

Purpose: To show the Jobs for Nature investment to date in Northland and the significance of funding given the economic and environmental challenges to the region



¹Map sourced from Land Information New Zealand 2023

Significance of Jobs for Nature (J4N) funding to the Northland region during the pandemic

J4N-supported projects helped build skills, confidence and opportunities for residents post-COVID-19 by creating nature-based employment opportunities and an economic stimulus.

A successful collaboration between the community, local government, and central government agencies, J4N projects created environmental improvements and expanded access to nature for communities across the region.²

Economic impacts of COVID-19 on Northland³

- Northland Regional Council projected an 8% fall in GDP for the year ended March 2021, with recovery to pre-COVID-19 levels not expected until 2024
- Employment was predicted to reduce by 10% by 2022, affecting around 9,000 people (twice the impact experienced as a result of the global financial crisis)
- Unemployment was projected to more than double to 12,000 people by 2021/2022
- Household incomes were expected to reduce by 10% from over \$89,000 in 2019 to under \$80,000 in 2021/2022
- Māori job losses between 2020 and 2022 were estimated to be at 3%
- Infometrics noted that the region had a high concentration of construction employment, which was set to see a considerable fall in building activity⁴
- The concentration of the economy on the Marsden Point Refinery and tourism for the Far North presented opportunities for Northland.

Environmental challenges facing the Northland region

Drought risk: Northland is predicted to become drier, increasing the risk of drought⁵

Climate change impacts: Northland's water, land, ecosystems, people and economy are increasingly disrupted by climate change. About 80% of Northland's emissions come from agriculture and manufacturing, with the rest from transport, services, and households.⁶ [Northland Regional Council]

Water quality issues: E. coli contamination, sediment, phosphorus, and low levels of macroinvertebrates are pressing issues for Northland's water quality.⁷

Sedimentation is the main environmental issue spanning the Auckland and Northland regions, with an estimated 700,000 tonnes of sediment deposited into the harbour each year. Accelerated by land clearing for agriculture, forestry, and urban development, it negatively impacts coastal environments.⁸

The Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme is a J4N decade-long investment which spans both regions. This \$300 million investment aims to halve sediment loss from land to sea.

Sector insights⁹

Responding to climate change and green skills development: The Te Purunga ki Te Raki Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) see employment opportunities in the 'green skills' sector and are keen to see movement in the implementation of a Renewable Energy Zone in the rohe.

Supporting local people into good jobs can be realised with hapori and industry working together. The RSLG's are collaborating with various stakeholders, including Te Hiku Iwi Development Trust, Whangārei District Council, and workforce development councils, to better understand the green skills required in the region.

Infrastructure resilience planning: Planners, surveyors, and architects have emphasized the need to develop skills and expertise in infrastructure resilience, particularly in management and diversion of stormwater. About 70 Northland towns and localities are projected to be significantly affected by coastal flooding, erosion, and permanent inundation through sea level rise over the next 100 years and beyond.

How is J4N investment addressing environmental challenges facing Northland while creating employment opportunities?¹⁰

Approved funding	\$58.7 million across 41 projects
Employment opportunities	1,087
Hours worked	646,680

J4N projects have contributed to the region’s ecological restoration, job creation and skill development, providing both environmental and social benefits, for example:

- 24 biodiversity and ecosystem restoration projects focusing on plant and animal pest control
- Two projects aim to safeguard kauri trees across the Bay of Islands, including Russell, Puketi, Whangaroa, Omahuta, Rakaumangamanga, and Opuia Forests. Four of which are dedicated to pest control and invasive species management
- At least ten water quality improvement and catchment management projects involving: Restoration of dunes, wetlands, rivers, and key sites of significance: A number of projects target the restoration of these areas, contributing to the overall ecological health of the region
- The Northland Inanga Spawning Habitat Restoration Project has received \$1 million in funding from J4N, supporting freshwater quality by eradicating pests, planting to enrich and protect waterways and protecting native freshwater species
- In addition to environmental outcomes many projects help to build skills beyond the investment especially in remote areas like Mitimiti, Panguru and Te Hapua.

What does labour market participation look like for Northland and why is this significant?

A significant aspect of the labour market in Northland is the high unemployment rate among the Māori population. The labour market in Northland as of June 2023, still has a higher unemployment rate (4.5%) compared to the national average (3.4%) with a relatively lower labour force participation rate. The unemployment rate among the Māori population in Northland remains high, although it has decreased compared to previous years. J4N helps to create employment opportunities to address this, including investment in skills and training for long term employment prospects.

Employment opportunities created through J4N	
FTE plan – Projects lifetime	591
FTE actual	415
Hours worked	646,680
Employment starts	1087

Current labour market participation rates for Northland

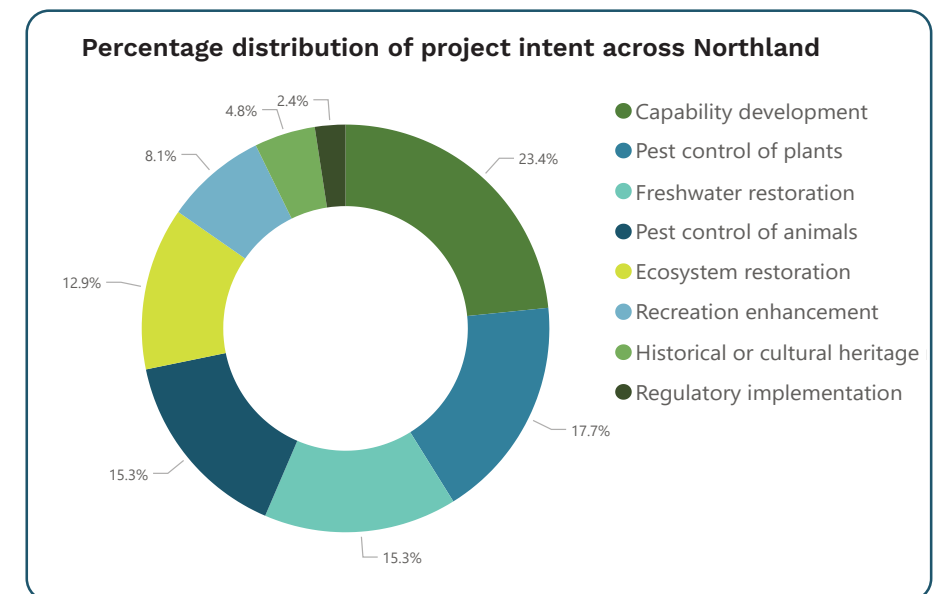
Labour market	
Employment rate	60.8% with an estimated average of 101,100 employed (September 2023)
Median annual household income	\$69,600 (2018) ¹³
Unemployment rate	4.5% in (2023) NEET rate: 14.5% (2022) ¹⁴

Māori ¹⁵	
Population	36.0% (64,458) (2018)
Employment rate	60.7% with 33,200 people employed (September 2023)
Participation	63.1% (2023)
Unemployment rate	10.3% (September 2023)

[Source Census 2018 and HLFS]

Pasifika	
Population	4.2% (7,542) (2018) ¹⁶
Working age	4,400 (2020) ¹⁷
Participation	58.8% (2023) ¹⁸
Unemployment rate	20.2% (2023) ¹⁹

Source [Q1 Data November 2023]



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