

Greater Wellington Regional Council Briefing to Incoming Ministers 2020/21



Introduction	3
Key Priorities and Activity Groups	6
Obligations to Māori	8
Environment	
Resource Management and Freshwater Reform	10
River Management for Flood Protection	12
RiverLink Project (Hutt River)	14
Predator Free Wellington and Regional Pest Management.....	16
Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project	18
Alignment with 1 Billion Trees Programme	20
Regional Strategy and Partnerships	
Wellington Regional Growth Framework	22
Wellington Regional Climate Emergency.....	24
Regional Economic Development and COVID-19 Recovery	26
Wellington Multi-User Ferry Terminal.....	28
Let's Get Wellington Moving	30
Metlink Public Transport	
Public Transport Patronage Recovery	32
Decarbonisation of the Public Transport Fleet.....	33
Future Proofing the Track Network and Rail Fleet	35
Revisiting the Public Transport Operating Model	37
Water Supply	
Three Waters Reform	39

Our common challenges

Located in our capital city and including the Wairarapa and Kāpiti Coast, Greater Wellington is one of the largest and most diverse regional councils in New Zealand. We manage the country's second largest public transport operation, have a unique role in providing drinking water to the metropolitan area, own the region's port, provide flood protection for many parts of the region, and act as the environmental steward for the region's natural resources.

We are committed to working closely with the Government. There will at times be inherent tensions, which is all the more reason that we forge a close working relationship. This relationship is already strong with agencies like the Ministry of Transport, Waka Kotahi, and the Ministry for the Environment. We need continued commitment to ensure a joined-up approach to addressing our common challenges.

The attached briefing note highlights a number of key priorities, risks and opportunities which we want to bring to the Government's attention. We believe there are real opportunities to work together to address these. But first, we would like to highlight four higher level issues that are impacting our work.

1. Funding and affordability

Over the last decade we have experienced significant growth in our roles and responsibilities, and in the services demanded by our communities. This has required us to grow our staff capacity and capability, and consequently to increase rates for our community. Like central Government we can borrow money to fund elements of this, but our biggest challenge is the ability of the community to fund these increases. Thirty percent of Greater Wellington's funding is from general and targeted rates, with the majority of the rest from public transport fares and Waka Kotahi co-funding. With the impact of Covid-19 likely to affect the regional economy hardest in 2021, we are very cognisant of the community's more limited ability to pay.

Like most local authorities, we are facing significant funding challenges for infrastructure renewals over the next 10-30 years, however our challenge is not one resulting from historical under-investment. We have committed to fund significant infrastructure upgrades to address a range of pressures:

- Additional regional rail capacity to meet growing demand
- New electric buses to move our fleet towards lower emissions
- Flood protection improvements for key urban areas like Hutt City and parts of the Wairarapa, to be more resilient to extreme weather
- Bulk water infrastructure renewals to reduce maintenance costs and water leaks
- Contributions to Let's Get Wellington Moving "to move more people with fewer vehicles".

We acknowledge recent Government commitments to funding contributions towards flood protection (through shovel-ready projects); and towards water infrastructure (through the water reform package), however we still face the prospect of significant rates increases over the next 5 years that will be unaffordable for the community.

We urge the Government to make available additional funding sources for local government to reduce the over-reliance on rates. In overseas jurisdictions, Government provides a share of tax revenue to local authorities through capital grants, or provides a much wider range of funding tools that extend beyond property owners. Tools such as a regional fuel tax or congestion charge have proven viable elsewhere. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the options with you.

2. Climate change and decarbonisation

Greater Wellington is serious about its leadership role in regards to climate change. We are committed to our organisational goal of becoming carbon positive by 2030 and providing leadership as the region responds to climate change. This commitment is strongly aligned with the Government's commitment to reducing emissions towards Zero Carbon 2050.

The cost of reducing emissions is significant in the short-term and Government financial support will be required to achieve our goals. In particular, we will need a commitment to co-funding for electric buses through Waka Kotahi and significant Government support for new regional trains, to provide the capacity needed to achieve real mode shift.

As a region (and a nation) we also need to address the growing challenge of climate adaptation. Our primary concerns are rising sea levels, storm surges and the impact on our coastal communities. Whilst several communities and local councils are already investigating options for transition, the fact is that the cost is significant, and this will not be affordable for local ratepayers on their own – we will need Government to co-fund. Given the impact on people's homes and livelihoods and the strong emotions that this raises, we will also need strong legislation and policy guidance. To be most effective, all sectors of government (central, regional and local) should work together to address this problem. We would welcome the opportunity to work with Government to find ways of addressing these issues.

3. Role of KiwiRail

As you will find in the detailed briefing notes, Greater Wellington has multiple touchpoints with KiwiRail, spanning their various roles as rail network asset manager, rail service operator and regulator. Our relationship with KiwiRail is critical to the successful operation of the metro passenger rail network and a key contributor to the operation of the regional port and inter-island ferry service. Following are a few examples of the challenges created through this interdependent relationship.

Greater Wellington invests substantial funding into the purchase of rail units and the operation of rail services. We pay a large annual fee to KiwiRail for access to the track network, as well as a contribution to fund insurance of the network. However we have very limited influence on the programme of renewal and maintenance of the track network – and delays or mistakes can have significant consequences for the operation of rail services and consequently the wider regional transport network.

The Wellington Central Railway Station is owned by KiwiRail and is the only station in the metro network that is not owned by Greater Wellington. We only have a short-term agreement for right of access through

the building to the rail platforms, and have not been able to negotiate a long-term form of tenure. As Wellington Station is the final destination for a majority of rail passengers, this challenge creates uncertainty for them and Greater Wellington. We are unsure about the future of the station, especially given that KiwiRail has previously explored plans to sell it.

As the majority owners of CentrePort, Greater Wellington is working with the Board to develop a long-term strategy for this asset. The role of regional rail is critical to the successful operation and growth of the port and avoiding significant heavy haulage on the state highway network. As the operator of rail freight, KiwiRail needs to provide fair and equitable services to all ports across the country.

We believe that the delivery of national rail functions could be enhanced by a clearer separation of roles. This would ensure a level playing field for all users, a fairer allocation of costs, and reduce the considerable pressure on one organisation to deliver to multiple objectives. We ask the Government to consider the appropriate structure and separation of the various roles in the management and operation of the national rail network.

4. Partnering with Mana Whenua

We have had a longstanding, evolving relationship with the six mana whenua partners of our region since Ara Tahi was established in 1991. This arrangement was subsequently formalised under the Charter of Understanding 1993 as the first signed agreement between the parties. After 29 years, we are working with our mana whenua partners to re-set our collective regional partnership arrangements for the future.

Of our six partners: Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika (2009), Ngāti Toa Rangatira (2014) and Rangitāne o Wairarapa Tamaki Nui a Rua (2017) have been operating in the post-settlement environment after finalising their Treaty of Waitangi historical claims with the Crown. While Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa hope to settle within the next two years, Te Āti Awa ki Whakarongotai and Raukawa ki te Tonga represented by Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki are at the early stages of their settlement journey.

Treaty Settlements are an important aspect of New Zealand's natural resource management landscape. While they are an expression of the Crown-Iwi relationship, they also provide an area where Local Government can build robust relationships.

The Crown's settlement redress places new statutory obligations on Greater Wellington but provides little funding support. Greater Wellington cannot continue to use its rates base to meet the Crown's ongoing Treaty of Waitangi obligations without new central agency resourcing assistance. Treaty settlement costs include co-governance and co-management arrangements (including committees, joint management agreements).

We propose that the Crown implements new ongoing funding for environmental management Treaty redress settlements which will improve affordability for council and enable iwi to achieve their settlement aspirations; and do an independent review of the Crown's projected costs imposed on territorial authorities and the actual impact on the rates base.

This purpose of this paper is to provide incoming Ministers and Members of Parliament the key priorities of Greater Wellington Regional Council and how we would like to partner with the Government in 2021. Each of the priorities is briefly described on 2-page summaries and are organized by Greater Wellington activity groups. Below is an overview of these groups and the priorities that are included in this briefing document.

Obligations to Māori

Greater Wellington's relationship with mana whenua and Māori is guided by the Local Government Act 2002 and the Resource Management Act 1991. These Acts require Greater Wellington to recognise and provide for the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga. We are also responsible to provide opportunities and resources that enable Māori to participate in decision making.

Environment

Greater Wellington is responsible for regulating the use of the region's natural resources and managing flood risk from the region's rivers and streams. We do this through regional policies, plans and resource consents. We help the community to manage and restore ecosystems and manage land sustainably. We identify the likelihood of a river flooding our houses, businesses and farms, develop floodplain management plans, and maintain and build flood protection infrastructure. We manage a network of regional parks and forests for the community's use and enjoyment. We monitor and report on the state of the environment and regulated activities, manage environmental threats like pest plants and animals, and provide a 24-hour pollution response service. We also look after the region's harbours. Key priorities included in this briefing include:

- Resource Management and Freshwater Reform
- River Management for Flood Protection
- RiverLink Project (Hutt River)
- Predator Free Wellington and Regional Pest Management
- Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project
- Alignment with 1 Billion Trees Programme.

Regional Strategy and Partnerships

Greater Wellington coordinates regional strategy activities in partnership with other local authorities on a range of issues and priorities across the region. Our long term approach is to develop and maintain strong relationships and collaborative programmes to support integrated decision making across the region.

We involve mana whenua, key stakeholders, central government and the community in these processes and in our decision making. We also lead or are involved in a number of regional initiatives that provide significant benefits to the regional community, including economic development, emergency management, regional resilience, and transport planning. Key priorities included in this briefing include:

- Wellington Regional Growth Framework
- Wellington Regional Climate Emergency
- Regional Economic Development and COVID-19 Recovery
- Wellington Multi-User Ferry Terminal
- Let's Get Wellington Moving.

Metlink Public Transport

Greater Wellington manages the Metlink public transport network and delivers public transport services to the regional population. Passengers, ratepayers and road users all help fund it via fares, rates and a subsidy from Waka Kotahi. We deliver services across an integrated network of bus routes, five passenger rail lines and the harbour ferry service. We are also responsible for developing and maintaining public transport infrastructure including railway stations, train maintenance depot, bus and ferry shelters, signs, and park & ride facilities. Key priorities included in this briefing include:

- Public Transport Patronage Recovery
- Decarbonisation of the Public Transport Fleet
- Future Proofing the Track Network and Rail Fleet
- Revisiting the Public Transport Operating Model.

Water Supply

Greater Wellington is responsible for collecting, treating and distributing safe and healthy drinking water to Wellington, Hutt, Upper Hutt and Porirua cities. This work is carried out for Greater Wellington by Wellington Water, a joint council-owned water management company. City and district councils are responsible for the distribution of water to households and businesses through their own networks. The key priority in this briefing is Three Waters Reform.

Purpose of the programme

Greater Wellington has a longstanding, evolving relationship with the six mana whenua partners of our region since Ara Tahi was established in 1991. This arrangement was subsequently formalised under the Charter of Understanding 1993 as the first signed agreement between the parties. After 29 years, we are working with our mana whenua partners to re-set our regional partnership arrangements for the future.

Plans for the next six months

Greater Wellington and other regional councils are currently planning how they will manage the significant central government policy requirements to implement Te Mana o Te Wai (TMoTW). Having to engage with hapū and incorporations rather than Post Settlement Governance Entities is a significant unbudgeted change. For example, our Wairarapa mana whenua partners have advised they have more than 100 hapū. The logistics and costs of having to engage with numerous new representatives rather than a primary focus on our two Wairarapa mana whenua partners of 29 years is a huge challenge. This demand is multiplied four fold when adding the hapū of our four other mana whenua partners. Councils are already working with Ministry for the Environment officials to advise Ministers of the need for new central government funding in this area.

Key challenges and opportunities

Māori participation in decision making processes and statutory reviews

The Local Government Act requires that Greater Wellington provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to its decision-making processes and support Māori capacity to contribute to council decisions. Greater Wellington has been resourcing our partners to engage in our committee and advisory group decision making processes for many years, however there remains huge challenges in meeting the demands of multiple central and local government agencies.

Resource Management Act - Mana Whakahono ā rohe

The Resource Legislation Amendment Act 2017 enables an iwi authority to initiate a Mana Whakahono ā rohe (MWaR) with Regional Councils, which they not allowed to decline. Greater Wellington officers have advised officials from the Ministry of the Environment that the definition of an 'iwi authority' lacks specificity. Also, GW was surprised to receive a request for a discussion about a MWaR from an iwi located outside of our regional boundaries. These provisions recognise the pre-1840 interests an iwi authority has in an area and has created strong concerns among our present mana whenua partners.

Transfer of powers and functions

Greater Wellington has had many discussions with its mana whenua partners on the Resource Management Act, Section 33 provisions to transfer powers and functions. We are aware that should we transfer, any liabilities remain with Council. To date, transfers have been managed through contracts rather than formal statute and are relatively modest and associated with monitoring the health of a waterway.

Inconsistent interpretation of government legislation

Inconsistent government interpretation of longstanding provisions create confusion and potential conflict with our mana whenua partners. One example is the Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 provisions on our archaeological authority applications consultation requirements. HNZ required that we consult with an Iwi located outside our regional boundaries, as well as our mana whenua partners prior to lodging an archaeological authority application. This created confusion as all other recent archaeological authority applications for work in this area had been granted without such a requirement.

Māori participation in regional elections and establishment of wards

Despite the purpose of the Local Government Act, the diversity of New Zealand communities is not recognised in the members elected to local government across New Zealand. Māori participation as candidates in our regional council electoral processes is low and reflects the general pattern of councils' nationwide. Also, the low proportion of Māori in our region means the reality of achieving a Māori ward or constituency will be a significant challenge if it is determined by public vote.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Review opportunities and provide additional funding to enable full participation of Māori in local government decision-making processes and review of key legislation that enables, rather than inhibits iwi engagement in local government processes.
- b. Strongly consider the recommendations (Chapter 3) from the *New Directions for Resource Management In New Zealand Report* (T Randerson, June 2020) regarding the review of the Resource Management Act.
- c. Remove legislative barriers to using the transfer of power provisions and joint management agreements under the Resource Management Act.
- d. Review to ensure the interpretation of the Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 is consistently applied nationwide by HNZ offices.
- e. Respond to the recommendations of the *Matike Mai Aotearoa 2016 Report* on constitutional transformation, especially Recommendations 6 and 7.
- f. Develop a nationwide communication strategy to increase Māori candidates on councils that promotes the value of Māori and local government engagement in regional electoral processes.
- g. Review the Local Electoral (Māori Representation) Amendment Bill and consider removing the potential for boycott by non-Māori electors, so Māori can achieve their aspirations.

For More Information

GW Mana whenua partnerships - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/mana-whenua-partnerships/>

Monica Fraser, Te Pou Whakarae, Te Hunga Whiriwhiri | GM for Maori - Monica.Fraser@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

Released in August 2020, the government's Freshwater Package is designed to stop further degradation of freshwater ecosystems and improve water quality over 5 years. Within a generation, it will reverse past damage and bring our freshwater resources, waterways and ecosystems to a healthy state. Greater Wellington supports the intent of these transformational freshwater reforms.

To give effect to the Freshwater Package however, changes are required to our regional planning documents (Natural Resource Plan, Regional Policy Statement) by the end of 2024. Effective implementation demands changes to our planning, advisory, science, rivers and parks management, consenting, and compliance and enforcement functions. Our organisation is just the start though; these changes will reverberate through our relationships and impact every part of the community.

Already the nature and scale of the reforms is exposing the tensions between the pressures of urban development, freshwater improvement, 3 Waters, the impacts of climate change and the need for extensive infrastructure investment. These factors are compounding the very significant challenge of funding the far-reaching changes within the specified deadlines.

Plans for the next six months

Greater Wellington's regulatory response has been immediate; some of the new freshwater regulations became active on 3 September 2020. We are providing advice to land owners and consent applicants, and processing consents under the new regime.

Our sector-leading Whaitua programme continues. The programme brings together mana whenua, local government and communities to determine the freshwater goals for their own area, and meetings will continue over the next number of months. These groups make both regulatory and non-regulatory recommendations to Greater Wellington. This is how we demonstrate Te Mana o Te Wai in practice.

Greater Wellington is also providing input into wider resource management reform. The system is not operating as it should and we have real insights on the misfiring of Schedule 1 of the Act.

Key challenges and opportunities

The short- to medium-term challenge is resourcing. The freshwater reforms due by 2024 include two plan changes using the new centralised freshwater planning process. This has placed significant costs on regional government, and a timeline that cannot be met without new resourcing.

During the 2019 submission process to the Freshwater Package, Greater Wellington highlighted that this requirement would be unaffordable for our communities, and this pressure has been exacerbated by the recessionary COVID-19 environment. To avoid double digit rate rises we need central government to either review statutory timeframes or provide funding assistance, especially in the areas of planning, science, compliance, monitoring and enforcement, and land owner assistance in addition to funding for large-scale habitat restoration.

Tensions are already emerging between actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change, maintaining and improving our region's freshwater resources and urban development. National direction for both freshwater management and urban development (and soon indigenous biodiversity) places Greater Wellington and other regional councils at the centre of this tension.

There are significant opportunities for win-wins, especially in bringing together climate change and freshwater responses, rather than treating them as separate. Large scale wetland restoration in Queen Elizabeth Park (Kāpiti) is a good example. Other key carbon sinks remain at risk from territorial authority driven urban spread. However these initiatives require significant investment.

Government has a key role in ensuring that there are sufficient skills in the workforce coming through from the tertiary system. This is especially true for graduates with planning or freshwater science qualifications. We need these skills to support these reforms across the whole country.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Provide funding support to enable Greater Wellington and resource users to gear-up to the requirements and expectations of the freshwater and RMA reforms.
- b. Ensure the upcoming RMA reform incorporates a penalty framework that is an effective deterrent to causing environmental damage.
- c. Engage on local authority plans in preparation - as the 'owner' of the resource management system, central government is a powerful voice in resource management hearings.
- d. Ensure the tertiary education sector is aligned with the need to increase workforce capability at significantly increased scale, especially in the fields of planning and freshwater science.

For More Information

Healthy Waterways - <http://www.gw.govt.nz/healthy-waterways/>

Whaitua Committees - <http://www.gw.govt.nz/whaitua-committees/>

Proposed Natural Resources Plan - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/proposed-natural-resources-plan/>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Chair of Environment Committee: Cr Penny Gaylor; and Co-chair of Te Upoko Taiao: Cr Jenny Brash

Staff: Al Cross, Environment Management Group Manager - Alistair.Cross@gw.govt.nz Matt Hickman, Environmental Policy Manager - Matthew.Hickman@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

The Greater Wellington region is subject to flood risks from the 2,333km of rivers and 19,365km of streams. These risks range from loss of life to loss of land through erosion, to damage to property and buildings. Through our work, we aim to manage these risks to our communities.

The purpose of Greater Wellington river management programmes is to sustain the integrity of existing flood protection schemes by ensuring they continue to provide expected levels of security against flood events. We also ensure new schemes are culturally sensitive, ecosystem friendly and make optimal use of natural flood management systems such as wetlands.

The intensity and frequency of climate change-induced weather events is placing stress on the integrity and risk reduction capabilities of existing schemes.

Plans for the next six months

In the 20-21 financial year Greater Wellington has budgeted approximately \$20M for operational expenditure and a further \$15M for capital upgrades, primarily for the RiverLink Project on the Hutt River.

Through the 'Shovel Ready' Covid-19 recovery programme, Greater Wellington has secured \$10.8m of Crown funding (co-funded with a further \$6m) to implement upgrades to critical flood protection infrastructure in at-risk parts of the region. The work programme will include aspects of the RiverLink Project in the Hutt Valley along with erosion protection works elsewhere on the Hutt River and vegetative buffer establishment on the Ruamahanga River in the Wairarapa.

Greater Wellington is also involved with several catchment-specific programmes designed to restore the ecological health of river systems while protecting communities from the effects of floods. This includes working with local landowners to re-establish wetlands adjacent to Lake Wairarapa.

Key challenges and opportunities

The main challenge is to stay ahead of the increased frequency and magnitude of flood events and the risk of coastal inundation, brought about by climate change. This requires:

- More sustainable development including 'planned withdrawal' of 'at risk' communities from areas increasingly subject to flooding.
- Building more resilience into catchment head waters, by encouraging landowners to adopt land management practices that minimise erosion and mitigate the intensity of severe weather events.

The July 2020 'Improving Resilience to Flood Risk' Cabinet paper proposed a framework to guide the role of central government in strengthening community resilience, focussing on flood risk as a priority area. It noted that current funding arrangements for flood protection infrastructure were established over 30 years ago, and are no longer considered sustainable or consistent with delivering outcomes in line with the framework and its underlying principles.

More “fit for purpose” funding models will enable Greater Wellington and other regional councils to continue to improve community awareness of the economic, environmental, and cultural implications of decisions relating to our natural resource and physical infrastructure, This will in turn increase the resilience of our landscapes and our flood protection assets.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Progressing the challenges identified in the July 2020 ‘Improving Resilience to Flood Risk’ Cabinet paper, particularly establishing a “fit for purpose” funding model for flood protection infrastructure.
- b. Development of a partnership approach with Regional Councils to implement critical flood resilience work.

For More Information

Greater Wellington Flood Protection - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/floodprotection/>

Floodplain Management Planning - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/floodplain-management-planning/>

Rivers and Schemes - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/rivers-and-schemes/>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee Chair Cr Prue Lamason

Graeme Campbell - Manager of Flood Protection - Graeme.campbell@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

RiverLink is a partnership project, involving Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Hutt City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council working together with mana whenua to improve transport connections and flood protection and support urban revitalisation of Lower Hutt's central city.

It includes the State Highway 2 Melling Transport Improvements, which are funded through the NZ Upgrade Programme. More broadly, RiverLink aims to enable urban growth and a vibrant, liveable central city, with improved flood resilience, and better transport links. Our plan includes improved walking, cycling, and public transport options which are critical to enabling urban development without increasing congestion on our roads and greenhouse gas emissions.

The purpose of the programme is to:

- Stimulate urban regeneration and encourage new commercial and residential development in Hutt City centre.
- Improve flood protection for Lower Hutt city centre and central residential areas.
- Improve multi-modal access to the city centre: by relocating Melling Station; and addressing the transport severance experienced by people who wish to walk or cycle between the Western Hills, Melling Station and city centre.
- Improve the resilience, safety, reliability and efficiency of access to the city centre from State Highway 2.

Plans for the next six months

The project is currently in the resource consenting phase, as scheduled. During this phase, we're further developing the design for RiverLink and preparing to apply for resource consents in early 2021. During this stage we are considering construction plans and integrating the designs for the river and stopbanks with plans for the central city and upgraded transport links.

In the 2020-2021 financial year, Greater Wellington has budgeted approximately \$11.5m for capital upgrades for the RiverLink Project on the Hutt River. A further \$68m is budgeted in subsequent years to complete the project.

Through the 'Shovel Ready' Covid-19 recovery programme, Greater Wellington secured \$10.8m of Crown funding (co-funded with a further \$6m) to implement upgrades to critical flood protection infrastructure in at-risk parts of the region. The work programme will include aspects of the RiverLink Project in the Hutt Valley to the tune of \$3.2m of government funding with a further \$1.8m of co-funding.

Key challenges and opportunities

- Meeting construction timeframes to be complete by 2026, in line with Waka Kotahi timelines
- To fund this work for completion in such a short timeframe.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Use of the Ministerial referral provisions of the fast-track consenting process for the Hutt River RiverLink project (resource consent due in Q2 2021).
- b. Additional funding to enable Greater Wellington's construction programme to align with Waka Kotahi NZTA programme of works for Melling Interchange.

For More Information

RiverLink - <http://www.riverlink.co.nz/>

Hutt City Riverside Promenade – RiverLink <http://www.huttcity.govt.nz/Your-Council/Projects/riverside-promenade---riverlink/>

Waka Kotahi – Melling transport improvements <https://nzta.govt.nz/projects/melling-transport-improvements/>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee Chair Cr Prue Lamason

Graeme Campbell, Manager – Flood Protection - Graeme.campbell@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

To mitigate the negative impacts of animal and plant pests on native biodiversity and water quality, support healthy and productive ecosystems and increase resilience to the effects of climate change.

To make Wellington the first predator free capital in the world (rats, mustelids and possums) through the Predator Free Wellington programme and contribute towards New Zealand becoming predator free by 2050.

Plans for the next six months

Delivering pest plant and animal management as per Regional Pest Management Operational Plan 2020/21

Delivering pest plant and animal control in high priority native biodiversity Key Native Ecosystems and territorial authority reserves.

Delivering landscape scale possum (and lesser extent, mustelid) control to maintain the gains of the long term vector animal control undertaken under the National Pest Management Plan for Bovine Tuberculosis.

Gearing up, employing and training staff and contractors to undertake Predator Free Wellington predator control operations.

Key challenges and opportunities

Greater Wellington is working to reverse the decline of native flora and fauna through coordinated pest control. However we cannot meet the funding gap created by the withdrawal of OSPRI funding for possum control in the region. Additionally, in areas of rich biodiversity, Greater Wellington efforts to combat pest animal damage are hindered by inflexible OSPRI funding schedules.

Should funding not be accelerated, these large forest areas will sustain long lasting damage from possums and other pests. Funding of approximately \$350k per annum is required to deliver sustained forest ecosystem protection.

Predator Free Wellington is contributing significantly to increasing “green jobs” and employment prospects in the Covid-19 situation, and community contributions to greater environmental protection. Extending the PFW programme region-wide will in turn build skills and benefits in less populated areas. Feedback from our mana whenua partners indicates significant potential to grow capability amongst their rangatahi to protect and enhance their own land.

Greater Wellington has facilitated early discussions with Zealandia founders, Wellington Water, the Department of Conservation and others to explore the potential benefits of predator-proof fencing 3,350 hectares in the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area. Chief among these is the chance to provide large-scale high quality habitat for kakapo; the current island sites are now fully populated.

This initiative offers the chance to potentially triple the world's population of kakapo (currently 215) plus sustain viable populations of other critically endangered species.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. To reinstate funding support for possum control, in collaboration with DOC and OSPRI, to protect old growth forest ecosystems.
- b. Continued support of the Predator Free 2050 goal as a co-funder of the Predator Free Wellington programme.
- c. To extend Predator Free Wellington to the wider region, with a particular focus on the Māori economy.
- d. Work together to explore new opportunities to protect threatened and endangered species on Greater Wellington land. These include establishing the feasibility of a large scale predator proof sanctuary for kakapo in the Wainuiomata Mainland Island, 45 minutes northeast of Wellington City.
- e. Ongoing collaboration with Ministry for Primary Industries on continued control of pest species of national interest, the Check Clean Dry programme and National Pest Plant Accord.

For More Information

Predator Free Wellington - <https://www.pfw.org.nz/>

Greater Wellington Pest Management and BioSecurity - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/biosecurity/>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter, Chair of Environment Committee: Cr Penny Gaylor

Davor Bejakovich, Manager BioSecurity - davor.bejakovich@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

Vision

Whakaora te repo, ka ora te taonga wai - Restoring our wetland treasure

Wairarapa Moana (the collective name for Lakes Wairarapa and Onoke and associated wetlands) is the largest wetland complex in the lower North Island and includes the second largest lake in the North Island. It includes diverse habitats of international ecological importance and is home to large numbers of threatened and at risk species. In 2020 it was granted RAMSAR status, recognising its international importance.

The Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project (The Project) began in 2008 to enhance the native ecology, recreational and cultural opportunities on public land in and around Wairarapa Moana. The Project is overseen by a Governance Group comprising representatives of Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, Rangitāne o Wairarapa, Department of Conservation (DOC), South Wairarapa District Council, a combined representative from Papawai and Kohunui marae and Greater Wellington.

Mission

We will work with the community to enhance the spiritual identity and ecology of Wairarapa Moana, and improving recreational and economic opportunities for the benefit of everyone.

Goals

- Wairarapa Moana is highly valued as a place of cultural and historical significance that inspires our future
- Healthy water in Wairarapa Moana nurtures all native plants, animals and their ecosystems
- Wairarapa Moana underpins environmental, customary, recreational and commercial values that benefit the wider community.

As part of joint redress in terms of the Treaty of Waitangi settlement, management of the lands covered by the Project will pass to Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa and Rangitāne o Wairarapa. Greater Wellington is committed to ensuring that the aspirations of our mana whenua partners are suitably represented in the expanded Project. Both Iwi are represented on the Project Governance Group, and provide valuable input into guiding the project.

Plans for the next six months

Since its inception the Project has been organised around three work streams funded by Greater Wellington and the Department of Conservation (for \$300k per annum): ecological restoration, community engagement, and interpretation and visitor facilities.

In 2020 the Project was fortunate in securing \$3.5 million over five years from the “Public Waterways and Ecosystem Restoration Fund”, a Jobs for Nature initiative. This funding boost of \$700,000 per annum will allow for a significantly increased ecological restoration activity including pest control and revegetation, and the next 6 months will see that work ramping up considerably.

Key challenges and opportunities

While Wairarapa Moana has recently been granted RAMSAR status, it is in a highly modified and degraded state. The task of reversing the years of ecological and water quality decline at the Moana will require sustained funding beyond the capacity of the regional ratepayer.

One of the challenges is to convert the additional Crown funding into meaningful upskilling employment opportunities for Wairarapa Iwi that can be sustained beyond the 5 year timeframe of the additional resourcing.

Compounding the challenge is the reality of most of the land surrounding the water being in private ownership with millions invested in infrastructure to support primary production. This will mean very difficult conversations around the health of the lake versus food production, and co-development of a pathway towards resolution.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Long-term funding to ensure that the results of the expanded investment in the area are retained and further leveraged when the “Jobs for Nature” funding ceases. Funding in the order of \$2m per annum will achieve significant progress, while scaling up capacity and associated resources.
- b. Supporting tertiary training and other initiatives to provide appropriate upskilling opportunities for Wairarapa iwi, and associated employment.

For More Information

Wairarapa Moana Wetlands - <https://www.waiwetlands.org.nz/>

Greater Wellington Wetlands Programme - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/wairarapa-moana-wetlands/>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Chair of Wairarapa Committee: Cr Adrienne Staples

Tim Porteous, Manager Biodiversity - Tim.porteous@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

To accelerate protection of soils, water quality and indigenous biodiversity, Greater Wellington is applying 1BT funding through two programmes:

WRECI – Wellington Region Erosion Control Initiative

WRECI aims to conserve soils and reduce sediment in waterways by protective fencing and tree planting on 170,000 hectares of erosion-prone hill country and riparian (streamside) margins, in partnership with private landowners. The key outcome is reducing stream bank erosion and mass movement on hillsides during storm events, to improve water quality and protect communities. Reversion from pasture to native vegetative cover is also part of this programme which adds biodiversity benefits. WRECI has been supported over the past 10 years by MPI's Hill Country Erosion Fund (HCEF), with a current co-funding agreement covering 2019-2023. Significant growth has been driven by a 2018 injection of 1BT funding to the HCEF, and community demand and political appetite for tree planting.

Scaling up Riparian, Parks, Biodiversity enhancement

Using about \$1.3m of additional funding to advance existing Greater Wellington planting in our Riparian, Parks and Biodiversity programmes from now to 2023, to improve water quality and biodiversity in high priority catchments.

Plans for the next six months

Delivering the aspirational outcomes of 1BT on the ground through:

WRECI

- Engaging with landowners to prepare projects for delivery in 2021
- Carrying out farm planning for “right tree, right place” in the next few planting seasons
- Investigating large scale nursery expansion.

Riparian, Parks, Biodiversity 1BT programmes

- Stock exclusion and planting in prioritised riparian areas
- Securing tree supply for native planting in Regional Parks
- Community engagement assisting tree planting programmes.

By Autumn 2021 preparations will be in place to protect existing native bush with fencing, and to deliver tree planting across the region to treat the risk of erosion prone land. The first tranches of large scale planting programmes will be ready to implement, on Greater Wellington parks and other high priority sites.

Key challenges and opportunities

Protecting our soils and improving indigenous biodiversity are multi-generational commitments which need to be supported by long-term central government funding. Many parts of the tree-planting supply chain require stability over many years and without reliable funding cycles, its capability cannot develop adequately to deliver on national reforestation goals. For example, plant supply, technology and skills for accelerated tree planting programmes, industry scale growth in seed collection, nursery services, fencing materials, land use planning, contractor fencing, planting and site maintenance all require a stable market enabled by programmes and funding security of more than 5 years.

We understand that it is likely that the objectives of the four main components of 1BT - Crown Forestry, Hill Country Erosion Fund (HCEF), Direct grants, and Partnership grants – will be reviewed in some way. Greater Wellington has seen very high value for money being derived from the HCEF and the Partnership 1BT budgets and we strongly advise that those two 1BT funds are maintained or increased. It is our view that the objectives of 1BT are good for NZ and the HCEF and Partnership funds have been the most successful of the four components of 1BT.

In the context of riparian planting, without a means of stock exclusion (which usually means fencing), there is no viable planting programme. However the current funding criteria mean that 1BT funds cannot be used for fencing. As a result the Greater Wellington share of “match” funding is firstly required for fencing, and little remains to “match” the Crown’s 1BT share for planting. Compounded by timing issues, the overall scale of the programme is small and meets only a small portion of demand.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Continued support through tree planting funding, particularly HCEF and enabling partnerships.
- b. Longer-term funding agreements that provide funding security to Greater Wellington and our partners, underpinning further investment by local government, tertiary education providers and the private sector.
- c. Refine funding criteria for tree planting / erosion control schemes so that they better support achievement of the desired outcomes at the scale envisaged.
- d. Streamline Crown funding application processes and/or amending previous agreements to achieve the benefits of further integration.

For More Information

Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/wreci-strategy/>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Chair of Wairarapa Committee: Cr Adrienne Staples

David Boone, Manager, Land Management - david.boone@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

This Wellington Regional Growth Framework (WRGF) is a 30 year spatial plan for the Wellington-Horowhenua region. The region is growing faster than it has done for many decades and is facing immediate and longer-term housing supply and affordability, urban development and infrastructure challenges. This is a collaboration between local councils, central government and māna whenua. The Framework includes Masterton, Carterton, South Wairarapa, Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt, Wellington, Porirua, Kāpiti Coast and Horowhenua.

The WRGF aligns with the government's Urban Growth Agenda and is one of a number of spatial plans being developed around the country. Numerous central government agencies have been involved in its development including the following Ministries: Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Transport (MOT), Education (MOE), Environment (MfE), the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA), Kainga Ora, the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), and The Treasury.

Plans for the next six months

The governance group for the WRGF (which includes council CEOs, iwi and representatives from HUD and Waka Kotahi) have signed off the draft Framework document.

The regional Chair and Mayors of the region have agreed to establish a Joint Committee (under the LGA) for implementation of the WRGF.

Workshops with councils and iwi are planned through until the end of 2020 to present the WRGF and the thinking about the Joint Committee. Council meetings are being held through to the end of 2020 to endorse the WRGF for consultation, with further council meetings in early 2021 to agree to the Joint Committee. Similar meetings will be held for iwi.

Central government partners are looking to take both the WRGF and the Joint Committee decisions to Cabinet in February 2021.

Key challenges and opportunities

Growth challenges that have been identified through the process include:

- Sufficient and affordable housing and investment in infrastructure
- Natural hazards, climate change and enhancing the region's natural environment
- Inequitable access to social, educational and economic opportunities
- Poor access to affordable housing choices for Māori.

In addition to these challenges, areas of enduring presence need to be both identified and protected from new urban development, such as: significant mana whenua sites, recreational land, highly productive land, and significant infrastructure.

Getting nineteen partners to endorse the draft Framework and Joint Committee is both a challenge and an opportunity for a continuation of the partnership approach used during the development of the WRGF. The support of Government will be important. WRGF represents an opportunity for joined up decision making – both from a planning and a funding point of view – to achieve greater synergies and enhanced outcomes for the region and NZ.

A current challenge is the ability of iwi to engage in this process due to a lack of capacity and capability. There are opportunities for Government to support iwi (especially given the increased need for iwi input coming from central government policy direction) through capacity funding or scholarships to get young Māori into this policy field and provide additional resourcing over the longer term.

The local government partners in the proposed Joint Committee have provisionally agreed to provide initial funding in the order of \$800k a year for the creation of the Committee and Secretariat. As a partner to this process it would be appropriate for Government to also consider a contribution.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Put Ministers on the Joint Committee – tentative date for Cabinet is February 2021.
- b. Endorse the WRGF for consultation – tentative date for Cabinet is February 2021.
- c. Co-fund the secretariat for the Joint Committee – this shows a continued commitment to the partnership.
- d. Support capacity-building for iwi to engage in this and similar planning processes (as noted above).
- e. Joined-up central government participation on projects e.g. MoE, Government Property Group, Kainga Ora on master planning of development areas.
- f. A “whole of government” approach to funding growth rather than an agency by agency approach.

For More Information

Wellington Regional Growth Framework - <https://wrgf.co.nz/>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Chair Wellington Regional Strategy Committee Cr David Lee

Kim Kelly, Project Director - Kim.Kelly@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

Our vision is that Greater Wellington becomes a climate resilient, low emissions region and in 2019 the Regional Council declared a climate emergency and set a target for the organisation to be carbon positive by 2035. At the same time two ten-point action plans were adopted that supplement our 2015 Climate Change Strategy. These are referred to here as the Wellington Regional Climate Emergency Response.

Also in 2019, Council established a Climate Committee to place climate action front and centre of Greater Wellington's governance and activities. We are tracking both our corporate and regional greenhouse gas emissions and have identified potential emissions budgets and emissions reduction pathways to become carbon positive as an organisation by 2035. These will require significant investment decisions which will carry affordability issues for the Council.

We convene the Wellington Region Climate Change Working Group, essential to regional governance and coordinated collaborative action. There, we are partnering with the territorial authorities and mana whenua of the region and provide essential and robust scientific and technical support at a regional level. We are supporting our partners in their community efforts by bringing climate science, natural hazard and adaptation expertise to their engagement processes.

Plans for the next six months

Our Low Carbon Acceleration Fund, leveraged off carbon credits received via the NZ Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), will resource projects to reduce our corporate emissions without burdening rate payers further. So far, this fund is enabling two projects to get underway this year to phase out grazing and restore 150 hectares in our regional parks to productive carbon sinks.

We have committed to increase the number of electric buses in the Metlink fleet from 10 to 108 vehicles by December 2023, which will substantially reduce the proportion of bus related greenhouse gas emissions in Wellington.

We will continue to build partnerships and support regional climate action with the region's territorial authorities and mana whenua, providing technical and science advice and advocacy. We will also continue to collaborate on regional projects including Let's Get Wellington Moving, the Regional Land Transport Plan and the Wellington Regional Growth Framework, ensuring district and city spatial plans align.

Key challenges and opportunities

The Greater Wellington region has the opportunity to become globally known for its climate-friendly, sustainable and community-focused approach. Whilst our emissions overall are currently trending downwards, our biggest sources are from transport and agriculture, and transport emissions are trending upwards, at a concerning rate. This will continue to increase and likely reverse the overall trend without Government intervention. On the other hand, we also know that we are one of the regions least affected by COVID-19 impacts, due to the nature of our regional economy.

In turn, this makes our region a driver of the national economy and supports jobs in all industries nationwide. This Government has the opportunity to demonstrate leadership through co-funding the decarbonisation of public transport, enabling our region to move equitably towards the low emissions resilient future it wants for our nation as a whole. We can help inspire progress in New Zealand, as the greenest, cleanest, safest, fairest region.

From an organisational perspective we have identified potential emissions reduction pathways to become carbon positive by 2035. Our corporate emissions are about 1 percent of regional emissions. Reducing them in line with our goals can be achieved through partnering with Government to decarbonise both bus and rail services and this will also positively impact our regional emissions. Wellington has the highest number of public transport boardings per capita and high mode share compared to other regions. This is an advantage which can be built upon with Government investment in climate-friendly, low emissions public mass transport that is efficient, reliable, cost-effective and accessible to all.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Enable the enhancement of permanent carbon sinks in non-forest land uses (including wetlands) to be recognised and incentivised through a market mechanism or scheme that rewards such activities (e.g. as is currently available for post-1989 forests in the NZ Emissions Trading Scheme).
- b. Enact new legislation to cover managed retreat and adaptation to provide local and regional government with the mandate to take adaptation action. This needs to be accompanied by a central government climate change adaptation fund.
- c. Provide stronger hazard risk management guidance and a requirement for local authorities to include hazards information on Land Information Memoranda (LIMs). This will enable local authorities to take action to alleviate impending climate change impacts and for local communities to be appropriately informed of risks.
- d. Accelerate funding to support decarbonisation of transport in the Wellington region, including the purchase of non-carbon Metlink train fleets, and further decarbonisation of the Metlink bus fleets.

For More Information

Climate Change Resources - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/where-to-go-for-further-information/>

Low Carbon Acceleration Fund - <http://www.gw.govt.nz/greater-wellington-on-the-pathway-to-lower-carbon-emissions/>

Chair: Cr Thomas Nash; Chair of Climate Change Committee and Deputy Chair: Cr David Lee

Purpose of the programme

Greater Wellington is committed to leading and enabling regional economic development, prioritising COVID-19 recovery, and supporting Māori economic development. Our regional leadership activities and core responsibilities contribute to a resilient regional economy. We aim to support our region's ability to thrive, by ensuring the delivery of key operations, accommodating population growth and addressing the challenges of climate change. All this while supporting a variety of recovery plans and growth opportunities with our partners including:

- *Regional Economic Development Agency Support* - We are a 20 per cent shareholder and funder of WellingtonNZ, Wellington's Regional Economic Development Agency.
- *Partnerships and Māori Economy* - By supporting economic recovery plans with our Mana Whenua partners and mātāwaka, we aim to activate stronger and more resilient community outcomes. For a more prosperous regional wai and whānau environment, we are supporting Te Matarau a Māui: Collaborative Pathways to Māori Economic Futures, a collective Ohu informed strategy designed to deliver co-designed Māori outcomes and agency.
- *COVID Recovery* - We are supporting regional recovery through our activities and investments, and a regional action programme, while participating in regional leadership recovery forums.

Plans for the next six months

Greater Wellington is committed to the creation of a new Joint Committee for leadership in regional recovery, economic development and spatial planning, including governance of the Wellington Regional Growth Framework (WRGF). We will seek Cabinet approval and delegated Joint Committee representation in early 2021.

We are supporting the Wellington Regional Leadership Group's (part of Coordinating Executive Group) objectives to benefit coordinated recovery efforts, while addressing significant pre-existing inequity gaps and socio-economic distress.

We are considering how best to direct our investment in [WellingtonNZ](#) for cohesive regional economic growth. Following the recent launch of Te Matarau a Māui, the next steps are to create an independent body with an appointed board, obtain sustainable funding, and confirm a work programme to begin implementation in 2021.

We acknowledge the Jobs for Nature and Shovel-Ready Projects funding to accelerate regional recovery and job creation in the post-COVID era. We are implementing our committed projects, and are open to discussions regarding further economic stimulus packages.

Key challenges and opportunities

Our region's economy is influenced by all tiers of Government, key tech and creative sectors. Bringing these key parties together to find integrated and aligned programmes is challenging, especially with eight local government partners. We have worked with these partners towards cooperative governance, including the proposed Joint Committee. A priority focus for the Joint Committee is the cooperative regional development and release of a new economic development framework.

The region has cooperatively drafted the WRGF with Government and mana whenua. Showing the preferred path to future growth, successful implementation depends on significant infrastructure investment over the next 30 years. This scale of investment requires significant Government co-investment and support.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Ministerial participation in the proposed Joint Committee, endorsement of the Wellington Regional Growth Framework and a contribution to funding of the Committee and Secretariat.
- b. Co-funding and active involvement in the development and implementation of the regional economic development plan to maximise the potential economic benefits and wellness outcomes for region and New Zealand.
- c. Support for the implementation of the Māori economic development strategy *Te Matarau a Māui* to accelerate progress, address areas of existing inequality and support our mana whenua partners. We're seeking funding for programmes aligning with key Government priorities for Māori economic development and recovery. We also want to align our connections with MBIE and TPK, to help ensure delivery of outcomes and explore what capability programmes are available to equip Māori to succeed in economic development leadership roles.
- d. Work with us to accelerate regional recovery. There are real opportunities to ensure the delivery of key regional infrastructures to support growth, our vulnerable communities, wellness and sustainable employment through ongoing communication, cooperative planning and co-funding.

For More Information

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Chair Wellington Regional Strategy Committee Cr David Lee

Regional Economic Development

Sarah Gauthier, Senior Strategic Advisor, Economic Recovery: sarah.gauthier@gw.govt.nz

Te Matarau a Māui: Collective Pathways to Māori Futures

Website – www.TeMatarau.co.nz | Key contact – TePuritanga Jeffries TePuritanga.Jefferies@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

In response to the 2016 earthquake, the Port rebuild programme has looked to replace the two single-user ferry terminals with a multi-user ferry terminal. The vision is to have a vibrant port with a co-located or multi-user ferry terminal maximising the outcome for both the region and the nation. A new terminal is also needed to accommodate new, larger Interislander ferries that may be ready by 2024/25.

Greater Wellington is the majority shareholder in CentrePort and the port's redevelopment has impacts on the commercial operations, which in turn affects 26,000 jobs in the wider region.

Plans for the next six months

Greater Wellington has worked with all key stakeholders in the Future Ports Forum (including the CentrePort, NZ Transport Agency, KiwiRail, Bluebridge and Wellington City Council) over the past 3 years and a decision was made to plan for a multi-user ferry terminal at Kaiwharawhara. It was agreed that the new site would be shared by Interislander and Bluebridge ferries.

KiwiRail has subsequently pulled out of the forum and is exploring the development of a single-user terminal at Kings Wharf, beside the Bluebridge existing terminal and closer to downtown Wellington. Greater Wellington and CentrePort continue to work with KiwiRail to find a resilient and equitable solution.

Key challenges and opportunities

KiwiRail's current position presents a number of challenges as the development of a rail-enabled ferry terminal at Kings Wharf would displace other port operations and compromise the commercial ability to operate a financially viable full service port for the region. Studies have shown that the port footprint does not allow for a full service port **and** a rail-enabled Kings Wharf terminal, without considerable additional costs in the development of off-site facilities and new technology and associated increased operational costs. There could also be a considerable detrimental impact on jobs in the wider region.

The anticipated arrival of new Interislander ferries in 2024/25 would allow less than 4 years for agreement to the site and commercial terms, design, consenting and construction of the terminal, as well as the implementation of significant changes to other port operations including the development of off-site facilities. This is highly unlikely to be achievable, which is of considerable concern for the continued operation of the inter-island ferry service.

Any solution needs to fit with Let's Get Wellington Moving's long term direction and plans, particularly around the integration of traffic from and to the ferry and the Wellington CBD.

The Port and waterfront are an important amenity area for the region. The inner harbour has a wide range of recreational users. Any ferry terminal development needs to recognise the range of stakeholders and consider any impacts on their interests.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Encourage KiwiRail to return to the Future Ports Forum.
- b. Guide KiwiRail in its approach to new ferries. In the COVID-era are large, rail enabled ferries justified? Could the New Zealand public be better served by less expensive replacement options in medium term?
- c. Leadership to ensure that the placement of orders for the new Interislander ferries and the location of the new ferry terminal presents the best outcome for the nation and region's economy.
- d. Support fast track consent processes for a new ferry facility and/or use enabling legislation to facilitate the progress of the project.

For More Information

Multi-user Terminal - <http://www.gw.govt.nz/cook-strait-connectivity/>

Business Case - <http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Cook-Straight-Connectivity-PBC-Infographic-FINAL-July-2019.pdf>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter

Greg Campbell, Chief Executive Greg.Campbell@gw.govt.nz

Luke Troy, General Manager of Strategy Luke.Troy@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

LGWM is a joint 20 year programme of works between the Wellington City Council (WCC), Greater Wellington, and Waka Kotahi. Our vision is a great harbour city, accessible to all, with attractive places, shared streets and efficient local and regional journeys. To realise this transformation, we need to move more people with fewer vehicles.

Our focus is the area from Ngauranga Gorge to Miramar including the Wellington Urban Motorway, access to the port, and connections to the central city, Wellington Hospital, and the airport. It includes all the ways we get to and around our city, and how the city develops alongside its transport system. Since 2016 over 10,000 people and 75 stakeholder groups have provided input on Wellington's transport challenges and opportunities.

Plans for the next six months

The Programme will launch a public awareness campaign, providing an over-arching story of the long-term objectives of LGWM and the upcoming specific consultation on the key packages in Feb/March.

A programme of one-to-one engagement with affected property owners whose properties may be affected by the Mass Rapid Transit and State Highways packages will also be undertaken.

The Indicative Business Cases will be completed in early-mid 2021. These will provide clear direction as the preferred packages and the overall programme.

Key challenges and opportunities

Integration is critical

LGWM is key to achieving regional targets for mode shift, emission reductions and safety, so developments and implementation must be aligned with other regional initiatives and plans, as well as national policy direction.

Increasing capacity for road vehicles from north of Wellington City is specifically excluded from the government funded LGWM packages. The Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) route will remove general vehicle capacity from the waterfront quays, while the City Streets package is considering an earlier delivery of bus infrastructure on the quays. Therefore it is critical to LGWM's success that modal options other than road vehicles are available from the north, in a timely manner. Specifically, this means having adequate rail commuter capacity available for when MRT construction begins. Given growth in rail travel over recent years we expect to reach our current capacity around 2025. Additional investment is required for new rail units and this requires significant Government co-funding.

Importance of early delivery packages to the public transport network

Completed in December 2019, the Bus Priority Action Plan (BPAP) was based on a collaborative investigation by WCC and Greater Wellington working with Waka Kotahi. It identified the key routes, issues and opportunities to improve the reliability of buses on Wellington's busiest routes. LGWM is responsible for delivery of the plan through the City Streets and other Early Delivery packages.

Greater Wellington views successful delivery of the BPAP, through these packages, as critical to improving the quality and capacity of the Wellington City public bus network over the short to medium term to achieve our mode-shift targets and reduce vehicles in the central city. This will make a real difference to reducing carbon emissions.

Diminished local affordability

The May 2019 investment package was based on a 40% share of \$6.4B total investment to be funded by WCC and Greater Wellington, via a 1% rate increase each year for twelve years. Greater Wellington remains committed to funding its share.

However local government's ability to pay has been significantly affected by the impacts of Covid-19. Both Greater Wellington and WCC face significant financial pressure due to decreased non-rates revenue and increased costs. At the same time, highly constrained economic conditions mean that our communities are much less able to afford rates increases. To help reduce the pressure on rates, we need to utilise other funding tools that are not solely targeted on property owners.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Advancing assessment of the LGWM indicative business cases, particularly Mass Rapid Transit and State Highway 1.
- b. Make available a wider range of funding tools, including those previously discarded by Central Government such as cordon/congestion charge, regional fuel tax and GST, for local share funding.
- c. Be open to alternative options that deliver improved outcomes for a more affordable cost.
- d. Continued strong unity and a genuine partnership approach, which remain critical to the success of the programme.

For More Information

Let's Get Wellington Moving - www.lgwm.nz

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Chair of Transport Committee Cr Roger Blakeley

Greg Campbell, CE and representative on LGWM Board - greg.campbell@gw.govt.nz

Luke Troy, GM for Strategy and representative on LGWM Prog. Steering Group (luke.troy@gw.govt.nz)

Public Transport Patronage Recovery

Purpose of the programme

To recover patronage across the Metlink transport network as strongly as possible post COVID-19 and continue tracking towards regional mode shift.

Plans for the next six months

Greater Wellington has been at the forefront of patronage recovery for New Zealand and a broad range of international jurisdictions throughout the response to COVID-19. We have had a very strong recovery, underpinned by strengthening network services and enhancing the customer experience.

The programme of recovery work will continue over the next 6 months, with a package of long-planned bus network improvements introduced on 25 October 2020 serving to reinforce the resilience and responsiveness of the network.

Key challenges and opportunities

Our greater challenge is to recover our patronage to pre-COVID-19 levels at a time of ongoing uncertainty, anxiety and changing travel and working patterns.

We have an opportunity to deliver a safe, reliable public transport network that holds the utmost trust and confidence of communities. Also, by recovering our patronage to pre-COVID-19 levels as quickly as possible, we will reduce revenue shortfalls and our reliance on additional funding from Waka Kotahi, and continue tracking towards mode shift.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Ongoing financial support from Waka Kotahi for Greater Wellington's efforts to recover patronage, which are centred on strengthening network services and enhancing the customer experience.
- b. Rolling out the National Ticketing Solution (NTS), and supporting Greater Wellington's efforts to transition to the NTS. This especially relates to confirming the financial contributions from Waka Kotahi as we start to test, trial and strengthen the "contactless" experience across our bus, ferry and rail networks.

For More Information

Greater Wellington Public Transport - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/public-transport/>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Chair of Transport Committee Cr Roger Blakeley

Scott Gallacher, GM for Metlink - Scott.Gallacher@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

To provide people in the Greater Wellington region with low-emission public transport. To reduce regional road transport related emissions, and help Greater Wellington and New Zealand achieve its low-carbon goals.

In August 2019, Greater Wellington Regional Council approved a series of greenhouse gas (carbon) reduction targets for its corporate operations and areas of direct influence:

- 40% reduction in net emissions by 30 June 2025
- 100% carbon neutral by 30 June 2030 and thereafter
- Become a net producer of carbon credits (carbon negative) by 30 June 2035.

To achieve the targets above, all our key transport modes (bus, rail and ferry) need to be part of the decarbonisation agenda.

Plans for the next six months

Bus – Greater Wellington is further modernising its bus fleet to deliver effective and efficient Metlink bus services and intends to commission at least 98 new electric buses over the next two years. Preparations are continuing towards our intention to implement an electric bus fleet in the region by 2030. Greater Wellington will also be exploring any opportunity to further increase the number of electric vehicles in our fleet, including by way of conversions. For example, one operator has received Government funding to trial the conversion of three double decker diesel buses to electric. Greater Wellington wishes to be actively involved in any Government programmes for the further retrofitting of buses.

Train - Greater Wellington is proposing significant rolling stock improvements, including exploring locomotives deploying hybrid electric propulsion, and electrification of infrastructure to both the Capital Connection and the Wairarapa train lines. We are working to advance these plans with Waka Kotahi and Kiwirail – the Government has already committed funding to a business case for this work.

Ferry - East by West (EBW) Ferries has significantly invested in the development of an electric ferry, the first commercial electric ferry in the southern hemisphere. This is due to be commissioned within the next six months and will require a revision of the service subsidy and investment in fast charging infrastructure. Greater Wellington has supported EBW throughout its build programme and will shortly be concluding negotiations over the inclusion of the electric ferry within the Metlink ferry network. Greater Wellington is also considering the support it might offer in the context of charging infrastructure associated with the new electric ferry.

Key challenges and opportunities

Challenges to achieve full decarbonisation of the Metlink bus, rail and ferry services by 2030:

- The capital expenditure required to implement the decarbonisation agenda is significant and will require a review of existing funding models, including the contributions from regional and central government.
- The ageing infrastructure and network of the rail network is a significant issue that we need to navigate as we explore decarbonisation opportunities for rail. The funding and operating model for rail, most notably the role of Kiwirail, should be revisited.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted public transport patronage, leading to revenue loss and funding shortfalls. Equally, the pandemic has negatively impacted central government budgets.
- The consequences of climate change require more network resilience to withstand increasingly frequent severe weather events and other natural hazards. Higher mean temperatures increase the emissions of road surface infrastructure, which undermines decarbonisation efforts.

Opportunities

- Decarbonisation of the Wellington regional Public Transport fleet will be a high-profile demonstration of leadership in achieving New Zealand's Zero Carbon 2050 target.
- Modernisation and decarbonisation of the PT fleet and infrastructure will encourage more people to shift from private cars to public transport leading to lower carbon emissions.
- Successful implementation of LGWM, in particular the Mass Rapid Transit corridor and the associated feeder routes, also offers significant decarbonisation co-benefits as it aims to move more people with fewer vehicles.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Engage on a public transport decarbonisation strategy and consider innovative ways the objectives can be achieved, including in the future funding and operating models for rail.
- b. Clear messages to government agencies on the investment required to decarbonise public transport and general support for low emission transport.
- c. Fund (at least 90%) purchase of regional rail units, subject to business case (in progress, with consideration to these trains being electric/hybrid).
- d. Support the retrofit of electric technology to Metlink diesel buses.
- e. Support from Waka Kotahi to help identify future funding from the NLTF, and agreement in principle that funding will be made available.

For More Information

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Chair of Transport Committee Cr Roger Blakeley

Scott Gallacher, GM for Metlink - Scott.Gallacher@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

The vision of the programme is to provide safe, sustainable low carbon transport for residents and visitors around the region, and to points beyond, while catering for population growth and encouraging mode-shift to public transport. The purpose of the programme is twofold: firstly to upgrade track infrastructure, then delivery of new trains from 2024/25.

Upgraded track infrastructure will provide newer technology to minimise speed restrictions and outages across the network. Track renewals will ensure services run as smoothly as possible, however will require replacing and modernising the overhead power system and signals power supply, and improving the network tracking including inside the four major tunnels. Other upgrades will include double tracking between Trentham and Upper Hutt, and improvements at Plimmerton and Wellington station approaches.

The carriages and locomotives used to deliver both the Wairarapa (Masterton – Wellington) and Capital Connection (Palmerston North – Wellington) services are nearing the end of their lives. In addition, they don't have enough seating capacity for current use and we expect those numbers to continue to grow strongly. From a customer experience perspective, new services would deliver more seating and frequent services, improved punctuality and reliability, shorter journey times, and better on-board passenger amenities. Investment in a decarbonised (almost inevitably electric) locomotive fleet will reduce requirements for fossil fuels, and support NZ's achievement of our 2050 Carbon Zero goal.

Plans for the next six months

The new section of track between Trentham and Upper Hutt on the Hutt Valley Line is due to be completed in 2021. It will allow more frequent trains to run between Wellington and Upper Hutt by removing the bottleneck effect caused by a single track on this section of the network. In addition, there is significant "business-as-usual" maintenance work required to be carried out by Kiwirail to ensure that the network continues to operate and deliver existing services.

Greater Wellington, Waka Kotahi, Ministry of Transport, Horizons Regional Council, KiwiRail and Transdev are working together to develop a business case to purchase a fleet of modern passenger trains. These would operate on the existing overhead power supply to Waikanae and Upper Hutt, continuing to Palmerston North and Masterton using a secondary method of propulsion.

Based on a 2019 business case for replacement of lower North Island rolling stock, Waka Kotahi provided Greater Wellington with \$5m to investigate options, develop a Detailed Business Case, the funding application, and continue with the procurement processes. This phase is expected to cost approximately \$800k and completion is targeted for 30 June 2021. The remainder of the funding (\$4.2m) covers the costs of preparing the detailed contracts and undertaking a two-stage procurement process for the potential \$300m-\$500m rolling stock design, build and maintenance contract. Greater Wellington and Horizons are aiming to secure government funding assistance by early 2022, and earlier if possible. This timeframe will enable the first of the new trains to be built and ready to transport passengers by mid-2026. We are mobilising the project and expect to be fully set-up by the end of 2020.

Key challenges and opportunities

With most of the regional rail lines in use almost 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the Metlink train services need to be balanced with progress on the upgrade work. The fragmented work programme has been further impacted by the restrictions of the COVID-19 lockdown. In addition, costs for Kiwirail have significantly escalated, far more than originally anticipated, and additional funds are required. If funding continues to be approved, significant infrastructure upgrade work will continue until at least 2027/2028

Rolling stock on the Wairarapa and the Capital Coast line is at or near end-of-life, with another 5-8 years at most. With current capacity insufficient to meet demand, there are no extra trains available in the event of failure, with a low level of service resilience. Unless the government commits to new rolling stock by 2021, Greater Wellington anticipates that the Network will be at capacity in the peak periods by 2024. “At capacity” effectively means that commuters will be “packed like sardines” and some commuters will be left on the platforms on a regular basis. Furthermore, the large long term investment in a new rail fleet is unaffordable for public transport users and ratepayers.

Once the track upgrades are completed, Greater Wellington expects reduced maintenance costs and service improvements. It will enable us to focus more on enabling capacity growth, mode shift, and decarbonisation. With their new methods of propulsion, these new rail fleets would dramatically reduce emissions, contributing to NZ’s carbon zero goals. In addition, with a more attractive and higher-frequency rail service we expect more people would use the train rather than their car, which would in turn reduce private vehicle emissions.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Ongoing support and funding from Waka Kotahi and Ministry of Transport, to upgrade the network’s integrity and safety to a condition that ratepayers can afford to maintain.
- b. Assure significant funding of the rolling stock, of at least 90% of the overall costs, to ensure delivery of this core infrastructure for our communities.
- c. Provide funding assurance by late 2021 to enable procurement before capacity is exceeded and the existing fleet reaches the end of its life.
- d. Explore options for national level procurement, to secure greater efficiencies and build long term maintenance capability.

For More Information

Greater Wellington Public Transport - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/public-transport/>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Chair of Transport Committee Cr Roger Blakeley

Scott Gallacher, GM for Metlink - Scott.Gallacher@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

Greater Wellington seeks to ensure that the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) is fit for purpose for 2020 and beyond, so that:

- Communities can be assured of a strong, vibrant public transport as we navigate our way through COVID-19
- Front-line staff across all public transport operations are fairly and appropriately remunerated
- The financial sustainability of public transport in New Zealand is stronger and more resilient, including in the context of efforts to increase the decarbonisation of the public transport network.

Plans for the next six months

Greater Wellington will continue to strengthen our public transport network for our communities, including in the context of developing our Long-Term Plan. But PTOM, including its associated frameworks and arrangements, requires a review to ensure it truly enables us being able to work with the Government to deliver a strong, resilient and vibrant public transport network.

Key challenges and opportunities

The Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) was introduced in 2013 by the previous Government with a view to better incentivise commerciality within public transport in New Zealand through a combination of planning, funding and procurement tools all aimed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public transport for New Zealanders.

With the highest per capita public transport use in the country, as well as the strongest recovery of patronage numbers throughout the COVID-19 response, the Wellington region has been at the forefront of attempting to make PTOM work. Greater Wellington has also sought to use PTOM as an opportunity to:

- Significantly improve the customer experience for our communities
- Offer real incentives for Operators to continually improve their performance
- Provide value for money services to our communities
- Grow patronage.

But as we look to operate within a COVID-19 environment, strengthen the customer experience and deliver a decarbonisation programme that delivers on the aspirations of the Government's climate change programme, we need to ensure that PTOM enables us to work with the Government to deliver a strong, resilient and vibrant public transport network. Some of the challenges under PTOM include:

- Limited ability of GWRC being able to more fully advance and protect the interests of front-line staff, most notably drivers and cleaners.
- Overly bureaucratic financial framework.
- Restrictions over the treatment of assets and infrastructure, and the ability of GWRC being able to control assets of strategic importance in the network.
- Difficulties associated with significantly increase electric vehicles in our bus fleet without a fundamental revisitation of the existing contractual frameworks.
- Current approach to “exempt services”, including in the context of the Airport Flyer in Wellington, and whether such an approach is appropriate in today’s environment. Many “exempt services” do not offer customers a level of service we would expect for people travelling in our region. Key concerns include the cost of fares, lack of real time information, standards and vehicle quality including cleanliness (health and safety). Yet the vast majority of people within our communities have an expectation that GWRC is ultimately responsible for managing or controlling the operation of these services. A range of these “exempt services” would be better provided as part of our network, yet aspects of PTOM constrain our ability to do so.

We want to be able to better take into account the interests of customers, transport operators and employees, and ratepayers as we continue our efforts to strengthen the public transport network. A review of PTOM would allow us to ensure it is fit for purpose for today’s environment and allow us to strengthen our ability to deliver a strong, resilient and vibrant public transport network.

Commitment needed from the Government

- a. Work with GWRC and other public transport authorities to review PTOM, including the current approach to “exempt services”, to ensure it is still fit for what we need to achieve for our communities.
- b. Revisit some of the contractual and financial frameworks to explore greater flexibility to allow GWRC and other public transport authorities to be able to assert greater control over its assets and infrastructure.

For More Information

Greater Wellington Public Transport - <https://www.gw.govt.nz/public-transport/>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter; Chair of Transport Committee Cr Roger Blakeley

Scott Gallacher, GM for Metlink - Scott.Gallacher@gw.govt.nz

Purpose of the programme

Over the past three years, central and local government have been considering solutions to challenges facing delivery of three waters services to communities. This has seen the development of new legislation and the creation of Taumata Arowai, the new Water Services Regulator, to oversee and enforce a new drinking water regulatory framework, with an additional oversight role for wastewater and stormwater networks.

In July 2020, the Government announced a funding package of \$761 million to provide immediate post-COVID-19 stimulus to local authorities to maintain and improve three waters (drinking water, wastewater, stormwater) infrastructure, and to support reform of local government water services delivery arrangements.

The Government has proposed public multi-regional models for water service delivery to realise the benefits of scale for communities and reflect neighbouring catchments and communities of interest. There is a preference that entities will be in shared ownership of local authorities. Design of the proposed new arrangements will be informed by discussion with the local government sector.

Plans for the next six months

Greater Wellington is the only regional council directly impacted by the three waters reform process. We supply bulk water under the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972, are a 19% shareholder in Wellington Water (WW), and hold over \$403m in assets for water distribution and treatment. These services and assets are managed through a services agreement with WW.

Greater Wellington has entered into the first phase of the 3 water reform programme, signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Crown and working to establish the multi-regional groupings to become the new service delivery agency.

Greater Wellington is supportive of the direction of the reforms and is committed to assisting the Government in working through the design options and transition to a new model for the provision of three waters.

Key challenges and opportunities

More than half of the Wellington region's water take sits on our regional parks. As the physical assets are transferred to a new entity, the protection and public ownership of these natural assets needs to be safeguarded.

At a wider level, there is significant community concern at the possibility of 3 waters infrastructure privatisation in future. Measures guaranteeing retention in public ownership offer the opportunity to build public trust and support for this programme of reform.

Commitment needed from the Government

Greater Wellington seeks Government commitment to:

- a. Ensure there is equity in any asset transfer to the new entities to protect the current and future financial liabilities of our residents.
- b. Three waters provision remaining in public ownership for the benefit of all our residents and for future generations.

For More Information

Three Waters Reform Programme - <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Three-Waters-Reform-Programme>

Chair: Cr Daran Ponter

Samantha Gain, General Manager of Corporate Services samantha.gain@gw.govt.nz