Restore Hibiscus & Bays

Ngahere Tupu Tonu • Thriving Nature

Strategic Plan

2021

Hibiscus and Bays Local Board
Auckland Council

Auckland Council
Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau

Contents

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This strategic plan was first developed in 2018 by a steering group of individuals representing groups & projects involved with environmental conservation and ecological restoration within the Hibiscus & Bays Local Board area. A review of the strategy was conducted in early 2021. Restore Hibiscus & Bays Steering Group members who contributed to this updated 2021-2026 Strategic Plan are acknowledged here.

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Community Hui Photos supplied by Geoff Reid.

Whakatauki

Toitū te Marae o Tane, Toitū te Marae o Tangaroa, Toitū te Iwi.

If the land is well
and the water is well,
the people will thrive.

Introduction

With significant support from the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board and other funders, the Restore Hibiscus & Bays network is committed to working collectively to eradicate pests, restore and protect native habitats and improve water quality throughout the East Coast Bays and Hibiscus Coast and to support other regional initiatives in creating safe habitat corridors across Auckland.

Context & Need

The Hibiscus & Bays Local Board stretches along the eastern coastline of Auckland's northern region. It is bordered to the west by the Northern Motorway and to the east by the Hauraki Gulf – Tīkapa Moana/Te Moana-nui-ā-Toi. In 2018, there were a total of 36,858 households across the area. Of the 104,010 residents, 80.8% are of European descent, 16% are of Asian descent, 6.5% are Māori, 2.1% are Pacific peoples and 1.2% are of other ethnicities.[1]

Below is a list of the unique habitats identified within the Local Board area.

- Coastal margins
- Sandy beaches
- Rocky shoreline
- Rivers / Estuaries
- Mangrove forests
- Wetlands - including stormwater
- Scenic bush reserves
- Island – Tiritiri Mātangi
- Marine reserve
- Mainland Open Sanctuaries - Shakespear Regional Park
- Kauri podocarp forest
- Streams – riparian margins
- Semi-rural areas and pasture
- Regenerating scrub
- Sand dunes
- Coastal cliffs
- Sandspit and shell banks
- Urban environment
- Roading corridors

Context & Need

The landscape is diverse and includes many coastal communities, large tracts of private rural land, some of which is under development, a small industrial park and densely populated suburban areas. At the northern end is the small coastal community of Waiwera, and to the south, the East Coast Bays suburb of Campbells Bay. It also includes the Whangaparāoa Peninsula, and reaches out into the Hauraki Gulf to include the pest-free wildlife sanctuary, Tiritiri Matangi Island, located 4 kilometers from the end of the Whangaparāoa Peninsula.

The Hibiscus and Bays is home to two regional parks, with a third, Wenderholm, bordering the northern boundary. Shakespear Regional Park located at the end of the Whangaparāoa Peninsula is a mainland open wildlife sanctuary with a predator-proof fence and has kiwi, hihi (stitchbird), tīeke (saddleback) and New Zealand dotterel populations, as well as the largest variety of reptile species in the Auckland region. Many of these species have been translocated from Tiritiri Matangi Island.

There are also several scenic reserves in Hibiscus and Bays and many local parks. These and other sites have been recognised as Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs). In 2017, Boffa Miskell carried out research identifying multiple Biodiversity Hubs across both Hibiscus and Bays (Figure 1).[2] Unfortunately, many of the special habitats within Hibiscus & Bays are separated into isolated pockets, making it harder for wildlife to flourish. Pest plants, such as moth plant, wild ginger, woolly nightshade, Japanese honeysuckle, and climbing asparagus, invade these spaces and smother native plants and trees, destroying the habitat of native wildlife. Introduced predators, such as rats, possums, stoats, ferrets and hedgehogs, kill our native birds, lizards and invertebrates, destroy their habitat or homes and take their eggs.

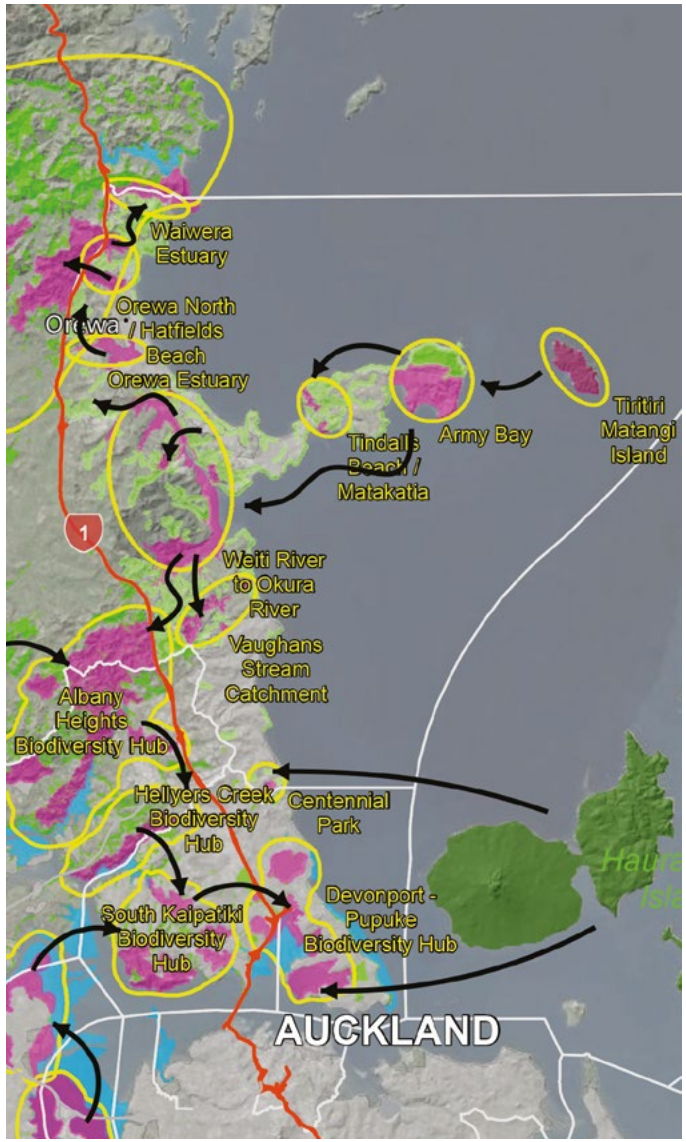

Figure 1. *Overview of the Hibiscus & Bays 'biodiversity hotspots'.*

Context & Need

Hibiscus & Bays is made up of a series of 34 catchments (Figure 2), bounded by hills from which water flows into streams and rivers and ultimately down to the Hauraki Gulf – Tīkapa Moana/Te Moana-nui-ā-Toi. The Hauraki Gulf is a taonga with local, national and global significance. It is home to approximately 25 species of marine mammals, including whales and dolphins, and an abundance of seabirds. It is also important to the people of the East Coast Bays, the Hibiscus Coast and beyond, supporting our recreation, work and wellbeing. Its kai moana has fed generations of families throughout Māori and European history.

Part of the coastline is protected through the establishment of the Long Bay–Okura Marine Reserve in 1995. Marine habitats are able to recover and marine species are left to grow and replenish. The reserve covers a variety of coastal habitats including sandy beaches, rocky reefs, estuarine mudflats and extensive areas of mangroves. Bird species include kōtare (kingfisher), heron, pied stilts, torea (oyster catchers), NZ dotterel, bar-tailed godwits, banded rail and the Nationally Critical Australasian bittern.

However, the Hauraki Gulf is under significant pressure and the most recent State of the Gulf report indicates a marked decline in the mauri, environmental quality and abundance of marine life.[3] One of the most commonly known causes of water quality degradation is sediment and contaminants, such as toxic heavy metals, which are washed from the land into the coastal marine area through freshwater runoff. After rainfall, our Hibiscus & Bays beaches are often unsafe for swimming. Contaminants commonly bind to sediments and other particles, which settle out and accumulate on the seabed. This affects the survival, reproduction and/or behaviour of animals that live on the seabed, and may cause flow-on effects on other parts of the ecosystem. Māori are particularly concerned about effects on the mauri of the coastal areas, and the health, abundance and safety of kai moana for consumption.

Figure 2. *Map showing boundaries of the 34 stream catchments within the Hibiscus & Bays Local Board area.*

Our Collaborative Process

In Hibiscus and Bays, there are multiple community volunteer groups that have been restoring and connecting native habitats and waterways for decades through weed control, predator control and native planting. Over recent years, there have been an increasing number of volunteer groups, projects, neighbourhoods, individuals, schools, and other organisations actively carrying out pest management and restoration work in both reserves and on private land across the area. All groups and projects are at different ages and stages, some consisting of several volunteers focusing on a local reserve, others facilitating significant landscape scale projects. Many groups are supported in their work by Auckland Council Parks Rangers and Environmental Services, or the Department of Conservation. In addition, some of the native bushremnants that have been classified as high value by Auckland Council are under a limited degree of pest control by professional eco-contractors.

See the Restore Hibiscus & Bays website for a current list of community organisations carrying out restoration work, and project areas across Hibiscus & Bays.

Our Collaborative Process

In 2015, the Hibiscus & Bays Local Board, Auckland Council and the East Coast Bays Community Project (now known as Heart of the Bays) provided support to the network of local community restoration volunteers and groups, in order to help identify challenges that they faced. The volunteers come together to share their successes and experiences. Within the context of increasing national and regional support for the eradication of pests, the network began discussing the potential of developing a plan to help guide and focus activities and provide leverage to source more funding. With assistance from Auckland Council's Biodiversity team, more local groups and interested parties were identified and invited to join the network. A steering group of representatives from the different groups, projects and organisations was formed. Supported by an independent facilitator, the Steering Group developed a biodiversity and pest free plan, which between 2018 and 2021 formed the basis of the strategy for the initiative. As part of this process, the wider network and Hibiscus and Bays community were also engaged in discussions about restoration and pest management. Hibiscus & Bays Local Board funding was secured to contract staff and the network and Steering Group continued to meet to guide priorities. In 2020, the initiative was given the name of Restore Hibiscus & Bays, in order to help increase public awareness.

Restore Hibiscus & Bays sits within a changing regional and national context, and so to remain flexible and responsive, it was agreed that the strategic plan should be reviewed every two years. To that end, a facilitated session was held in February 2021 with the network to seek clarity on the current and future relationship between the network and Restore Hibiscus & Bays and to seek direction from the network in the development of a 2021-26 strategic plan. Two facilitated sessions were also held with the Steering Group members to discuss and agree how they wished the strategy to evolve and move forward, taking into account the input from the wider network. They also reviewed and agreed on a new governance structure for Restore Hibiscus & Bays.

Engagement, Alignment & Considerations

Community conversations

Community engagement and participation is integral to Restore HIbiscus & Bays. Although managed and coordinated by a small staff team, the initiative is community-led, driven by an expert Steering Group including experienced environmental volunteers from across the local board area. In the development of the initial plan, community input and feedback was sought through two public engagement events. In June 2018, a community hui was held at Te Herenga Waka o Orewa, the local community marae, attended by over fifty people from across the Hibiscus and Bays area. The hui hosted two expert speakers and encouraged discussion and development of community ideas and feedback. An interactive display was developed and displayed at community venues to gain further input and ideas from people in the local area.

On an ongoing basis, the Restore HIbiscus & Bays staff team and Steering Group work to deliver the communications and community engagement plan. They engage with schools, our local marae, youth groups, Rotary, libraries, and other community organisations, such as the Browns Bay Baha'i Centre,Heart of the Bays and the Whangaparāa Community Trust, to seek advice, host events and community tool libraries and collaborate over shared goals. Through these collaborations, Restore Hibiscus & Bays seeks to embed our kaupapa into communities and neighbourhoods across the local board area.

Mana Whenua

Restore Hibiscus & Bays recognises the role that mana whenua play as kaitiaki. The Steering Group and staff team are building relationships with whānau, hapū, and iwi and have started discussions with Ngāti Manuhiri Settlement Trust regarding a potential shared kaupapa. They are also connecting with the local community marae Te Herenga Waka o Orewa and working to improve the cultural capacity of our network to be able to work within a Te Ao Māori context.

Hibiscus & Bays Local Board

The Hibiscus and Bays Local Board has made a significant contribution to the establishment and financial sustainability of Restore Hibiscus & Bays. They recognise that this important work requires a collaborative, long-term approach and they continue to support the work undertaken by the network. The identified aspirations of Restore Hibiscus & Bays align with the outcomes identified in the 2020 Local Board plan: [4]

- A Connected Community
- A Strong Local Economy
- A Protected & Enhanced Environment
- Open Spaces to Enjoy
- Transport Choices

Hibiscus & Bays Local Parks Management Plan

Restore Hibiscus & Bays will aim to work in alignment with the Hibiscus & Bays Local Parks Management plan which, once finalised and adopted by the Local Board, will supersede all previous restoration plans for individual parks and reserves in the Local Board area.[5]

Northwest Wildlink

Restore Hibiscus & Bays supports and contributes to the efforts of the Northwest Wildlink 'to restore, create and connect healthy habitats in the North-West so that our native birds and wildlife thrive once again'.[6] Hibiscus and Bays is a key connector and 'stepping stone' between the safe breeding grounds of the Hauraki Gulf islands and the Waitakere Ranges. The work of the different groups and projects within Restore Hibiscus & Bays supports the 'Big Backyard' concept – promoting urban regeneration and community involvement, linking backyards across the area and creating safe habitat for wildlife.

Pest Free Auckland

Pest Free Auckland is a community-led conservation programme facilitated by Auckland Council. It is partly funded by the Natural Environment Targeted Rate, which was introduced in July 2018 to help eliminate threats to native species. Through Pest Free Auckland, Restore Hibiscus & Bays receives technical advice, best practice guides, tools and resources and access to funding support to help build the capacity of our local initiative.

Auckland Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP)

The RPMP sets Auckland Council's priorities and goals for managing animal and plant pests in Auckland.[8] It also sets out rules that must be complied with under the Biosecurity Act. Auckland's many community environmental networks, including Restore Hibiscus & Bays, are fundamental to effective pest management. If adequately resourced, we see an important role for the network in improving public awareness, behaviour, participation and support forpest planagement on private land and public reserve land.

Predator Free 2050

Predator Free 2050 is the New Zealand government goal to rid the country of the most damaging introduced predators that threaten native species. The strategy and action plan emphasises collective action involving communities, iwi, experts, businesses, government and non-government organisations. Restore Hibiscus & Bays is keen to facilitate a shift within our community-based strategy towards coordinated and connected landscape-scale eradication (the complete removal of predators), in alignment with the transformative shift in approach outlined in the Predator Free 2050 plan.[7]

Sea Change - Tai Timu Tai Pari

Sea Change - Tai Timu Tai Pari is a plan to restore the life and health of the Hauraki Gulf developed by a diverse Stakeholder Working Group representing mana whenua, environmental and conservation, commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, land use, farming and infrastructure.[9] The plan identifies tree planting initiatives along open waterways as one recommended way to prevent pollution and sediment flowing into the Gulf. Restore Hibiscus & Bays seeks to facilitate actions through which community stakeholders can contribute the Sea Change plan to enhance and complement any infrastructural improvements and investments and innovations delivered by other stakeholders.

Plant pathogens

Restore Hibiscus & Bays acknowledges the threats from plant pathogens that exist in our region. Kauri dieback is a disease caused by a fungal-like organism that lives in soil and infects kauri roots. There is currently no proven cure, and nearly all infected trees die. The disease currently affects forests in Northland, Auckland, Great Barrier Island and the Coromandel Peninsula. Within the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board area, kauri dieback has been found in a number of locations including Okura Bush. Myrtle Rust is another fungal disease that poses a biosecurity threat to some of our native plants and trees, such as pōhutakawa and maire. It is difficult toprevent or treat, and there is currently no known treatment to kill this disease once infection sets in. Restore Hibiscus & Bays advises communities working in areas affected by these plant pathogen biosecurity threats to follow Standard Operating Procedures developed and disseminated by Auckland Council, Ministry for Primary Industries and the Department of Conservation.

Structure & Governance

The first Committee for Restore Hibiscus & Bays Incorporated was elected at the April 2021 network hui and will be reelected at each Annual General Meeting of the Society, including a Chair, a Deputy Chair and a Treasurer. The voting members should aim to elect representatives to the Committee from a wide range of volunteer projects with a geographical spread across the Hibiscus & Bays Local Board area. The Committee will also ideally include representatives from Whānau, hapū, Iwi with an interest in Hibiscus and Bays, Te Herenga Waka o Orewa marae, other non-Pākehā communities, and youth.

The Committee members participate in monthly Steering Group meetings, together with representatives from Council Environmental Service and Community Parks, the Department of Conservation and other advisors.
The duties of the Steering Group are to:

- Review reports from Restore Hibiscus & Bays members, subcommittees, staff or contractors.
- Ensure that the Society has in place appropriate policies and procedures to address its legal and other obligations, including but not limited to a Health and Safety policy.
- Conduct a top-line review and provide general feedback on key draft documents and resources developed by staff or contractors.
- Approve key draft documents and resources developed by staff or contractors.
- Approve key strategic decisions, e.g. decisions to apply for funding grants, employment of contractors and their job descriptions and KPIs, broad focus areas for the Society, etc.
- Raise any red flags to the staff or contractors, e.g. regarding communications, projects, finances.
- Promote the Society within own groups, projects and networks, e.g. on social media, in meetings, at events, and signpost people to staff and contractors where relevant.
- Suggest ideas for communications and projects where possible.

Restore Hibiscus & Bays incorporated and received charitable status in June 2021.

The Network – Influence & Opportunity

In basic terms, Restore Hibiscus & Bays is driven ***by*** the network ***for*** the network. There are a growing number of groups and projects that contribute to the initiative by participating at the bimonthly network hui and feeding ideas through in various ways. They also elect the Steering Group who in effect act as representatives for the whole network and make decisions at a strategic level, including inputting into the planning of the Restore Hibiscus & Bays work programme. The staff team - funded through the HIbiscus & Bays Local Board and other grants from a diversity of organisations – carry out the will of the network and Steering Group, by planning, seeking funding for, managing and delivering the work programme. The purpose of the Restore Hibiscus & Bays work programme is to ultimately benefit the groups and projects in the network in various ways. Through the work programme, Restore Hibiscus & Bays seeks to bring together, empower and expand the activities of groups and projects across the entire Hibiscus & Bays area, many of which are very small, place-based projects or newly emerging groups, as well as schools and other organisations, including youth groups and Rotary.

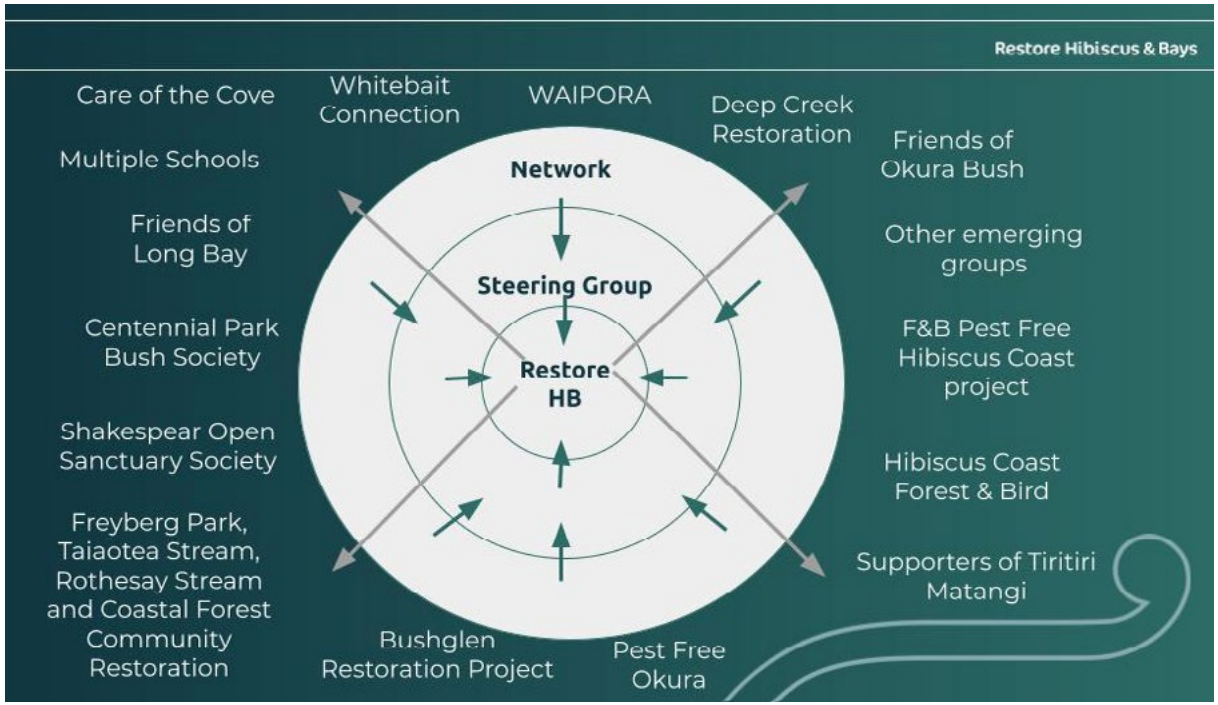

Figure 3. *Visual representation of the structure of Restore Hibiscus & Bays.*

Evaluating Our Impact

Restore Hibiscus & Bays will aim to regularly record and report to funders on the achievements and impact of the network, particularly the achievements that have been as a direct result of work done by the Restore Hibiscus & Bays staff team. This may include, but is not limited to, the number of new projects established or significantly expanded, projects funded, educational/ skills workshops delivered, engagement events or presentations, volunteers and community members engaged, and volunteer hours.

Numbers can tell us something about what we're achieving, but a lot of the impact of Restore Hibiscus & Bays cannot be measured. Below is a summary of the feedback received from the network through the strategy consultation process conducted in early 2021, as well as through an online survey:

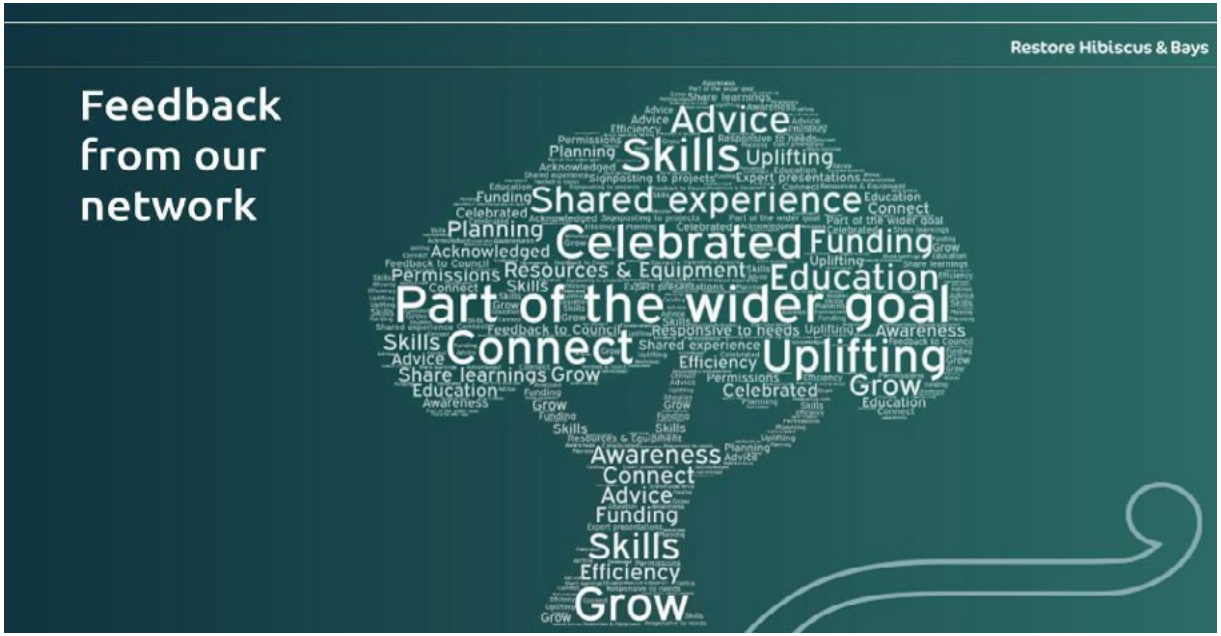

Figure 4: *Feedback from our network.*

The network members reported that they highly value advice, education, awareness raising, skills and funding that the Restore Hibiscus & Bays staff team are able to provide. However, more than that, it's the social benefits that are particularly important to our members, such as the feeling that their work is being acknowledged and celebrated, that they are connected with others and have a sense of shared experience and that they are part of a wider goal to restore our environment. They reported that they feel uplifted by being part of the network.

Our Tikanga – Our Principles

Below is the list of agreed guiding principles for the Restore Hibiscus & Bays initiative going forward.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi – We understand our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and are committed to honouring them.

Te Ao Māori – We acknowledge Māori worldview and seek to further understand how this can be integrated into our work.

Transparent working relationships – We know that together all our actions make a difference.

Diversity – We respect that different groups have different methods they employ to achieve results and are at different stages of their restoration journey.

Science Based - We recognise that to make good decisions we need robust information.

Community Focused - We take all opportunities to bring people together through this work, across our diverse, multicultural communities.

Inter-Generational - We recognise this is a long-term game and young people need to be encouraged and supported to carry on the work.

Ethical Responsibility – We take up the responsibility of advocating for nature and species that cannot speak for themselves.

Our Vision and Mission

The following section details the vision, mission and ecological goals for the Restore Hibiscus & Bays initiative and the strategic focus areas for the 2021-23 work programme. It is intended that this strategy will guide collaboration and help to increase the collective impact of groups and projects within the Hibiscus & Bays Local Board area.

Our Vision

Nature is healthy and our native species are flourishing. Our communities value nature and are empowered to work together to protect and enhance it. Our mahi is innovative and connected to the vision for thriving nature across the Auckland region.*

Our Mission

Restore Hibiscus & Bays is a community-led initiative that aims to partner with whānau, hapū, iwi and bring together, empower and grow the network of groups, projects, neighbourhoods, individuals, schools, businesses and other organisations working to eradicate pests, restore and protect native habitats and improve water quality across the Hibiscus & Bays Local Board area.

**Including the North-West Wildlink, Pest Free Auckland, Sea Change - Tai Timu Tai Pari & Predator Free 2050.*

Our Ecological Goals - What We Are Aiming For

Predator free

Expand and link predator-free 'safe' areas throughout H&B for our wildlife to thrive beyond the established sanctuaries of Tiritiri Mātangi and Shakespear Regional Park, contributing to the North-West Wildlink habitat corridor.

Habitat connections

Improve the ecological connectivity of native species in streams and between fragmented 'biodiversity hotspots' on land, by enhancing riparian habitats, including īnanga spawning habitat.

Self-sustaining indigenous ecosystems

Control threats to indigenous forest regeneration, such as environmental weeds and pest animals, to enable self-sustaining natural ecosystems.

Healthy waterways

Contribute to the protection of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park – Tīkapa Moana/Te Moana-nui-ā-Toi by educating communities and helping to stabilise stream banks and surrounding land to reduce sediment and other contaminants.

Strategic Focus Areas 2021-23

Te Ao Māori - To Underpin All Strategic Focus Areas Partner with whānau, hapū, iwi and understand and integrate Te Ao Māori into our work.				
Our Communities and Network Educate communities, raise awareness and build the network.	**Productive Relationships** Maintain and expand collaborations and partnerships.	**Ki Uta ki Tai – From the Mountains to the Sea** Facilitate coordinated and connected catchment-scale action.	**Hibiscus & Bays Monitoring** Expand and share what we know.	**Sustainable Restore Hibiscus & Bays** Build resources and team.

In reality, there will be some overlap with these focus areas, but this will help to clarify where our Steering Committee and our Staff team should be focusing their time and energy over the next two years.

Te Ao Maori - To Underpin All Strategic Focus Areas

Partner with whānau, hapū, iwi and understand and integrate Te Ao Māori into our work

Objectives →

- Build long-term relationships with multiple iwi with an interest in Hibiscus & Bays.
- Respect how Iwi would like to influence Restore Hibiscus & Bays and work in partnership to make it happen
- Build the cultural capacity of the network.

Priority Initiatives →

- Organise and participate in an ongoing series of hui with iwi.
- An educational programme for the network covering Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Ao Māori and how it relates to community conservation in Aotearoa, with specialist input from iwi, Te Herenga Waka o Orewa marae, Department of Conservation and Auckland Council and others with appropriate expertise.

Key Success Factors

- Iwi with an interest in Hibiscus & Bays have the opportunity to have a seat at the table and are influencing the Restore Hibiscus & Bays strategy and projects in a way that meets the goals, aspirations and priorities of the iwi.
- Network members have an improved understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Ao Māori and how it relates to community conservation in Aotearoa.
- Network members are integrating Te Ao Māori into their practices, acknowledging the role of Mana Whenua as kaitiaki and partnering with whānau, hapū, iwi where practical.

Educate communities, raise awareness and build the network

Our Communities and Network

Objectives →

- Inspire, encourage and educate more people to actively engage, participate and value healthy nature
- Reach into the school whānau whānui (wider community) and nurture future leaders, especially young people.
- Raise awareness across diverse communities of introduced pests and their impact on our unique biodiversity, in order to encourage backyard action
- Grow and develop capacity of the network, remove barriers and respond to network needs.

Priority Initiatives →

- Continue to refine and deliver the RHB communications and engagement plan, including awareness campaigns
- Run long-term educational workshop programmes to support schools in restoration and pest control
- Help new and established groups and projects by providing training, funding and resources.

Key Success Factors

- More network groups have capacity and capability to achieve their environmental goals.
- More people across multiple generations willing to volunteer to lead a group or project and have what they need to do so.
- More residents and landowners value native species and are able to identify and control pests in their backyards.

Stories from our Network

Manaaki Tai – Care of the Cove

In early 2020, several residents who live near the special Winstones Cove in Torbay contacted Restore Hibiscus & Bays because they were keen to get involved in restoring the native ecology of this coastline. Introduced predators, environmental weeds, erosion, stormwater drains and urbanisation have negatively affected and reduced this pōhutukawa–pūriri broadleaved forest habitat to small fragmented remnants.

In collaboration with the local residents, the Restore Hibiscus & Bays Ecological Restoration Advisor developed a plan to establish two new community-managed predator control lines through the Council-owned land around the cove and along Marama Reserve to the north. The community volunteers in Torbay are now set up, trained and actively running quarterly predator control pulses in the reserve, targeting rats, stoats and possums. All predator control activity follows our best practice guidelines and is recorded on Trap.nz, including bait taken and catches.

Our Ecological Restoration Advisor also developed an environmental weed control plan for the community to implement with appropriate training. For the very first weeding working bee in April 2021, a group of students from the local Marine Education and Recreation Centre (MERC) rowed to Winstones Cove from Long Bay to learn about pest plants and how to restore our endangered coastal broadleaved forests. Large infestations of mile-a-minute vines growing up large pōhutukawa were targeted to promote native regeneration and biodiversity. Other species targeted were agapanthus and arum lily.

The long-term pest plant control plan will be implemented by the community in stages, with native planting to restore the site beginning in July 2021. Eventually, the community hopes to expand the predator and weed control through some of the surrounding private property to create a protective halo for native wildlife, with a particular focus on restoring along the sides of the stream that runs onto the beach.

Stories from our Network

Whangaparāoa College

Whangaparāoa College was looking for expert assistance with their student-led project to restore the wetland area on school grounds. After an initial meeting with representatives from Auckland Council's Sustainable Schools and Environmental Services teams, the Restore Hibiscus & Bays Ecological Restoration Advisor developed an environmental weed control plan for the site that would be appropriate for the students to deliver in part. He was invited to present in February 2021 to all of the Year 7 students in the hall and then carried out educational workshops for nine classes across two days. Over the next several weeks, interested students applied to be part of the school environmental group offering them the opportunity to participate in ongoing hands-on workshops with Kane.

About 27 selected students in the environmental restoration group are now regularly carrying out the work to restore the wetland, receiving support and guidance from our Ecological Restoration Advisor on a monthly basis. By the end of their very first skills workshop, they'd learnt methods of control for moth plant (including collecting and correctly disposing of pods, as well as cut and pasting vines) and other methods, such as ringbarking mature woolly nightshade, privet and brush wattle.

Maintain and expand collaborations and partnerships

Productive Relationships

Objectives →

- Add value to groups and projects within H&B, based on gaps and needs.
- Expand partnerships with established groups and projects within H&B to help deliver holistic, landscape-scale approach to ecological restoration.

Priority Initiatives →

- Work with groups and projects within H&B to identify and address needs and gaps.
- Partner with Hibiscus Coast Forest & Bird on pest plant control and native planting to complement PFHC predator-free goals and work plan.
- Facilitate predator control at the boundaries of established projects.

Key Success Factors

- Excellent, transparent working relationships with established groups and projects.
- An increased number of collaborative projects
- Sharing of expertise and knowledge across projects is enhanced.

Partnership Successes

▲ Fairhaven Walkway

Throughout 2020, Restore Hibiscus & Bays and Forest and Bird Pest Free Hibiscus Coast collaborated on a project to facilitate indigenous forest regeneration in one of the last mature coastal broadleaved forest habitats in the north of Auckland. Restore Hibiscus and Bays worked to upskill residents on Riverhaven Drive on the Whangaparāoa peninsula wanting to undertake pest plant control through the nearby reserve next to the Fairhaven walkway. This was a combined community-led pest animal and pest plant control pilot project to complement the work of Forest & Bird Pest Free HIbiscus Coast, who had already begun engaging the residents in the area to undertake predator control.

Dense patches of wild ginger covered many parts of the understorey of the forest, preventing the natural regeneration processes of many mature native trees such as pūriri, kohekohe, tairere, kōwhai and nikau. The Restore Hibiscus & Bays Ecological Restoration Advisor delivered a series of workshops intended for locals who care about this special place and who wanted to learn how to address the environmental weed issues that threaten the indigenous forest. The community volunteers controlled the majority of the wild ginger along the walkway and the coastal edge. They also learnt skills in controlling jasmine and monkey apple though the reserve.

Approximately 15 local residents were involved in the initial stages of the project - and the group hope to further engage more residents as the project evolves. The next step is for the residents to apply the weed control skills they have learnt through the private bush areas bordering the reserve - with neighbours helping neighbours on each others' properties.

The weed control work has improved the accessibility of the site to better enable the volunteer predator control. The Pest Free Hibiscus Coast team has deployed 24 pest animal tools in total targeting rats, stoats and possums through the project area and trained volunteers living on Riverhaven Drive to look after the predator control line. In addition, they have backed up the line on the reserve by supporting residents to trap rats in their backyards using their pet-safe traps, which are free on the basis that people record their catches. The predator control is aimed at protecting the abundance of native birdlife in the area, including tūī, kererū and riroriro (grey warbler) - and a korimako (bellbird) was recorded there last year, the first confirmed sighting that far down the peninsula from Shakespear. Possum control also protects the mature trees; damage by possums was evident when the Pest Free Hibiscus Coast team set up the line.

Another positive environmental spinoff from this project is that the community's collective concerns were addressed regarding rubbish illegally dumped inside gaps within the nearby concrete dock on the Weiti River. Our Ecological Restoration Advisor shared their concerns that the rubbish might leak into the estuary and discussed the issue with our Auckland Council Community Parks Ranger, who then got the council Community Facilities and Waste Management teams involved. Eventually, they organised for Sea Cleaners to remove the rubbish - all 2,000 litres of it! Finally, the cracks in the dock were sealed to avoid rubbish continuing to be dumped there and there are plans to develop an educational sign.

Restore Hibiscus & Bays and Forest & Bird Hibiscus Coast plan to replicate this collaborative project at other sites across the Hibiscus Coast, including around the Ōrewa Estuary–Te Ara Tahuna, in order to build on community engagement and predator control that is already happening and further enhance habitat restoration on the coast.

Ki Uta ki Tai – From the Mountains to the Sea

Facilitate coordinated and connected catchment-scale action

Objectives →

Catalyse, coordinate and connect communities at catchment-scale to:

- Restore streams
- Eradicate predators
- Control pest plants

Priority Initiatives →

- Facilitate and maintain comprehensive, staged community-led pest plant control, native planting and predator control along open stream margins and in areas of ecological importance, initially throughout x4 catchment areas: Campbells Bay, Taiaotea-Rothesay Bay, Long Bay-Awaruku and Waiwera.
- Deliver education for landowners, residents and businesses on the negative effects for our waterways of pollutants entering our stormwater.
- Expand and maintain the predator control networks throughout the catchments, working outwards from the established halos.

Key Success Factors

- Achieve and maintain a density of predators to very low levels inside the focus catchments.
- The majority of open sections of the streams in focus catchments are restored to healthy self-sustaining habitat.
- Achieve and maintain a low population density of seed-producing pest plants within the focus catchments.
- Sediment is reduced and overall water quality is improved in our streams.

Catchment Connections

Restore Hibiscus & Bays ultimately aims to connect and expand all the work happening within each of the 34 stream catchments within Hibiscus & Bays, including on both public and private land. Focussing initially on four catchment areas, the staff team are engaging very closely with Centennial Park Bush Society, Taiaotea and Rothesay Bay Restoration project, Bushglen Restoration Project, Northcross Intermediate, Friends of Long Bay, Waiwera Property Owners and Residents Association (*WAIPORA*) and other groups to expand pest plant and predator control and native planting along the length of four streams and their tributaries, and eventually throughout the catchments. By early 2021, we had already raised over $20K in donations from communities and businesses to fund native plants and pest plant control, and also secured a significant grant of $100,000 from the Lotteries Environment and Heritage to contribute towards eco-contractors for pest plant control across the four catchments that is too challenging for volunteers to tackle alone. Riparian planting at sites across the catchments will start in July 2021. To get these ambitious projects moving at pace and at scale, we will continue to undertake ongoing fundraising via the Sustainable Business Network's Million Metres platform as well as through grant applications.

Catchment Connections

▲ Clean Streams Campbells Bay

Restore Hibiscus & Bays supports Centennial Park Bush Society with their work at catchment-scale to restore the private land surrounding the park, particularly along the Campbells Bay streams. This has included fundraising for the work via the Sustainable Business Network's Million Metres platform, developing pest plans for private properties along the stream, and providing technical workshops and guidance for volunteers working on the private land. An incredible amount of work is going into this by the local volunteers, who have been leading these private property projects, and Restore HIbiscus & Bays will continue to support them in whichever way is useful.

Catchment Connections

Taiaotea-Rothesay Bay Catchment Custodians

Restore Hibiscus and Bays has formed a partnership with the coordinator of Taiaotea-Rothesay Bay Restoration Project and provided input into a catchment-wide plan that identifies 10 management units (MU) for restoration on the Taiaotea and Rothesay Bay streams. Our Ecological Restoration Advisor provides on the ground technical support and advice around pest plant removal and restoration guidance that is tailored to the specific needs of each of the reserves within the catchments, including at a noted īnanga spawning site that is being planted out and restored to increase the suitable habitat for this taonga species to spawn at. One of the priority MUs identified in the plan is Taiaotea Reserve next to the Scouts Hall on Beach Road in Browns Bay, which runs along the margins of the stream. As of early 2021, this site was infested with a variety of pest plants. In March 2021, our Ecological Restoration Advisor delivered an initial workshop with the Scouts, making significant progress releasing blue morning glory off emerging kahikatea trees. This will be an ongoing activity involving the Taiaotea Scouts and Cubs, as well as environmental weed contractors who can take on the more challenging work.

Catchment Connections

▲ Long Bay-Awaruku Stream and Wetland Warriors

Awaruku is an incredible urban stream catchment retaining a variety of different indigenous terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems natural to this part of Auckland – from its forested upper reaches with its ancient 650 year-old kahikatea to the beautiful wetland that was remediated and revegetated adjacent to Long Bay housing development. Unfortunately, some of the lower reaches of the stream are in a sorry state. Some sections have some large-finned eels (*tuna*), but sadly the stream margins have been overtaken with wild ginger, blue morning glory and montbretia – not a great habitat for the eels. These sites will need urgent and careful restoration for our taonga species to survive and thrive again. Friends of Long Bay has developed a plan, with input from Restore Hibiscus & Bays, to prioritise weed control funding that we have from our Lottery Environment and Heritage grant and our Million Metres partnership. To complement the weed control and native planting, Restore Hibiscus & Bays are also working with Friends of Long Bay to expand their comprehensive predator control lines in the wetland reserves up into the private land along both Awaruku and Vaughan's Streams.

Catchment Connections

▲ Waiwera

Restore Hibiscus and Bays is working with Waiwera Property Owners & Ratepayers Association (WAIPORA) to remove pests, restore and protect native habitats and improve the health of waterways in Waiwera's eastern catchment. The first stage of the project aims to restore the remnant stands of mature coastal broadleaved forest creating a habitat for our native wildlife to thrive. Introduced tree privet makes up large parts of the existing bush canopy and is suppressing native forest regeneration. Initially, Restore Hibiscus & Bays has been supporting WAIPORA to restore the SEA land within Waiwera Scenic Hill Reserve. Our Ecological Restoration Advisor has been training keen members from the local community on how to control tree privet encroaching into the remnant coastal broadleaved forest. Control methods used include 'cut and stump' (for small juveniles), 'ring barking' plus herbicide (for larger and mature trees), as well as the 'drill and fill' method. After being controlled and left in place, large pest trees leave the canopy intact to prevent more environmental weeds establishing and provide valuable habitat for emerging native trees. With the help from members of the community, Restore Hibiscus & Bays has also set up a predator control line through the Waiwera Hill Scenic reserve. This highly valuable, largely intact habitat includes mature miro, kohekohe, pūriri, kahikatea, pōhutukawa, dense clumps of astelia and nodding kōwhai – all of these species are highly palatable to possums and rats. The objective of the predator control is to relieve some of this pressure and help restore and make the habitat suitable and safe for native birds, insects and lizards to re-populate. Our Ecological Restoration Advisor is now working with community volunteers and professional eco-contractors to expand the tree privet control and set up predator control lines across the private Significant Ecological Area (SEA) land in the catchment.

Expand and share what we know

Hibiscus & Bays Monitoring

Objectives →

- Develop and implement an H&B wide ecological monitoring programme that covers birds, predators, water quality and pest plants and that complements and expands existing monitoring projects.
- Further engage the community in the RHB kaupapa through collecting and telling the story of our data.

Priority Initiatives →

- Identify and secure research partners to plan and deliver the monitoring programme.
- Develop and begin to implement a monitoring plan that incorporates citizen science.
- Map monitoring sites and incorporate results into communications strategy, messaging and plan.

Key Success Factors

- Robust baseline and ongoing data that enables RHB to track and share progress over time.
- Robust data analysis telling us what we need to know.
- Community and network members are actively engaged in data collection and are aware of the network's successes.

Sustainable Restore Hibiscus & Bays

Build resources and team

Objectives →

- Foster a cohesive, efficient, financially sustainable membership-based legal entity.
- Secure a diversity of income that enables delivery of the RHB goals.
- Build and grow team capacity and capability to match the work programme.
- Build and maintain excellent and transparent working relationship with the Local Board and other core funders.
- Strengthen connections with other pest free environmental groups and networks across Auckland.

Priority Initiatives →

- Transition process to an independent legal entity.
- Develop funding strategy and expand funding programme, including approaches to business.
- Annual planning to inform funding and resourcing.
- Staff recruitment in line with funding and resource needs.
- Needs-based staff training programme.
- Succession planning for RHB staff team and network projects.
- Participate in best practice sharing with pest-free organisations Auckland-wide.

Key Success Factors

- Sufficient skilled staff to deliver on the work programme.
- Sufficient revenue to fund staff, contractors and other resources to enable the network to act.
- Expenditure to match our income.
- Sharing of expertise and knowledge across the Auckland region is enhanced.

Review

The development of this plan has been an evolution of ideas and relationships. These will continue to grow and change over time and it is therefore intended that this is a living document that can also grow and change to reflect the learnings and experiences along the way. To remain flexible and responsive, Restore Hibiscus & Bays will review this plan every two years.

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