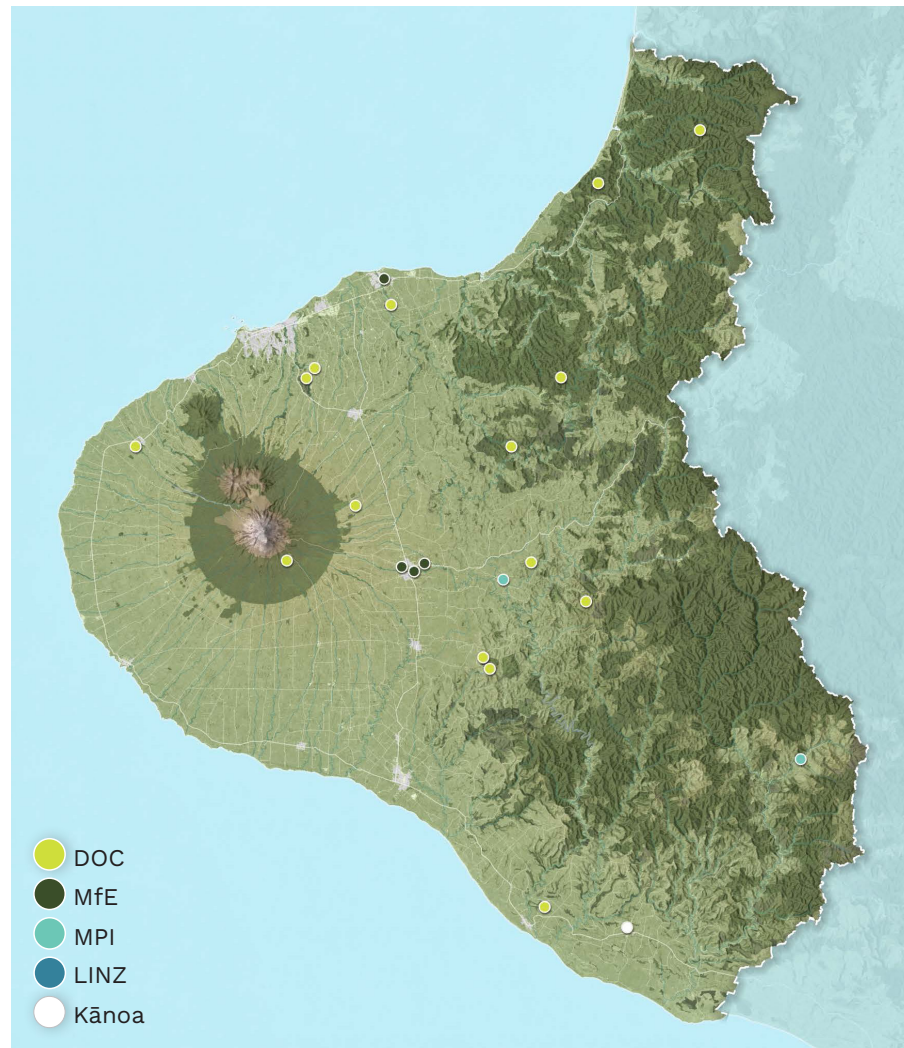


Purpose: To show the Jobs for Nature investment to date in the Taranaki region and the significance of funding in context of the economic and environmental challenges to the region.



Map sourced from Land Information New Zealand 2023

Significance of Jobs for Nature (J4N) funding to the Taranaki region during the COVID-19 pandemic

Economic and employment impacts¹: The Taranaki regional economy, heavily reliant on the energy sector, experienced a significant economic shock due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The region was among the hardest hit in New Zealand during the first year of the pandemic.²

More than 5,500 jobs were expected to be lost by March 2021, over 9% of the workforce. The unemployment rate was projected to rise to 10.1% from its pre-pandemic rate of 5.3%. The bulk of job losses were forecasted to be in accommodation and food services, retail and wholesale trade, transport, postal and warehousing, and construction. Lost earnings were estimated to be around \$312 million in the year to March 2021.

Māori households were expected to be hard hit, with the Māori unemployment rate in Taranaki usually more than double the overall rate. This gap was expected to remain wide as Māori are highly exposed to industries that experienced large job losses.

Environmental challenges facing the region

Climate change³: The region is already experiencing the effects of climate change, with potential for significant impacts in the future. These include bigger storms, more frequent flooding, rising temperatures, and sea-level rise. Rising sea levels have affected coastal areas and are expected to have increasing implications for coastal infrastructure and development.

Biodiversity loss⁴: Taranaki's forests, wetlands, and native coastal plants have suffered greatly, mostly due to farming, causing a drop in biodiversity. This has put more native species at risk, including three of the region's 11 native lizard species. Pest animals, especially possums, are a big problem for native species, notably the endangered dactylanthus/pua o te reinga, as they damage these plants directly.⁵

Water quality: Freshwater biodiversity is being affected by increasing land use and pollution from farming and other runoff. Water quality varies across the Taranaki region, with the poorest quality found in lowland urban catchments. The use and quality of water is a major resource management issue in the region, with agriculture being a significant user.⁶

Land use and soil erosion: Erosion is a significant challenge, particularly in the eastern hill country. Soil conservation works have reduced sediment loads, but ongoing action is necessary. Soil health monitoring has shown a general decline in soil health due to soil compaction, particularly from heavy machinery and high animal stocking rates.⁷

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

Data as at 30 September 2023

Funding	\$21.4 million across 21 projects
Employment opportunities	468
Hours worked	281,567

The J4N projects in the Taranaki region are delivering environmental, social, and cultural benefits. Collectively, these benefits include:

Improved biodiversity

Projects like Ngāti Tawhirikura Hapū and Rotokare Sanctuary Halo are working on restoring ecosystems. This includes improving the quality of freshwater and bringing back habitats for important species. Other projects like Te Kohanga Ahuru, Kiwi Monitoring and Habitat Protection, and ETET DOC200 Private Land Trap Replacement are focused on controlling pests. This helps protect native species and promotes biodiversity.

The Parininihi Project is working to bring back species like the kōkako which has disappeared from the area. This helps restore the region's natural wildlife. The Nga Rauru Kiihahi Māori land blocks project is working on fencing and planting along waterways. This helps improve water quality and supports freshwater ecosystems.

Social and cultural benefits

The Halo project, is helping local communities develop skills and knowledge in conservation and land management. They're also protecting culturally significant species like the kiwi. Some projects, such as Ngāti Tawhirikura Hapū, are restoring historical and cultural sites.

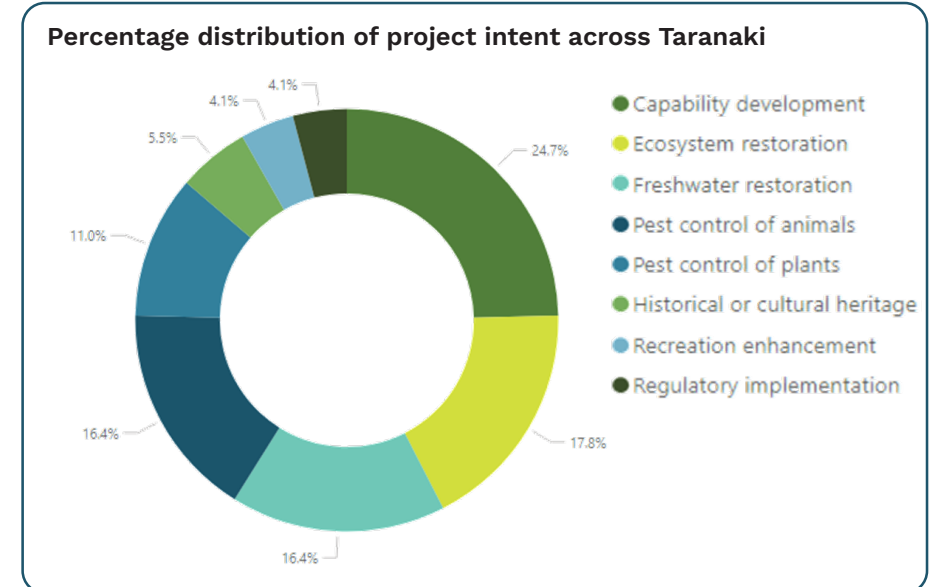
The projects are also increasing access to recreational activities. Halo creates more recreational opportunities, allowing the community to connect with nature and enjoy outdoor activities.

Overview of labour market participation in the Taranaki region

Labour market	
Working age population	299,800 (2021) (includes Manawatū/Whanganui)
Labour force participation rate	With an estimated average of 70,300 employed (2023)
Employment rate	68.0%
Median annual household income ⁸	\$109,000 (2023)
Unemployment rate ⁹	2.7 % NEET: 17.0% (2023) ¹⁰

Māori	
Population ¹¹	20.2% (23,298) 2018
Working age ¹²	62.0% (2018)
Participation	68.0% with an estimated 39,000 people employed (2023 includes Manawatū-Whanganui)
Unemployment rate ¹³	8.7% (2023 includes Manawatū-Whanganui)

Pasifika	
Population ¹⁴	2.2% (2,520) 2018
Working age	1,200 (2020)
Participation	80.7% (2020)
Unemployment rate ¹⁵	1.2%



Source [Q1 Data as at 30 September 2023]

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