

Purpose: To show the Jobs for Nature investment to date in the Wellington region and the significance of funding given 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 Wellington region during the COVID-19 pandemic

Economic and employment impacts: The Wellington region was expected to handle the economic impacts of COVID-19 lockdowns better than most due to the public sector and major professional services that were able to continue operating. Professional services, public administration, scientific, health care and social assistance, and education and training make up 43% on the region’s jobs.¹ However, the region still had a large hospitality industry that would be particularly vulnerable during the Level 3 and 4 restrictions.²

The region’s employment was predicted to drop by 5.8% in 2021, which was less than the national average drop of 6.7%.³ Upper Hutt, Kāpiti Coast, and parts of the Wairarapa had a higher dependency on tourism and hospitality therefore the unemployment was predicted to be higher in these parts of the region. The most affected groups were expected to be Māori and Pasifika communities, and young people. A high proportion of Māori in the Wellington region were working in more economically vulnerable occupations, including construction and manufacturing.⁴ The number of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) was expected to increase, with Māori job losses from 2020 to 2022 predicted to be around 4%.

Environmental challenges facing the region

Climate change: The Wellington region is especially vulnerable to any rise in sea level due to its small tidal range, which could cause loss and damage to coastal infrastructure and roads.⁵ The region will experience a substantial increase in hot days, with an increased risk of drought in the Wairarapa.⁶

Biodiversity loss: With human settlement, the region only has 5% of its original forest remaining. Native animal and plants are extremely vulnerable due to the destruction of ecosystems, leaving the remaining forests isolated.⁷ Weeds and pests pose a threat to the vulnerable native plants and animals.

Freshwater: Many streams in Wellington are enclosed in pipes to make room for infrastructure above. This loss, and the damage or blocking of other streams causes a risk of extinction for the native fish. Introduced fish can cause issues with water quality and also put native species at risk.⁸

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

Data as at 30 September 2023

Funding	\$29.4 million across 18 projects
Employment opportunities	148
Hours worked	230,213

The J4N projects in the region are collectively delivering a wide range of environmental and social benefits these include capacity building, ecosystem restoration and pest control.

Improved skills and capability of the environmental workforce

Eleven of the projects are focused on capability development.

Many of these are also focused on freshwater restoration, including Waikanae Waterways Restoration which is the largest funded project in the region, aimed at restoring the river catchment’s health. For example, the NWR Tupoki Takarangi Trust Whenua Restoration project aims to provide employment opportunities for whānau and restore the native biodiversity and habitat on specific areas of their whenua.

The DOC/MSD - Conservation Skills & Employment Pilot project is a nine-week training programme that enables job seekers to obtain work experience, skills, fitness, and motivation for work readiness while doing conservation work.

Improved biodiversity

The projects aim to restore and enhance the region's ecosystems, with a particular focus on freshwater and coastal systems. This includes efforts to control pests (both plants and animals), restore native biodiversity, and improve the health of waterways. For example, the Hem of Remutaka Coastal Wetland Restoration project focuses on restoring threatened coastal and wetland systems.

Cultural benefits

Several projects also aim to restore and enhance the region's cultural heritage. For instance, the Ngā Pari e Rua project delivers landscape-scale restoration to multiple significant sites around the Porirua basin and provides cultural awareness training to the public.

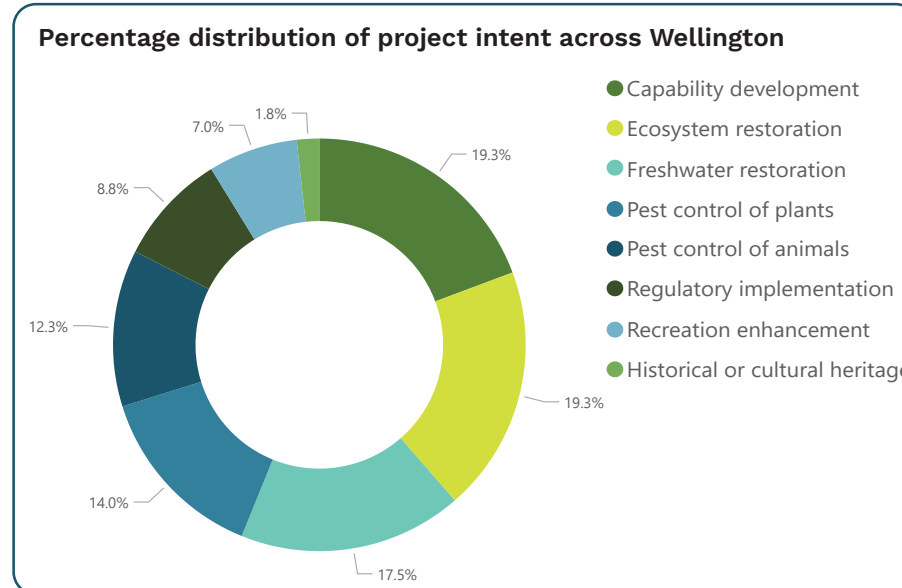
The Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust project aims to build the capacity and capability of its iwi members to measure, monitor, and evaluate the quality of freshwater bodies across the Rangitāne rohe, and ensure that all it does is underpinned by mātauranga-a-Rangitāne.

Overview of labour market participation in the Wellington region

Labour market	
Working age population ⁹	453,300 (2023)
Labour force participation rate	76.0% with an estimated average of 324,379 employed (2023) ¹⁰
Employment rate	73.8% ¹¹ (2023)
Median annual household income	\$141,300 ¹² (2023)
Unemployment rate	2.9% (2023) ¹³ NEET rate 8.2% (2023) ¹⁴

Māori	
Population ¹⁵	14.4% (72,252)
Working age	45,300 (2020)
Participation	Estimated average of 44,900 employed
Employment rate	73.8% (2023) ¹⁶
Unemployment rate	4.1% (2023) ¹⁷

Pasifika	
Population	8.6%
Working age	28,100 (2019)
Participation	Estimated average of 21,200 people employed
Employment rate	71.0% ¹⁸
Unemployment rate	4.7% (2023) ¹⁹



Source [Q1 Data as at 30 September 2023]

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