environment accentuating the identity of Wellington. On a smaller scale it interweaves the natural and the built environments creating a more liveable city. Council uses open space to shape the urban form of the city.

## **Council's Role**

Council manages a 2,800 hectares of open space in Wellington. This includes:

- 2,500 hectares of bush (native, exotic and mixed);
- 200 hectares of general purpose grass areas;
- 100 hectares of sports turf;
- 98.5 kilometres of maintained tracks;
- 104 children's play areas;
- 3,600 m<sup>2</sup> of annual bedding;
- 7 hectares of gardens and shrub areas;

Council is also involved in education about open space values and partnerships with private landowners. The District Plan protects specified areas of open space and conservation sites under the Resource Management Act.

## **Implementation Plan**

The implementation plan sets out how Council plans to implement the open space concept over the next five years. Like most organisations Council has limited funds so the implementation plan has to work within a budget and needs to focus on the highest priorities. If the implementation plan can be successfully completed, the foundation of the open space concept for Wellington will have been laid.