

**Purpose:** To show the Jobs for Nature investment to date in Hawke's Bay and the significance of funding in context of the economic and environmental challenges to the region.



Map sourced from Land Information New Zealand 2023

## Significance of Jobs for Nature (J4N) funding to the Hawke's Bay region during the COVID-19 pandemic

### Economic and employment impacts<sup>1</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic including lockdowns impacted the Hawke's Bay's regional economy, leading to increased unemployment and workforce challenges. The region's resilience, bolstered by its robust primary production, healthcare, and manufacturing sectors, facilitated its recovery.

Infometrics and Business Hawke's Bay made the following predictions regarding the expected economic impacts of the COVID-19 lockdowns on the Hawke's Bay regional economy:

- GDP was expected to reduce by 6.2% from March 2020 to March 2021
- The number of jobs in the region was expected to decrease by 8.3% (about 7,000 jobs) during the same period
- The number of job-seekers increased in 2020 by 58% compared to the previous year. 2,200 more people lost their jobs compared to the previous year, and 67% of work-ready job seekers were Māori and Pacific peoples<sup>2</sup>
- The unemployment rate was forecasted to increase to 8.4% in the first quarter of 2021
- Household incomes across the region were expected to drop by \$380 million from March 2020 to March 2021. There was a significant increase in income relief payments, accommodation supplement support, and special food grants in July 2020<sup>3</sup>
- Job losses were expected across several sectors, including accommodation, food services, retail, and wholesale trade.

### Environmental challenges facing the region

**Climate change** is expected to have a significant impact. The region is projected to experience reduced river flows, increased water demand, higher risk of wildfires, soil erosion, extreme rainfall events, and increased pest control problems. More frequent and intense droughts will influence pasture growth, livestock health, farm productivity, crop yields, and reduced water availability for both irrigation and dry-farmed crops.<sup>4</sup>

Over the past five years, the Hawke's Bay, has experienced several severe weather events; Cyclone Gabrielle (2023), Napier Floods (2020) and the major floods in 2018. The frequency of these events is expected to increase due to climate change, with extreme rainfall events now four times more common.

Cyclone Gabrielle brought heavy rainfall, causing widespread flooding. The region's infrastructure was not designed to handle such a large amount of rain, leading to long-term impacts. 11 lives were lost and hundreds of homes were destroyed. Large areas of agricultural and horticultural land were also devastated. The aftermath saw a significant amount of waste, including flooded household items, ruined infrastructure, and vehicles.<sup>5</sup>

**Soil erosion and sedimentation:** The Hawke's Bay region is considered to have one of the highest levels of coastal risk exposure due to natural disasters, storms, and coastal erosion. About 250,000 hectares of Hawke's Bay hill country is at high risk of erosion, and about 6.8 million tonnes of sediment eventually enters the region's waterways every year, detrimentally impacting water quality and aquatic life.<sup>6</sup>

**Water quality** in the Hawke's Bay region is under pressure due to more frequent and intense rainfall and drought.<sup>7</sup> Lake Tūtira, has faced long-term water quality problems, with poor ecological health, high levels of phosphorus, and frequent toxic algal blooms.<sup>8</sup>

**Biodiversity:** The protection and enhancement of biodiversity is another challenge facing the region. Changes in climate and human activities are threatening habitats and species, leading to a loss of biodiversity.<sup>9</sup>

### How is J4N investment addressing environmental challenges facing the region while creating employment opportunities?

Data as at 30 September 2023

<b>Funding</b>	\$39.7 million across 38 projects
<b>Employment opportunities</b>	895
<b>Hours worked</b>	331,392

The J4N projects in the Hawke's Bay region are focused on:

**Biodiversity protection and improvement:** Protecting freshwater ecosystems through riparian fencing and planting, pest control, and habitat restoration.

**Community engagement and capacity building** within local communities, particularly the Māori community. This includes; transferring local knowledge to younger generations, providing employment opportunities, and partnering with local structures to offer skill-building opportunities.

**Water quality improvement:** Achieved through measures such as erosion control, riparian management, and addressing sediment loss to waterways.

**Sustainable land use and management:** Including initiatives for sustainable land use change, the development of integrated catchment management plans, and the protection of wetland and waterway areas.

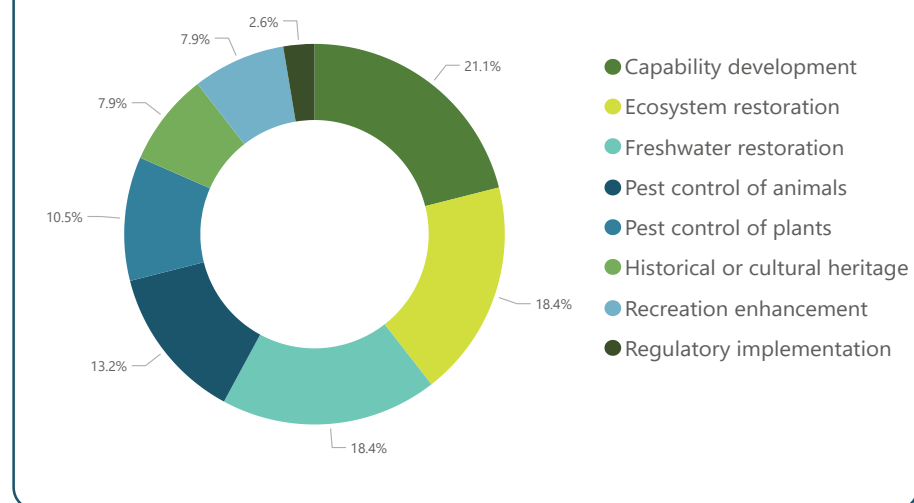
### Overview of labour market participation in the Hawke's Bay region

Labour market	
Working age population <sup>11</sup>	61.2% 111,854 people
Labour force participation rate <sup>12</sup>	66.4% Q2 2023
Employment rate <sup>13</sup>	67.7% (Q2 2023)
Median annual household income <sup>14</sup>	\$132,100
Unemployment rate	3.6% (Q2 2023) NEET 12.5% <sup>15</sup>

Māori <sup>15</sup>	
Population	27.0% (44,931) 2018
Working age	31,800 (2020)
Labour force participation rate <sup>16</sup>	62.2%
Unemployment rate <sup>17</sup>	8.0%

Pasifika as at March 2020 <sup>18</sup>	
Population	5.6% (9,351) (2018)
Working age	4,100 (2020)
Participation	73.6% (2020)
Unemployment rate	Suppressed* (2020)

Percentage distribution of project intent across Hawke's Bay



Source [Q1 Data as at 30 September 2023]

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17. Figure.NZ. (2023). Unemployment rate of Māori people in New Zealand, By region, year ended March 2023, % of the labour force.
18. Figure NZ (2018) Ethnic groups of people residing in the Hawke's Bay Region, New Zealand, 2018 Census, number of people.

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