

Environment

Te taiao, our environment, is important to us all. It's our home, our playground, our workplace, the air we breathe, the water we drink, the places where we swim, walk and fish.

Greater Wellington is responsible for protecting and enhancing our natural environment and providing opportunities for access in our wild backyard. We regulate activities that can damage the environment, protect the highest value biodiversity areas, reduce flood risk across the region and care for public land, including eight regional parks, on behalf of the community. We also support safe navigation of the region's harbours and manage environmental threats such as pest plants and animals. We do this work in partnership with mana whenua through regional policies, plans, resource consents and working collectively alongside others, including a large team of volunteers, for the greater environmental good upholding kaitiakitanga.

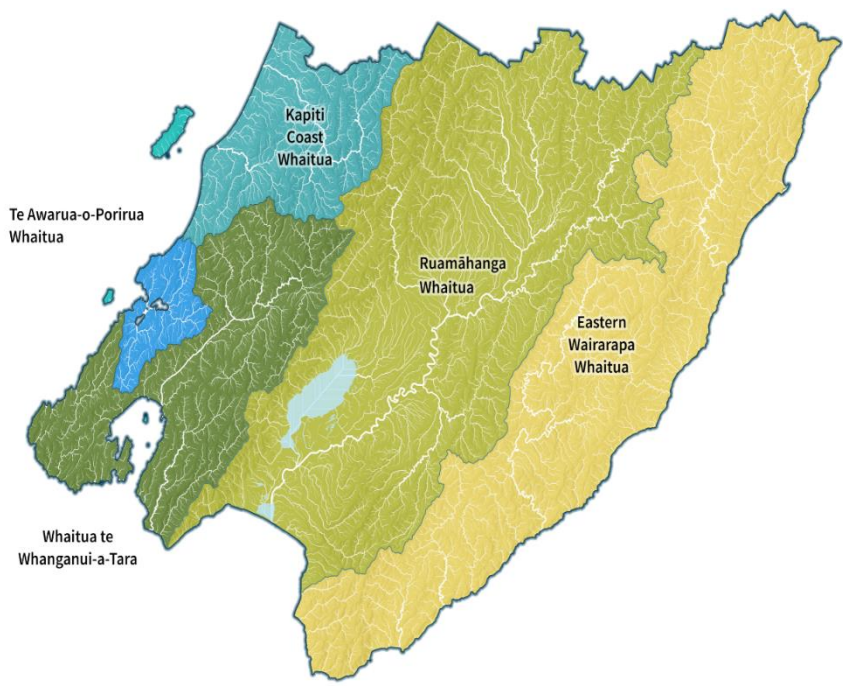
Our environmental work connects to our strategic framework by ensuring te taiao continues to thrive and is resilient and prepared for the pressures ahead. We connect communities together to enhance our vibrancy as a region with a sense of collective wellbeing.

The catchment-wide approach

The Environment Group has many ways to help protect our region's precious and unique environment including taking a catchment-wide view. This view better delivers for the environment by working more closely with communities and mana whenua at a scale more meaningful to them, and for delivering a more holistic and integrated approach.

Since the last LTP, Greater Wellington's Environment Group has significantly changed its operating model for the first time in the organisation's history. The new structure and systems are designed to more effectively deliver outcomes for te taiao and people, and to build a more resilient region. The new Group aims to work in genuine partnership with mana whenua, and will engage with communities, industries and stakeholders. We will use a rich mix of science and mātauranga Māori in decision-making.

A major new focus is to plan and deliver work and report on results based on catchments. Greater Wellington has identified five 'super-catchments' in the Wellington region, sometimes known as "whaitua" in reference to the Whaitua Implementation Programme approach taken with National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management implementation. We have established a new function in the Environment Group, Catchment, to support and facilitate planning and delivery of environment work linked to mana whenua and community priorities within these catchments.



This group of activities supports the Community Outcomes:

Connected communities

Our work with the community connects people with the environment they live in

Thriving environment

We look after the region’s special places to ensure they thrive and prosper

Resilient future

We manage and protect the region’s resources so they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Activities of the Environment group

- **Environmental restoration, recreation and harbour safety**
 - Conservation and restoration (pest, land and biodiversity management)
 - Parks management (restoration and recreation)
 - Maintain harbour safety and prepare to respond to incidents
- **Planning and prioritising integrated work at a catchment scale**
 - Deliver Whaitua development programmes
 - Identify priorities for each of our catchments.
 - Develop, manage and evaluate our plans through a catchment lens
 - Manage engagement with community and mana whenua in relation to the environment activities of Greater Wellington.
- **Environmental strategy, policy and protection**
 - Provide strategic direction in relation to the environment and flood protection
 - Create environmental protection policies and rules
 - Process and monitor consent applications
 - Enforce environmental compliance and respond to incidents
 - Planning how we manage our Regional Parks
- **Environmental knowledge and insights**
 - Use environmental and social science to provide knowledge and insights to inform our work.
- **Flood resilience**
 - Plan, design, deliver and maintain flood risk mitigation methods
 - Provide information about flood risk and options for management

Opportunities and challenges

- Biodiversity and climate crisis means there is going to be more work to do than resource available – we need people and partners to all lean in
- Many things in the environment cannot be predicted so we need to be agile
- Work has been done across multiple programmes, relationships and Acts that has created obligations and direction that commits resources
- There are opportunities to work with the uncertainty and interconnectedness of our work under the new model to grow the capacity of the region to deliver for Te Taiao
- Opportunities for our environment mahi to deliver in multiple benefits for biodiversity, climate resilience, mana whenua outcomes and equity.

Significant negative effects and how we will address them

Pest management – the control of pest animals and plants requires a range of methods including pesticides. Some people object to any form of animal control especially for game animals. There are also some objections to the use of chemicals to control pest plants and animals, of particular concern to some sectors of the community is the use of the toxin 1080 and the use of glyphosate (Roundup).

We will address these effects by carrying out pest control activities led by national best practice. We follow guidelines and rules set by the Environmental Protection Authority and WorkSafe. Our staff are trained experts in pest plant and animal management and certified to use pesticides. If there are cost-effective pest control methods that do not involve pesticides then we will consider using them. We use the least toxic chemical that will be effective in any given situation.

Flood protection and control works – there is the potential for flood protection projects, and maintenance operations to have a negative effect on river ecology and natural character of the river and therefore our natural environment. We are also facing significant increases in cost to maintain current flood services.

We will address these effects by minimising the adverse impacts and enhancing positive outcomes of flood protection projects, maintenance operations on the environment by using a range of methods such as working within our Code of Practice and undertaking riparian planting and integrating land use and water management planning. We are also prioritising our essential flood protection work to ensure that the community is protected from flooding.

Regional parks – stock grazing land management activities have high impacts on a range of ecosystem services, recreation amenity values and organisational reputation as custodian of parks for the community. Insufficient pest control can have significant impacts on environmental health and the success of restoration work.

To address this, we are phasing out grazing in our regional parks and planting native forests to increase biodiversity. We are also amplifying our pest control to increase the success and survival of plantings.