



Jobs for Nature (J4N)

Place-Based Case Study #1 Auckland Region

This report presents a snapshot of the Allen + Clarke evaluation team's visit to the Auckland region to undertake place-based case studies. We summarise what we heard, who we saw, what is going well and what are some of the challenges.

Auckland's ecosystem is diverse, with 36 terrestrial and wetland ecosystems throughout the region. The region has a mix of rural and urban J4N projects and two of the six projects included in the case study were offshore islands.

Meremoana Potiki and Jessica Kereama undertook the fieldwork in May 2023, selecting a range of projects throughout the region that reflected the diversity of terrain, people and place. We engaged with six J4N projects from the Auckland region: Whangai Trust, Te Whakaoranga o te Puhinui me te Manukau, The Sustainable Business Network, the Fenwick Reserve Ecological Restoration Project Matuku Marine Reserve, Tiakina Kauri (*Auckland Council*), and an iwi organisation. These projects were delivered by iwi, local government, and NGOs who are the drivers doing the mahi at a local and regional level.

Meremoana and Jessica travelled to Auckland to meet J4N project managers, and then went onsite to some of the locations in which the projects are being delivered to gain an understanding of what is happening 'on the ground'.

This case study report provides a narrative summary of the Auckland place-based case study against the key evaluation criteria. It then profiles three of the funded projects we visited to describe some of the J4N work that has been completed. For providers that wanted to remain anonymous we have captured their feedback in the evaluation summary.



Auckland Region: Summary Against Evaluation Criteria

Relevance

The Jobs for Nature programme policy goals were clear and well understood by the project managers, iwi organisation and NGO leaders that were interviewed in the Auckland region. All projects that were selected in the case study were able to demonstrate their project alignment to J4N policy and objectives. Funding recipients consistently described the relevance of their initiative to the overall goals of the J4N programme, and in the case of one iwi, to the aspirations as expressed in their Treaty Settlement.

The objectives and scope of J4N projects in the Auckland region were adjusted to remain relevant to changing circumstances. An example of this was renegotiating employment numbers when hiring people became a challenge, particularly as the expected increase in unemployment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic did not eventuate.

However, the way the implementation of the J4N was coordinated and managed within the Auckland region was not clear to personnel from the projects we interviewed. In particular, the decision making process regarding which projects were funded and why was opaque to J4N funding recipients.

Effectiveness

Environmental Outcomes

The J4N programme in Auckland is achieving tangible results in environmental restoration. The large injection of funding enabled organisations that were already active in undertaking environmental protection work to accelerate activities such as the eradication of moth weed, find solutions to try save the iconic species of the Kauri, and to undertake a 'source to sea' waterway restoration project.

J4N has created benefits for healthy waterways through Auckland City, biodiversity through weed pest management, and cultural values through working with iwi directly on projects such as Puhinui, and with Tiakina Kauri and Te Kowarau a Maki. Freshwater and biodiversity projects have contributed to improved environmental wellbeing. Taiao outcomes have been mapped by some projects to track outcomes, and provide evidence of tangible results.

The landscape scale approach to the restoration of one waterway was reported to enable Auckland city dwellers to reconnect to the environment, with an awareness of the waterways as the stream travelled through the metro city. The J4N project leader stated, *"People need to reconnect to nature, so that they care about what happens to our planet. They need to understand there is something they can do about it."*

Employment Outcomes

New employment initiatives have been created through the J4N programme in Auckland. One of the funding applicants we spoke to reported that they had successfully employed 48 staff members and transitioned 22 people into full time employment. The employment included project management, project leadership/ supervision and co-ordinator roles. Another J4N project employed a workers from a nature-based tourism business that had closed due to the COVID-19 lockdown. The arrangement allowed the employees to develop new skills and capabilities and is now providing work opportunities for the tourism business employees in off-peak season.

J4N projects are employing populations who have historically experienced disadvantage. For example, Te Whangai Trust aimed to address employment disparities by providing employment opportunities to 'anyone who knocked on the door'. Employing and training Māori rangatahi was a focus of the Puhinui project. A trained conservation force was developed through the Tiakina Kauri project. The Sustainable Business Network supported projects through its network nationally, those contracts enabled conservation work in rural areas throughout New Zealand.

Less tangible results occur when iwi providers received inadequate training, support and supervision to deliver activities such as weed and pest control programmes, particularly in isolated areas such as offshore islands. For these projects, difficulty accessing training (*such as GrowSafe*) and other relevant courses, impacted on service delivery.

Synergies and Partnerships

The evaluation did not find evidence of synergies between projects, with the projects included in the case study typically operating in a self-contained way. There was some discussion of potential duplication of effort, for example duplication of nursery development across Auckland. It was identified that there is a lack of co-ordination regionally, particularly with the Auckland Regional Council no longer operating as a separate entity. The regional co-ordination and technical expertise of the former council was described as sorely missed.

J4N has helped contribute towards restoring iwi/Crown relationships by enabling funding and investment to the iwi. Local iwi across Auckland were reported to be busy, with many agencies and projects involved in consultation work with them. The J4N Programme delivery can form effective partnerships with iwi when resources are set aside to enable the work, engagement or co-design and implementation of projects. The Auckland region case study identified examples where the J4N Programme consistently contributed to building partnerships between central/local government, iwi/ Māori and communities; Tiakina Kauri, and Puhinui.

These J4N projects enabled the local council to collaborate with iwi and hapū, in some cases where there had been no existing relationship, to undertake activities such as address the rāhui and the care of Kauri.





Additionality

The J4N Programme has created additional benefits beyond 'business as usual' for all six projects included in the case studies. For example, Te Whangai Trust has been able to train and provide employment to communities that has made a difference to income, and the investment in training has created future employment prospects for kaimahi. For one of the iwi organisations, whānau members have been able to reconnect to the island, which had been alienated from them. Other iwi have had J4N projects invest in their advice and have participated in co-design of activities which helped resolve tikanga and kawa in regard to a rāhui to protect Kauri in the Waitākere Regional Park. The Sustainable Business Trust has been able to invest in a pest eradication programme that employs local community members, advancing pest management strategies that had relied on volunteers.

J4N as a programme added value beyond the individual funds through developing regional capacity and capability for environmental restoration activities. It has enabled the creation of new resources that will have benefit beyond the life of the programme, such as tikanga to guide forest visits, new mapping tools, and new methods of weed management that adds value to the way ecosystems are restored.

It has also added value by precipitating the development of new workforce models, such as tourism-conservation workforce sharing. The J4N funding enabled a nature tourism business workforce to pivot between tourism and environmental work (*track repairs*), enabling an effective response to tourism slowdown and unforeseen weather events.

Coherence

The J4N project selection approach reflected the regional and national needs for employment and restoration of ecosystems without replicating other job creation or employment support measures for all six of the projects sampled in the Auckland case study.

There is evidence of alignment with national and regional priorities and strategies. Weed management regimes aligned with national strategies for species such as the moth plant. The Sustainable Business Network invested in pest management programmes that contribute to the DOC 2050 Predator Free Vision. The Tiakina Kauri project is implementing the national plan for Kauri management in collaboration with iwi, councils and DOC. The project is endeavouring to manage Kauri forests in coherence with iwi priorities, ensuring the guidelines for forest visits have iwi values at the heart of the protocols, reflecting tikanga and kawa. However, there was no J4N investment in the development of policy capacity to respond to issues associated with the RMA, NPSFM and environmental policy and regulations in the case studies sampled.

The job creation aspect of the J4N Programme aligns with and builds on other job creation and employment support measures. Within the six case studies there were no reported displacement or duplication of other training support programmes. However, there was a criticism of the number of plant nurseries created for iwi to implement as part of the 'shovel ready infrastructure' projects, which clashed with a J4N project that already ran a successful plant nursery.

Sustainability

The majority of J4N projects in this case study (*four out of six*) had not attracted additional funding or resourcing beyond the J4N programme funding. These organisation had been proactive in seeking support from philanthropic trusts, with no additional funding secured as yet. The project personnel spoken to advocated for the continuation of national investment in the environment, noting that gains made in weed and pest management could go backwards if additional funding was not available.

The employment opportunities provided by J4N were described as 'partially sustainable'. The Auckland case study included projects such as Te Whangai Trust, in which people employed temporarily through J4N have transitioned to permanent employment. This included people commencing project management careers, and uptake of contracting opportunities.

Successes and Challenges

All J4N projects in the Auckland case study described wellbeing outcomes, such as enhanced connection to places and purpose. This is particularly prominent in projects on iwi lands which focus on reconnecting to places where people had once lived before displacement through colonisation.

All projects spoke to having a sense of pride about what they have achieved, and the importance of the work they had taken on, from supporting the revitalisation of native forest, through to reconnecting people back to nature in Auckland.

However, there was a desire for more connection and coordination of J4N projects within Auckland. The J4N projects we interviewed largely operated in isolation, without regional jobs for nature project co-ordination. The Sustainable Business Network were the exception, as they operated nationally to support conservation work through their partnerships with conservation groups.

Administrative reporting was described as difficult, and 'ever changing'. The need for consistency around data gathering was identified.

Funding decision making processes remained a mystery to interviewees and were described as lacking transparency. Overall, the amount of funding per person was seen as inadequate by some J4N recipients. This was particularly the case in remote areas, such as offshore islands. In these areas, project personnel suggested that there was a need to calculate costs differently to reflect challenges such as infrequent transport, and higher food and accommodation costs for kaimahi. The additional food costs were borne by the kaimahi and the transport was borne by the organisation.

There was also limited capacity for iwi engagement in J4N projects, with iwi throughout the region described as in 'consultation overload'.



The Fenwick Reserve Ecological Restoration Project – Matuku Marine Reserve

Auckland Region Place-Based Case Study

The genesis of this J4N project began when the project coordinator, Tony, discovered moth weed during the process of cutting a walking track in the Matuku Marine Reserve area of Waiheke Island. The area has high ecological value, as a catchment of Mahoe, Karaka, Kauri, Puriri, Taraire, Kohekohe, Tawa, Kanuka, with accompanying birdlife such as the Kererū. Tony describes moth weed as having formidable adaption to the environment and a killer of native bush.

The Fenwick Reserve Ecological Restoration Project was founded in October 2021. On a regional and national scale for moth weed, this is one of the largest scales of funding. The coordinator stated that the project had undertaken approximately double the amount of pest weed eradication that they had originally anticipated.

There is a team of four people undertaking weed management, and an office-based administrator who helps with reporting. *"The work is hard, we put people through a course. Health and safety are paramount, and it helps if you love the outdoors."*

The Fenwick Reserve Ecological Restoration Project pays above the allocated J4N rates. Tony noted that *"the funding is tight, and you must make sure people have enough to live from, and employment is competitive"*. He pays a minimum of \$30 an hour, which attracts mainly overseas young people who want to visit New Zealand and Waiheke Island.

Tony took the J4N evaluation team out along the tracks he had cut. He drove up to the highest cliff tops to illustrate the amount of weeds removed from the native forest.

The project coordinator noted that the local councils had very limited money to undertake pest weed management, and that the council is very supportive of the work. The organisation works with the council to deliver environmental education programmes on the island. The project also works collaboratively with DOC, which was about to undertake a monitoring visit to check progress.



Tony and his equipment to tackle his nemesis, moth weed.



Tony identified that it is 'mission critical' to get on top of this weed. This project has seen 18 months of hard work, targeting key areas to get control of moth weed. This has illustrated that it can be controlled; but it is about doing it at the right time, and in the right sequence.

Tony emphasised that it is critical to work with the seasons: *"in winter you can't spray, so those might be days of cutting and clearing"*.

Tony identifies that the weed forms pods with up to a thousand seeds in each pod, and which can distribute seeds up to 30 kilometres. Each vine could have up to 40 pods. It is vital to remove the pod before it ripens. Tony stated *"The real time to hammer the weed is when it is flowering. You hit it hard in November through to January. We cut it and pull them out before they form pods."*

Destroying the weed before it gets out of control is key to protecting Matuku Marine native bush. *"You have to be doggedly determined."* Sustainability of weed management is a challenge. At the time of the case study visit in May 2023, the project had completed weed eradication on one side of the Matuku Basin, but hoped to clear the whole hillside of the weed. *"There are no obvious pots of funding sitting around to help us clear the land when the J4N funding runs out"*.



Tiakina Kauri

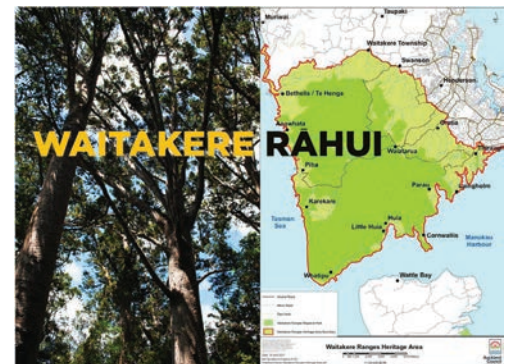
Auckland Region Place-Based Case Study

The evaluation team met with Stuart Leighton in May 2023. Stu has been a Ranger at Auckland Council in Te Wao Nui a Tiriwā (Waitākere Ranges) for over 25 years.

To protect healthy kauri the local iwi, Te Kawerau a-Maki, placed a rāhui in 2018 on a number of forested areas and walking tracks around the Auckland region. Tensions escalated between the communities that wanted to use the tracks, and the people who wanted to save the kauri. In response, Te Kawerau a-Maki and Auckland Council came together to co-lead the fight to protect kauri in the Wao Nui a Tiriwā. Tiakina Kauri is a partnership between mana whenua, local councils, and Biosecurity New Zealand. The project involves innovatively finding a solution to support iwi values, protect the biosecurity of the ngahere and support the community to use the walking tracks.

The J4N programme enabled the Auckland Council to invest in the iwi-led development of tikanga around managing the entry into the domain of Te Wao nui a Tane, in a way that provides for the restoration of the mauri of the kauri. Stu described the elements of washing, or purification before entering into the forest as a synergy of iwi-led values, guiding the correct protocols of entry into some of the walkways.

The programme has also provided Auckland Council with the resources to invest in developing the capacity to maintain tracks. The funding enabled the project to support a nature tourism business that experienced a downturn due to COVID-19 border closures. The nature tourism operator was able to earn income and keep their business viable in off seasons by undertaking needed work on recreational tracks they were familiar with.



<https://www.facebook.com/thekauriproject/photos/te-kawerau-a-maki-have-just-announced-that-the-r%C4%81hui-ceremony-to-close-the-waita/1498848013524238/>

Te Rāhui

Te Kawerau a-Maki led the rāhui over Te Wao Nui ā Tiriwā to heal the mauri of the ngahere and to help protect kauri. They did this to save the forest and their “rakau rangatira the kauri for future generations.” This was expressed as kaitiakitanga and manaakitanga in action.

The J4N project supported collaboration and partnership between iwi and council, ensuring iwi values are the cornerstones of the Tiakina Kauri plan. The management plan covers the North Island and aligns with the National Plan for managing the biosecurity of Kauri Forest Walkways.



Awa Rangers – Puhinui Project.

Te Whakaoranga o te Puhinui me te Manukau

Auckland Region Place-Based Case Study

Te Puhinui stream spans from the peak of Tōtara Park through the residential area of Te Wirihana, into the commercial area of Manukau and out to the Manukau Harbour (Te Manukanuka o Hoturoa).

Te Whakaoranga o te Puhinui – Te Puhinui Regeneration Strategy aims to support the intergenerational regeneration of the wellbeing of the Puhinui catchment and its people.

The project uses a living system and whakapapa-centred wellbeing design that integrates Western ecological and regenerative development concepts with indigenous tikanga, frameworks and narratives. It sets out core values, a clear purpose and vision, principles, responsibilities and obligations, and identifies strategic initiatives, design guidelines and a programme of works for future projects.

The evaluation team met with Piet Tuinder of Sustainable Business Network and Matt McClymont, Project Manager for the Puhinui Regeneration Project. Matt welcomed us with the following mihi and karakia that iwi had provided for the strategy to guide the work undertaken. The karakia marks the inland and tidal places, maunga and land marks important to iwi when navigating the landscape.

*“Papaki kau ana ngā tai o Te Mānukanuka o Hoturoa,
Paakia ki uta, pākia ki tai,
Teretere haere ana ngā wai māiri o te Puhinui,
Te awa koiora me te awa tāuru whakapiki ora,
Hoki atu rā ki ngā Matukurua, ko Matukutūreia rāua
ko Matukutūruru,
Ko ngā tūpuna maunga tawhito, tū te ao, tū te pō,
Aro atu te manawa ki a Manukau tāngata rau,
Arā, te pae haumako me te whenua makuru o Te Waiohū,
Huri taiahio ko ngā uri tākereke o Huakaiwaka,
Ngā raukura matahiapo āna,
Tukua mai kia piri, tukua mai kia tata,
Tukua mai ki Puhinui,
Kia whakaoratia tōna tapu, toona mauri me tōna mana,
Kia eke Panuku, kia eke Tangaroa,
Haumi-ē, Hui-ē, Taaiki ē!”*

Mathew and Piet talked about iwi values being at the centre of what they are trying to achieve the restoration of the mauri of the waterways that run through the city, and the wellbeing of the people who whakapapa to that waterway. They acknowledged Te Waiohū (Te Ākitai o Waiohū, Ngāti te Ata and Ngāti Tamaoho) role as kaitiaki (guardians) and their history, significant places and aspirations for the future. They work with mana whenua and the rangatahi focused Te Pu-a-Nga Maara, Auckland Council and other local partners and businesses plus significant funders including DOC, Milford Foundation and Z Energy. The broader strategy is based on a collaborative partnership between Māori authorities, Eke Panuku and Healthy Waters from Auckland Council, a range of government agencies, community organisations and the culturally rich, unique and diverse communities of Te Puhinui.



The Puhinui Stream lower in the catchment which has been channelised.



Concept illustration of what Puhinui Stream could look like. Credit Resilio Studio – <https://sustainable.org.nz/projects/puhinui-regeneration-project/>



Puhinui Regeneration Strategy Concept illustration – https://global-cities-climate-action-auckland.virtual-engage.com/content/documents/Additional%20Asset%206.2%20-%20%20Puhinui%20Regeneration%20Strategy_IFLA.pdf

The Puhinui Stream Regeneration Project has been established over the last two years to create nature based careers for local rangatahi to support the regeneration of this urban catchment. It aims to support the stream to become a flourishing living system that integrates the environment, a thriving local economy, its communities and culture, from maunga to moana. A clean, healthy, flowing Puhinui Stream will realize its potential to link neighbourhoods and provide high-quality open space and resilient green infrastructure for all to enjoy.

These aims respond directly to the unique character of Te Puhinui, its inherent challenges and opportunities, alongside current issues related to population growth, urban development, ecological degradation, climate adaptation, social deprivation and building capacity and capability.

The Puhinui Regeneration Strategy is ratified through Te Puhinui Regeneration Charter. This is potential world first agreement that acknowledges the collaboration and mutual respect between all signatories, including indigenous leaders (Te Waiohū), local communities, council and the government towards the regeneration of Te Puhinui.

“Nature has been under-invested in for a long time, there are a number of environmental challenges in addition to climate change, we’re trying to work on the system in regard to appropriate investment and national level partnerships.”

Jobs for Nature funding enabled a landscape approach to restoration of the stream over the biggest city in New Zealand, and enabled rangatahi to enter into paid work opportunities.



Jobs for Nature (J4N)

Place-Based Case Study #2 Manawatū-Whanganui Region

This report presents a snapshot of the Allen + Clarke evaluation team's visit to the Manawatū-Whanganui region to undertake place-based case studies. We summarise what we heard, who we saw, what is going well and what some of the challenges are.

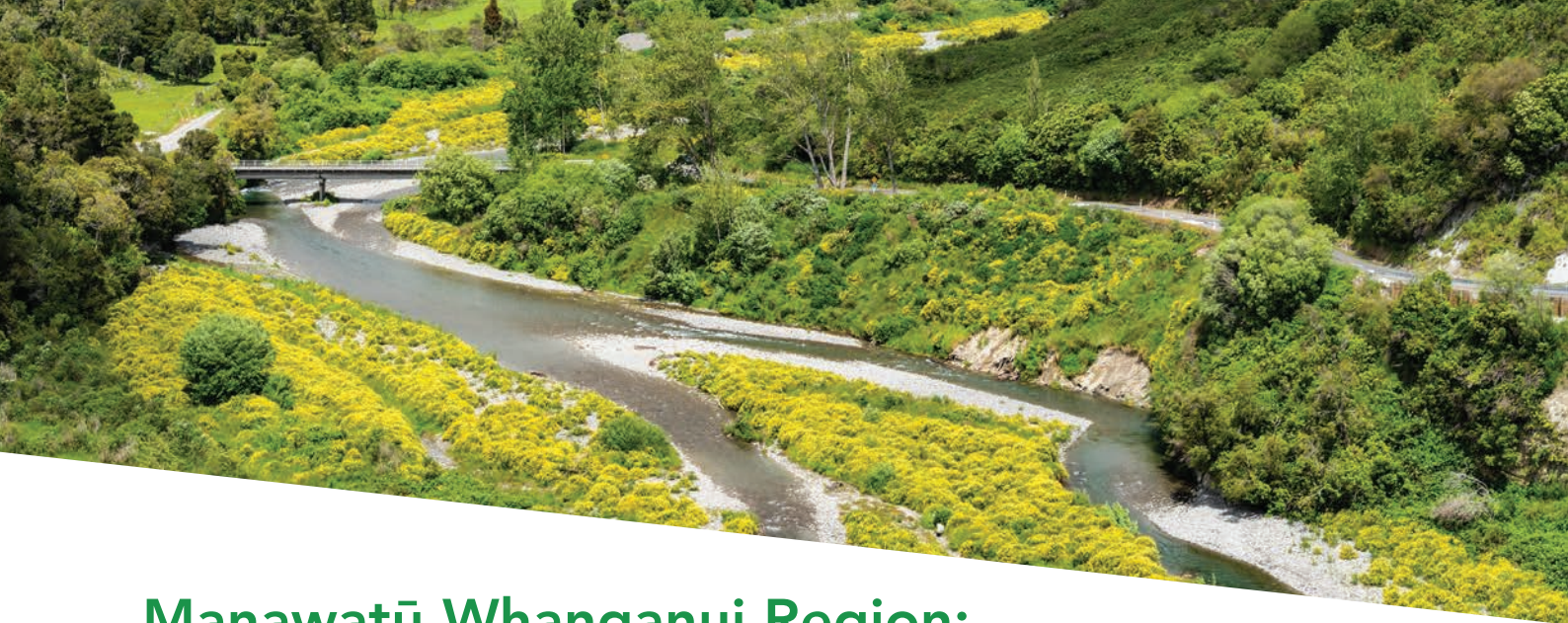
The Manawatū-Whanganui region covers a diverse landscape stretching from the coast to the ranges, containing rich floodplains, coastal, and alpine ecosystems.

Kai Fasaan, Fiona Scott-Melton and Jessica Kereama undertook the fieldwork in May 2023. Our place-based case studies extended across a vast region, taking us from Levin to Rāetihi. The Manawatū-Whanganui region had mainly rural iwi-based projects.

We engaged with seven J4N projects: Muaūpoko Ki Uta Ki Tai, Whakahaumarū Te Whenua Project (*Ngāti Kauwhata*), Rangitāne o Manawatū Tinorangatiritanga, Haumanu Ūkaipō (*Ngāti Apa*), Pōkākā Ecosanctuary (*Ngāti Uenuku Trust*), Mauri Oho Project, and Southern Ruahine Kiwi Habitat Restoration Project. These projects were delivered by five iwi organisations and two NGOs, who are drivers doing the mahi at a local and regional level.

While some projects focused on pest control and others focused on planting and fencing; at the centre of all of the projects was a love of the taiao. The team travelled to the region to meet with J4N managers and kaimahi to gain an understanding of what is happening at the project sites.

This case study report provides a narrative summary of the Manawatū-Whanganui place-based case study against the key evaluation criteria. It then profiles the seven funded projects we visited to describe some of the J4N work that has been completed.



Manawatū-Whanganui Region: Summary Against Evaluation Criteria

Relevance

The Jobs for Nature programme policy goals were clear and well understood by project managers, iwi organisations and NGO leaders that were interviewed in the Manawatū-Whanganui region. Funding recipients described the relevance of their initiative to the overall goals of the J4N programme, and in the case of all five iwi, to the aspirations as expressed in their Treaty Settlements or Treaty aspirations (*two of the iwi had not completed their contemporary Treaty settlements*).

The objectives and scope for J4N projects in the Manawatū-Whanganui region were adjusted to remain relevant to changing circumstances. An example of this was renegotiating environmental forecasted pest and weed management targets when it became apparent that the original forecast was too high and that the rugged terrain needed to be considered.

However, several interviewees stated that they were not clear about the rationale for funding decisions and how the projects fitted together to create a joined up approach to regional environmental priorities. The situation was compared with other regions, such as Hawkes Bay, where participants stated that there appeared to be greater transparency about who was getting funding and why. Such transparency was believed to help projects coordinate with each other and to develop an overall picture of regional environmental restoration activities.

Effectiveness

Environmental Outcomes

The J4N funding enabled projects to conduct a range of environmental protection work in the Manawatū-Whanganui region. This included expanding a trapping network in the Ruahine ranges, tackling sea spurge on the coast, and developing an ecosanctuary as a major conservation and restoration project at the foot of Mount Ruapehu. In addition, projects involved riparian planting, fencing and wetland development. These projects have created benefits for healthy waterways and biodiversity. Projects with substantial planting of trees such as 10,000 hectares will have long-term contributions to the health outcomes of the environment beyond the lifetime of the project.

Employment Outcomes

New employment pathways and upskilling of those involved in the mahi had taken place throughout the region. The programme had led to new employment initiatives for Muaūpoko, Ngāti Kauwhata, Rangitāne o Manawatū, Ngāti Apa, and Ngāti Uenuku. All of these iwi reported enjoying a large boost to their environmental staff numbers. The employment included project management and planning through to delivering weed and animal pest management activities. The J4N programme enabled employees to develop skills, knowledge and capability to effectively improve the environment.

J4N project leaders described employing a range of people including rangatahi, older workers, those in their first job and those who had struggled to secure employment due to criminal history. For most of the J4N projects in this case study, creating employment pathways was as important as the mahi being done on the ground.

In the Manawatū-Whanganui region there is a high number of iwi and Māori providers of environmental services. This high percentage of Māori in the region was reflected in employment at all levels of J4N funded projects from CEO, general managers, project coordinators and teams of kaimahi carrying out the work. All the iwi and Māori providers indicated that employment opportunities would continue beyond the lifetime of the project.

The investment has created new business opportunities for conservation-based employment. J4N project managers provided examples of kaimahi who had used the skills learned in J4N to secure ongoing contracting opportunities such as parks and reserves maintenance contracts with councils.

Synergies and Partnerships

In the Manawatū-Whanganui region participants were unclear whether any synergies existed between projects or whether any services were being duplicated. It was identified that there was a lack of coordination, and a desire for regional forums in which all J4N projects could communicate and help each other. In addition, there was a perception that the five central government agencies did not have a cohesive and joined up approach to implementing the programme.

J4N helped restore iwi-Crown relationships by enabling funding and investment to the iwi in the regions. In particular, the five iwi organisations viewed DOC as supportive but stretched. Local and regional councils were seen as siloed in their practice and had not yet leveraged off the investment made in iwi in the region that J4N had enabled. Representatives from the iwi-led J4N projects interviewed identified that there was a need to strengthen partnerships between central, regional and local government agencies with iwi and Māori in the environmental space.

Cultural Outcomes

The funded J4N projects and initiatives approached the work from a holistic system view of catchments and ecosystems. All iwi spoke in terms of 'maunga through to waterways' as part of their iwi identity. Many spoke about the connection they had experienced to the whenua, how the projects were a step towards healing, reconnecting with their whakapapa, and an opportunity for iwi participation and partnership in caring for the whenua, exercising kaitiakitanga.

Many of the projects provided iwi with an ability to address the work needed to be carried out on lands returned through Treaty settlements. Many interviewees commented that these sites were in dire need of care. Lakes, wetlands and walkways have been able to be restored in areas that have been perceived as neglected by Crown agencies due to a lack of funding.





Additionality

J4N has generated additional benefits beyond the individual projects included in the Manawatū-Whanganui case study. These benefits included supporting iwi organisations to lead the restoration of flora, fauna and waterways that are of ecological, historical and cultural significance.

J4N created an opportunity for iwi to complement the work of DOC through using both “*Western science and mātauranga Māori*.” Kaimahi interviewed spoke of meaningful employment and reconnecting with the whenua. For iwi, this provides valued whakapapa connections to land and waterways. For all five iwi providers and the NGO who worked with Māori, memories of places were awoken for iwi, with kaumātua recalling interactions with flora, fauna, and waterways before they were impacted by pollution and clearing.

Having a trained conservation workforce in the Manawatū-Whanganui region was also reported to reap additional benefits in terms of enhanced regional capacity to respond to events, such as flood events which were covered as part of training in driving heavy equipment.

Coherence

Interviewees commented that the key enabler to coherence in the region was Horizons Regional Council and DOC working together to support J4N projects. However, this was currently perceived to be happening in an ad hoc manner. Interviewees reported inconsistent experiences of support across the region. For example, one NGO described experiencing challenges when trying to engage with Horizons Regional Council to develop a cohesive plan to set traplines. A key concern was the risk that J4N kaimahi might redo traplines in pest eradication projects in areas that were covered by other providers’ trapping, not realising that there were project overlaps. While some iwi organisations described receiving council and/or government support with training and capability building, another rurally located iwi described seeking assistance with training and finding that this was not readily available.

In the selection of providers there was no J4N investment in the development of policy capacity to respond to issues associated with the RMA, NPSFM and other central government environmental policy or regulations. However, for some iwi the increased number of kaimahi means that they can meet with organisations about RMA matters as a team of iwi members.

The job creation aspect of the programme aligns with and builds on some of the other job creation and employment measures, in particular those initiated under Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) and the One Billion Trees project. Examples included the iwi-led ecosanctuary (*Pōkākā*) and the MPI-initiated Māori land restoration project. There had also been earlier Ministry for the Environment (*MfE*) investment in planting projects on the Rangitikei.

Sustainability

The J4N investment in Manawatū-Whanganui will leave a legacy in terms of supporting the development of infrastructure, such as walkways around lakes in the Rangitikei. Iwi and NGO organisations spoke about contributing to Papatūānuku thriving, and considered that the skills and capabilities developed through the restoration projects will be sustained beyond the timeframe of the contracts. The iwi-led ecosanctuary will provide ongoing opportunities in eco-tourism.

The J4N projects included in this case study had taken a deliberate approach to embedding sustainability into their employment practices. For example, iwi-led projects typically focused on employing hapū and whānau members to build the skill-base of their own people, and support the embedding of community identity. Investment into their teams ongoing career development, through encouraging participation in formal qualifications, was emphasised as an important aspect of sustainability. Some iwi-led projects also saw J4N as an opportunity to build their reputation through proving their ability to deliver environmental and employment outcomes, with the aim of sustaining the projects by accessing other funding contracts within their developing networks. Showing that *mana whenua* “do what we say we are going to do” was important.

Organisations that had been established prior to the J4N investment generally indicated that they saw their projects as more likely to be sustainable. These organisations (*including those delivering the Mauri Oho and Haumanu Ūkaipō projects*) used the J4N funding to build upon previous taiao work that had been funded by entities such as MPI. They typically had the ability to pursue additional contracts to sustain the mahi they are involved in after the J4N funding period. However, building sustainability for iwi who are just beginning to develop taiao units takes time. These iwi (*including Ngāti Kauwhata and Ngāti Uenuku*) indicated that they need ongoing support to build their capacity, particularly given the future role that tangata whenua anticipate in the Resource Management Act (RMA), National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) and other environmental policy and regulations.

Successes and Challenges

The J4N programme in Manawatū-Whanganui has contributed to enhanced connection to place and purpose. All project kaimahi interviewed in the area indicated they had a sense of pride in what they have achieved, greater connection to their pepeha, and a deeper appreciation of nature, history and of the beauty of the place they worked in.

Delivering on taiao outcomes has created opportunities to learn for iwi organisations that have not previously had the resources to develop their environmental units. For iwi with existing taiao units, the J4N funding has created new opportunities to develop depth to their capacity and capability to deliver environmental restoration initiatives.

J4N project leads in Manawatū-Whanganui would have liked more coordination across the region, including more lead-in time to undertake joint planning and training, before having to report on results. One question echoed by all in the region was: **what happens next for funding?**





Te Ao Māori Perspectives of J4N in the Manawatū-Whanganui

The Manawatū-Whanganui place-based case study included five iwi-led projects. This has enabled consideration of J4N through a te ao Māori lens.

Rangatiratanga and Taonga Tuku Iho

Iwi and Māori NGOs interviewed identified that J4N projects universally identified that taonga tuku iho are actively looked after and cared for, as specified under Article 2 of Te Tiriti. In its delivery, J4N is seen as an opportunity for rangatiratanga. J4N funding enabled Māori to be involved as partners or leads in doing the work within the region. J4N provided iwi and Māori NGOs equity around access to financial resources. Iwi and Māori organisations spoke about the transformative opportunities provided to work with Crown agencies that enable them to be engaged with DOC and Horizons Regional Council. This contributes towards the fulfilment of RMA 6 and 7 and active kaitiakitanga and mana whenua relationships. Iwi and Māori organisations saw their environmental activities as complementing the work of DOC through drawing on mātauranga Māori.

Kaitiakitanga

Interviewees from iwi organisations spoke of kaitiakitanga; the value in care and connection to the whenua. They talked about the connectedness they have experienced, not only to each other within the teams, but to the whenua. Iwi and Māori NGOs spoke about a reconnection of people back to land and water, and saw J4N as a step towards healing and reconnecting to their whakapapa.

Representatives from iwi and Māori NGOs spoke about the negative environmental and cultural impacts of colonisation through activities such as pollution, the cutting down of trees, the naming of places by Pākehā and the loss of the Māori names, and the loss of natural resources (*birds, trees, berries, harakeke, and waterways*). Examples include clearing of the great forests of the Ruahine Ranges, the renaming of Lake William, and the pollution of the Ōroua River.

Working on J4N projects delivered in environments that iwi and hapū once owned and lived in began a deep process of reconnection shared by the wider whānau.

Ōritetanga

Throughout the region and project staff we interviewed, iwi discussed how they are creating meaningful impact in their communities by creating employment pathways and upskilling those involved in the mahi. Iwi and Māori organisations had no trouble fulfilling employment numbers. People came to the iwi because of the *“karanga of the iwi to come home and help restore the environment.”* Iwi and Māori organisations reported contracting their kaimahi for more than the 30 hours a week available through J4N, and topping up salaries above the funding to ensure a decent wage.

Treaty Settlements

J4N funding provided iwi with the ability to address much-needed work on lands returned through Treaty settlements, with many saying these sites were in dire need of care. Projects led by iwi who had Treaty settlements spoke about J4N contributions towards the fulfilment of statutory settlements and resourcing co-management agreements.

Wairua – Restoration of Mauri

Interviewees spoke about the mauri of places being restored, and the taonga of those places (*maunga, waterways, wetlands*). Iwi placed great value in reconnecting *“back home”*, and the opportunity to restore places that are taonga such as Lake Punahau where the iwi pick up poisoned birds and tuna. Kaimahi spoke about their kaumatua telling them stories about what kai used to be in those places, and what the uses of natural resources were.

The restoration of places that are taonga contribute to improvement to the mauri of people, provides for connections that lift the wairua, reconnect the spirit back to the ngahere, rongoa, and space to unpack working with wahi tapu.

Iwi Leadership

The iwi and Māori organisations interviewed were not involved in J4N planning, design or decision-making around funding allocation. Iwi and Māori have not had the opportunity to co-design the metrics of what gets counted and what is valued. Interviewees noted that these metrics and what is reported tends to be framed through Western concepts of value (*such as the number of trees planted, fence line measurements, FTEs and numbers of traps for pest management regimes*). Some of the examples of measurements that iwi and Māori organisations spoke about, that represent ‘value’ from a te ao Māori perspective, were the number of *“people reconnecting back home”*, the number of wāhi tapu restored, having more capacity within the iwi organisation to respond to opportunities, and the wealth of kai in wetlands and lakes.



Muaūpoko Ki Uta Ki Tai

Manawatū-Whanganui Place-Based Case Study

Muaūpoko Tribal Authority CEO Di Rump described Jobs for Nature as follows: *“This had been a stunning and transformative programme of an ilk and magnitude which is difficult to express.”*

The J4N project supports Muaūpoko Tribal Authority to build environmental capacity and capability. The project established the Kohitere Nursery which supplies plants for riparian restoration work. Di stated that J4N provided an opportunity to undertake work that the iwi had wanted to do for 25 years.

“This is stuff that Muaūpoko Tribal Authority needed to be involved in, to support the taiao, support the concerns of their own people and the community as a whole – being able to be present in the areas they should be...”

J4N addresses the first article of the Treaty, enabling participation. Muaūpoko are now able to have a presence and leadership role in the environmental management of their rohe, complementing the work of DOC. This supports the first article in the Treaty, enacting principles of partnership and participation.

“Working with DOC and those that already knew us has enabled us to co-create this project to give the flexibility to be able to do what we wanted to do... To be trusted and left to do the work that is needed. This J4N is one of the first meaningful and authentic partnerships, with the funding to be able to do anything.”

Di stated that the Crown’s past choices and actions were about exclusion and inequity. At times the iwi experienced direct exclusion, and felt that agencies came into the whenua and chose who to work with, rather than treating the iwi as a Treaty partner.

“We now have a high trust relationship with DOC, it’s been a great relationship. We have had visits from senior advisors, and more coming up shortly. We are able to see the work that is being done. We are building relationships by showing outcomes. Building reputation by showing we can do it. The relationship with the regional council has also lifted, through the water team.”



Muaūpoko Jobs for Nature Project Coordinator Dean Wilson, showing Kai Faasen around the nursery – 9 May 2023

The iwi has employed 19FTE. It was easy to fulfil the employment outcomes as people wanted to work on their own whenua. The team ranges in age between 20 to 75 years old. The increase to the living wage will be challenging for the iwi, but they are determined to make it work.

Muaūpoko have been able to create employment that enables rangatahi to work alongside their kaumātua and hear their elders’ stories and knowledge, enabling transmission of iwi knowledge to occur.

The iwi are working with a local nurse at the moment to train the rangatahi and help establish their own nurse. Kaimahi interviewed loved the work being done on J4N.

Representatives interviewed noted that there is more work to be done to restore the environment in the Muaūpoko rohe. It was reported that J4N kaimahi have had to respond to two major botulism outbreaks in Lake Horowhenua, which caused the loss of thousands of birds and fish.

“Who steps up in the community or government to claim responsibility or to support and address this? The team and kaumātua stepped in and went out to clear this up. Where was the support from outside? We had only one person come out to help from Horizons. The lake needs to be maintained; we still eat tuna from it.”



Haumanu Ūkaipo

Manawatū-Whanganui Place-Based Case Study

Haumanu Ūkaipo is being led by Te Rūnanga o Ngā Waiariki Ngāti Apa. The J4N project undertakes extensive pest eradication work, planting native species – including riparian in wetland areas – and building and maintaining tracks and fencing.

J4N has created pathways for people to reconnect to whenua. The iwi wanted to develop safe coastal walkways that prevent people walking near the state highway. The walkways are being built not just for mana whenua, but all people, including locals and tourists. Manākitanga is uppermost in their minds, looking after people who are in their rohe.

Walkways have currently been developed through the Lake Koitiata scenic reserve into the Santoft Forest, in which native species planting has been completed. The iwi owns most of the Santoft area, which is being returned as commercial forestry is harvested.

Ngā Waiariki Ngāti Apa is propagating rare plant species found in their rohe. Kaimahi also undertake plantings and carry out invasive plant and animal control in a cluster of wetlands, forming an 'eco-island' for taonga species. The project is integrated into an existing education, training, and employment platform, leveraging off earlier MPI investment of the One Billion Trees fund.

J4N complements iwi aspirations as outlined by their Treaty settlement. The iwi aspires to construct their own wetlands, and learn about how to build their own fish passes. To date, Ngāti Apa have planted over 10,000 trees and take pride in checking the release of plants because they feel an extra duty of care to be exemplary kaitiaki. The team identified there has been some challenging landowners who decline free fencing and planting, and other landowners who have been brilliant.

The iwi spoke about a sustainable workforce and the development of skilled, well-rounded and valued kaimahi that feel connected to their iwi and the taiao. The dedicated iwi team are learning about the names of native trees and biodiversity alongside practical skills such as pest control, four-wheel driving, and first aid. General Manager of the Taiao Unit, Chris Shenton, identified broader benefits that have been realised through the development of these skills:

"We have developed capacity within the iwi to have an emergency response team that can respond to flooding, because we have people who can drive the diggers, who know what they do...We are navigating climate change, and are keen to develop wetlands as part of the managed retreat."

The iwi is restoring the taiao at a catchment-wide level. They see their work as excellence in environmental restoration and caring for taonga *tuku iho* under Article 2 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.



Setting the traplines. Photo: Chris Tuffley

Mauri Oho Project

Manawatū-Whanganui Place-Based Case Study

Kai Faasen and Jessica Kereama travelled to Dannevirke to visit the Mauri Oho project base. They met with the leadership team outdoors overlooking the mountain ranges they are trying to protect: Ngā Pae Maunga o Ruahine, which heads south from a saddle on the Napier-Taihape Rd to the Manawatū Gorge.

Mauri Oho Project covers 59,000ha in the northern Ruahine Range, which includes 39,000ha of public conservation land and 7,000ha of Māori Trust Lands. The remaining 13,000ha is streams running through neighbouring farmland in the Kererū district. The project involves pest-plant control, planting, pest-animal control (*trapping*), environmental monitoring and a rangatahi development programme.

Arapera Paewai, the Mauri Oho Project Manager and Manaaki Ruahine Trustee, emphasised that: *"We are working with her, the Ruahine, she is part of who we are, the tupuna kuia, who we whakapapa to."*

Arapera spoke about a recruitment process for kaimahi that supports employment opportunities for rural communities. *"Some of our kaimahi are impacted by the seasonal nature of employment, other kaimahi had never been given opportunities for employment."*

Lisa Whittle, Mauri Oho Programme Support Manager, discussed the immense pride kaimahi take in their J4N work. Their diligence and hard work has seen kaimahi achieve formal qualifications and small wins such as gaining a drivers licence. J4N programme employment has provided an income, and a sense of connection and purpose in the work they do.

There have been steep learning curves for some of the rangatahi, and a few bumps, bruises and broken bones in the tough back country Ruahine Ranges. Some of the neighbouring farm owners are great to work with, and some don't let project workers on their land. That has been a steep learning curve for Lisa too, whose eyes were opened to the treatment kaimahi are exposed to, behaviours that she had not seen or experienced as a Pākehā New Zealander doing the same trapping work. Arapera was philosophical and supports kaimahi on the project not to react to offensive behaviour toward the team.

Arapera spoke about the funding available *"It's tough work, and we pay them more than the 30 hours of wages we are given, because people have to survive, they have families to feed. The J4N funding is a contribution, but not enough on its own."* The project supplements the J4N fundings with fencing and other contracting work to help bring in a decent wraparound salary.

The Southern Ruahine Kiwi Habitat Restoration Project are protecting the environment so kiwi and other native species can thrive.

Southern Ruahine Kiwi Habitat Restoration Project

Manawatū-Whanganui Place-Based Case Study

We met with Ian Rasmussen, the project coordinator, and a range of project kaimahi on 11 May 2023. The team are passionate about the Ruahine Ranges, and the vision they have in restoring the ecosystem. The J4N funding has enabled the recruitment of young people into their organisation. Kaimahi enthusiastically supported the vision of restoring the ecosystem.

The Southern Ruahine Kiwi Restoration Project is part of a wider eco-sustainability network of services throughout New Zealand. The project has developed a network of partners. One of the most impactful partnerships is with the “Menzshed” in the Ryman Healthcare Julie Wallace Retirement Village. Volunteers in the Menzshed produced 1000 traps for the project, and in the process made friends. All of the team in the “Menzshed” had suffered some kind of loss, and the work was reported to be therapeutic and meaningful. The New Zealand Air Force was another important partner, dropping off 120 traps to the project area in November, saving the team many hours of labour carrying the traps. This also functioned as training for the Air Force members involved.

The project has also connected with other J4N projects in the region. They have worked with Ngāti Kauwhata and Rangitane, and have built relationships with Mauri Oho. They have good support from Environmental Network Manawatū and Taiao Ora contracting.



Ian Rasmussen, Coordinator, Southern Ruahine Kiwi Restoration Project showcasing the traps especially made for the pest control of mustelids.
<https://enm.org.nz/about/our-people>



The Southern Ruahine Kiwi Habitat Restoration Project supports the restoration and maintenance of the Ruahine Ranges so that kiwi and other native species can return and thrive. J4N funding is being used to undertake animal pest control in Southern Ruahine. The project has deployed and maintained trap lines covering over 20,000ha. They have set 104 traplines and caught 259 mustelids.

Jobs for Nature has created opportunities to get to hard-to-reach places in the country.



Rangitane o Manawatū Tinorangatiratanga

Manawatū-Whanganui Place-Based Case Study

Rangitane o Manawatū designed their J4N project around the exercise of tino rangatiratanga. It has a focus on the iwi being on their whenua, connecting with their waterways and getting their people involved in environmental work. Key aims of the project have been to increase the capacity of the environmental arm of Rangitane o Manawatū (*Te Ao Turoa Environmental Centre*) and create better work opportunities for their rangatahi and pakeke. The work has included restoring riparian planting and controlling pest animals in the Pohangina and southwestern perimeter of the Ruahine. Tanenuiarangi Manawatū Roopu Tumuaki, Danielle Harris described Jobs for Nature as one of the best projects that DOC has funded in its existence:

"It's specifically been designed to work with iwi and with hapū in a way that they have control over the destiny of how their project was developed, how it's implemented, and how it's going to add value to us as a tribe."

The work has created an opportunity for rangatahi and pakeke to develop a range of skills including learning about bird calls, identifying plants, making traps and bird boxes and gaining a firearms license.



Traps set to control pest animals.

Broader benefits have included strengthening the connection of rangatahi and pakeke with their whakapapa and iwi, learning about their history including sites of significance, reconnecting with old practices such as hunting and fishing, and developing an ability to combine mātauranga Māori with Western ecological science practices.

The community have benefitted too, with deer caught through hunting processed locally and then shared with the pātaka run by the iwi. The community can access kai from the pātaka twice a week. Another unexpected benefit has been finding species that the iwi and wider community did not know were present, including native tadpoles which are the second recorded population in the North Island, a native snail population, and giant centipedes previously only found in the Coromandel. Research programmes are now being developed through DOC to protect these taonga.

The capacity and capability developed through the project has put the iwi in a better position to win commercial opportunities as they now have a workforce with the necessary certificates, access to the right equipment and their reputation has grown. Danielle believes the J4N funding approach should become 'business as usual' by DOC to iwi, as it has been a genuine way of manifesting Treaty relations with the Crown.



Pōkākā Ecosanctuary

Manawatū-Whanganui Place-Based Case Study

Pōkākā Ecosanctuary is founded upon the values of the hapu of Ngāti Uenuku, Ngāti Tamakana and Ngāti Tamahaki. Ngāti Uenuku Chair welcomed the Allen + Clarke evaluation team to Raetihi.

“Being mana whenua, Jobs for Nature is important, building healthy people and healthy whenua. If the land is ill, the people are ill. We are of these lands, of the maunga, the original people. Our kaumatua wanted to hear the birds sing again, thus the ecosanctuary. We chose Pokākā as the area to establish the sanctuary, at the foot of the hills”.

The ecosanctuary is situated at the foot of the Ruapehu, and a majority of the work is situated at the Manga-nui-o-te-ao. This is a very significant place to the iwi, described as ‘like the aorta of the heart’, providing sustenance to the whenua and the people. The J4N project work is about taking care of the ‘heart place’ using a holistic approach. The total area of land that the iwi has interest in is 1.6 million ha. The Pōkākā Ecosanctuary covers 2500ha, and is a small step in the right direction and an important starting point.

Kaimahi interviewed wanted to work in a space where they could give back to the whenua and their community. Some of the team spoke about being connected to the whenua as a hunter-gatherers. Another kaimahi spoke about returning back to the area to re-establish their iwi connection. A sense of belonging and connection is a strong pull for kaimahi to work in this project. Another kaimahi joined the team when her tourism small business had been impacted by a downturn due to COVID-19 border closures. The J4N project provided her with an income that enabled her to stay in the community and remain connected to nature and the outdoor work that she loves.

The team have a range of experience amongst them and use this to learn from each other. Many of the team know the terrain well as experienced hunters, and consider that they have always been a part of this whenua. Kaimahi told the evaluation team that they are proud to have an impact on the wellbeing of the land. Training from DOC to build capability has not occurred, however the organisation has just recruited a highly skilled project manager to plan and oversee the weed and pest management regime.

The Governance and Management team identified that Pōkākā EcoSanctuary would lay the foundations for ongoing ecosystem and species recovery across the wider central North Island region. These lands were once owned by Ngāti Uenuku, Ngāti Tamakana and Ngāti Tamahaki. The iwi plan for an ecosanctuary for native plants and animals on the central plateau will cost \$25 million, according to a recent estimate. The Jobs for Nature project funding is a ‘starter’, providing nearly \$2 million funding towards conservation work.

It was reported that the land offered back to Ngāti Uenuku as part of their Treaty settlement was degraded and poisoned, including barrels of buried DDT leaking into the land. The iwi response was to create a new vision which would see regeneration of forests, and birds returning back to their iwi rohe.

The iwi identified this ecological restoration project as one of the first iwi-driven ecosanctuary projects in Aotearoa. It offers opportunities in education, nature tourism, biking and walking trails. Jobs for Nature complements the economic and environmental aspirations of the iwi in the space of nature tourism.

Kui has a vision of Ngāti Kauwhata one day owning and operating a nursery of their own. Here she explains how the plants are laid out, and the construction of the nursery. Photos: Raarite Matakī (CEO of Ngāti Kauwhata).



Whakahaumarū Te Whenua Project

Manawatū-Whanganui Place-Based Case Study

Whakahaumarū Te Whenua is led by Ngāti Kauwhata. It provides training to young people on how to restore and enhance the mauri of the Ōroua River. Activities include clearing invasive species and planting native vegetation along the river. The CEO spoke about the alignment of the J4N project with Ngāti Kauwhata iwi goals to restore the awa, the whenua and the people.

J4N provided secure employment opportunities. The evaluation team interviewed kaimahi who worked with the plant nursery. Kaimahi have learnt how a nursery operates, including its form and structure, managing plant orders, growing from seed and preparing young plants for planting.

The evaluation team spoke to Ngāti Kauwhata project kaimahi that worked in pest plant eradication and re-planting native species. They discussed returning to their whenua, loving being involved with their iwi again, and wanting to see their waterways and lands restored. Some kaimahi who were involved in the planting and pest management projects had come from seasonal work from the fishing and meat work industries. They were enthusiastic about learning about plant species. Their overall motivation to participate was to respond to the call of their iwi to restore the land and waterways. They talk about the work undertaken on the land with their whānau, and are finding out from elders about how the river and lands used to be. This has supported the passing of traditional knowledge of plant life and the types of kai that used to be harvested.



Ngāti Kauwhata Kaimahi Kui, Shona and Jessica in Feilding with Jobs for Nature.



These are Shona's babies: she explains the care taken of young plants and she is passionate about her "babies". Shona also makes Rongoā. She has been loving the work opportunities that Jobs for Nature provides.



These plants are helping other Jobs for Nature projects and are in high demand for restoration projects.



Jobs for Nature (J4N)

Place-Based Case Study #3 Tasman-Nelson

This report presents a snapshot of the Allen + Clarke evaluation team's visit to the Tasman-Nelson region to undertake place-based case studies. We summarise what we heard, who we saw, what is going well and what some of the challenges are.

The Tasman-Nelson/Te Tau Ihu region is an environmentally diverse and ancient part of New Zealand. The region has temperate marine environments with exceptional diversity of habitats. These include inter-tidal flats, deep canyons, beech forests and coasts. Te Tau Ihu is home to flora and fauna found nowhere else in the world, and these form unique natural communities. The region is home to species found nowhere else in the world, including giant land snails, giant cave spiders, the king shag, Cook Strait tuatara, and coastal peppercreep. It is a stronghold for a range of species which are now rare and threatened elsewhere in New Zealand, including shorebirds, seabirds and the Great Spotted Kiwi. The Tasman-Nelson region has large rural communities and some small to medium sized towns. Its economic base includes primary industries, tourism and other sectors. There are nine iwi present in this area, each with its own unique history and relationship to the land.

Meremoana Potiki and Jessica Kereama undertook the fieldwork in May 2023. We met with The Nature Conservancy who provide project leadership and administration for the Kotahitanga mōe Taiao Alliance as well as delivering activities to restore flora ecosystems, Eco-restoration Mohoa (*Project De-Vine*), Waimārama Brook Sanctuary in Nelson, Waimere Inlet Enhancement and Mount Richmond Wilding Conifer Control (*Tasman District Council*) and Te Hoiere Catchment Freshwater Restoration (*Marlborough District Council*).

The projects selected within this case study site reflected the NGOs and councils who are the drivers doing the mahi at a local and regional level, and those who are the connectors across the projects. The iwi projects of this region will be part of the Te Ao Māori fieldwork case studies which will be a separate fieldwork visit.



Tasman-Nelson Region: Summary Against Evaluation Criteria

Relevance

The J4N programme was described as highly relevant to the environmental aspirations of key entities in the Tasman-Nelson region. Key organisations within the Top of the South Island community, including iwi, councils and the Department of Conservation (DOC) had formed an alliance to better co-ordinate environmental conservation efforts under a body called Kotahitanga mō tēaiao. The alliance is supported by a global conservation organisation, The Nature Conservancy, which provides scientific advice, global expertise, financial tools and support for stakeholder engagement.

The project managers, council representatives, and NGO leaders that were interviewed in Tasman-Nelson were aware of and understood the goals of the J4N programme. They stated that there is strong alignment between regional environmental goals articulated in the Kotahitanga mō tēaiao Strategy and the environmental goals of the J4N programme. All projects that were selected in the case study were able to demonstrate their alignment to J4N policy and objectives.

J4N project objectives and scope has had to be adjusted to remain relevant to changing circumstances for several of the projects that participated in the case study. Key changes included adjustments to employment numbers (*which were over forecast*) and changes to pest and weed management regimes. Adjusting the J4N contract was reported as a difficult process, and payments were reported to be withheld if numbers forecast were not met. This region was perceived to be more strictly managed than the other two case study regions, with financial consequences for unmet targets.

Effectiveness

Environmental Outcomes

The J4N programme in Te Tau Ihu is achieving tangible results in large-scale environmental restoration. For example, the funding has accelerated the goal of controlling invasive weeds in Golden Bay to a manageable zero-density level. This was described as “*weed and pest management on steroids*”, creating regional-scale ecological corridors connecting with large DOC estates, such as the Mārahau and the Abel Tasman National Park. Project personnel reported that the J4N funding had provided opportunities to accelerate activities as managing problematic weed pests at a scale that could make a significant difference to environmental outcomes. The J4N funding had enabled the control of weeds to the point that after the J4N funding period, only maintenance activities would be required.

Other tangible environmental changes include riparian planting and restored wetlands that contribute to repaired ecosystems. Fundholders discussed positive outcomes in monitoring species such as the long-tailed bat. Project interviewees were confident that their mahi will achieve long term environmental outcomes, but noted the caveat that extreme weather events such as flooding may undermine achievements.

Other projects were described as providing an opportunity for iwi governance, participation, capacity building or resetting of cultural values. For example, the Waimea Estuary catchment plan is a council-led project in which iwi values have informed the management strategy with the aims of restoration of culture and ecology. The funding comes from the Ministry for the Environment and is supported by the Tasman District Council and iwi through Kotahitanga mō te Taiao.

Employment Outcomes

Conservation employment was identified as one of the long-term outcomes desired by the community under the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao strategy. New employment initiatives have been created through the J4N programme, with project personnel reporting employment opportunities across their region. Project managers described the development of a region-wide workforce with conservation skills, knowledge, and capability to improve the environment.

The J4N programme has allowed organisations to increase the size of their workforce. For example, it was reported that J4N funding enabled the Golden Bay eco-restoration project to expand its invasive species plant management workforce from ten to thirty-two people, addressing employment disparities in rural areas such as Golden Bay. Throughout the Tasman-Nelson region, it was forecast that the conservation workforce would expand by 85FTE for this last quarter of the 2023/24 financial year.

Synergies and Partnerships

Partnerships between iwi, councils and NGOs have been strengthened in the Tasman-Nelson region. Eight iwi in the region are represented on the governance board of Kotahitanga mō te Taiao, and this partnership approach is reflected in the delivery of J4N in the region. As well as acting as decisionmakers on the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao board, iwi also contributed to J4N project delivery through the provision of advice on incorporating iwi values into estuary management (Waimea Inlet), working as project kaimahi (*Brook Waimārama Sanctuary*), to managing and delivering projects (the Ngāti Kuia-led native plant nursery at Titiraukawa which supplies the Te Hoiere Restoration Project).

There is also a focus in the region on community buy in and partnership to environmental restoration activities. The Allen + Clarke evaluation team took the opportunity to interview people in the community and in shops about the J4N projects. There was a high level of awareness of the J4N projects in the region, and the benefits for local flora and fauna. For example, community members reported that the “dawn chorus” in Picton was noticeably stronger.





Additionality

The combined community, iwi, council and central government approach to delivering marine and terrestrial environment projects through an ecosystem approach is unique in its synergy. Through the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance, J4N projects in the region have been planned collaboratively, with the aim of building capacity within the community to be a conservation force in Te Tau Ihu. Project interviewees considered that the benefits achieved through a joined-up approach had created larger scale impacts than could have been achieved through each individual projects. They described observing restored forests, improved functioning of wetlands that act as 'kidneys' to clean the waterways, the resurgence of flora and fauna, and the restoration of indigenous values to contribute to the essence of life.

The majority of the J4N project personnel that were interviewed stated that the programme added value beyond the individual funds through developing the ongoing capacity and capability of the environmental workforce. The investment had supported the organisations to offer training and qualifications to their workforce, some of whom had leveraged this to create new business opportunities. This included securing maintenance contracts with the government agencies such as MPI, parks and reserves maintenance contracts with local councils, and employment the agriculture sector. This is beneficial for J4N employees, adding greater capacity and capability to the contract workforce available to the regional for planting and pest management activities.

The J4N programme has also had the added benefit of contributing to the nature tourism offering in the Tasman-Nelson region. J4N projects have enhanced native forest and birdlife around the region, including the areas surrounding Abel Tasman National Park. The case study identified examples of J4N projects actively working to promote nature tourism and investment in conservation education, such as J4N kaimahi developing educational resources to enhance the visitor experience at Brook Waimārama Sanctuary.

Coherence

Interviewees in the Tasman-Nelson region stated that J4N projects are well aligned with the region's long-term aspirations for environmental restoration, as articulated in the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy. The strategic goal is to restore habitats, protect threatened species and support economic, social and environmental resilience for communities feeling the impacts of climate change. Kotahitanga mō te Taiao champions projects that restore healthy ecosystems, which in turn increases capacity to absorb carbon and protect against flooding, slips, erosion, biodiversity loss and economic and social hardship. The J4N projects in the region align with these goals, with many focusing on restoring marine and terrestrial environments to their natural state.

Representatives from J4N projects, including in this case study site, stated that the implementation of J4N was well managed and coordinated at the regional level through Kotahitanga mō te Taiao, and projects complemented each other in terms of employment and environmental gains sought. Regionally there are discussions on how to link projects to achieve landscape-scale benefits for conservation work, which is supported by activities such as project-level mapping of work completed and its contribution to other conservation projects.

The J4N programme also aligns with and builds on other central and local environment and job creation support measures. Several of the projects within the Tasman-Nelson region had previously received funding from programmes such as the One Billion Trees investment, and used J4N funding to accelerate activities commenced under this previous investment. Interviewees also described how their pest management and planting activities were aligned with DOC activities. Other projects, such as the weed and animal pest control project in Golden Bay, work to ensure alignment with the Regional Pest Management Plan and the Tasman Biodiversity Strategy.

The region has also aimed to embed coherence regarding iwi aspirations for the region within the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy, and has iwi representation at the governance level. This will be explored as part of the Te Ao Māori evaluation.

Sustainability

The J4N investment in the region has created sustainable changes that will be retained beyond the life of the programme. This includes investment in equipment, technology and capability building. For example, the funding enabled an NGO to invest in technology to map and manage weed and animal pest management activities. This has allowed a systematic, data-driven approach to environmental management activities, which will be retained for future work.

Interviewees across the majority of projects included in the Tasman-Nelson case study emphasised that the J4N funding had enabled the acceleration of environmental restoration work. In most of the projects, this had enabled tangible gains in terms of 'getting on top of' pest management and replanting activities, although two of the projects considered that one more round of funding was needed to be truly effective. Most J4N projects in the region were now considering how to plan for sustaining their work beyond the J4N funding, with most now moving to a 'maintenance' phase. For council projects, maintenance could be taken up by parks and recreation teams, in some cases absorbing the additional capacity created by J4N by employing or contracting J4N project kaimahi to undertake maintenance work. Interviewees reported that the region has begun to discuss sustainability of the projects beyond J4N as part of Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance governance meetings.

Successes and Challenges

The coherent, joined-up approach to environmental restoration under the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance was a key enabler to success of the J4N programme in the Tasman-Nelson region. The existing connections between councils, iwi, the Department of Conservation and The Nature Conservancy supported an ecosystem approach to J4N project delivery. Representatives from J4N projects that were interviewed for this case study considered themselves to be part of a coherent, region-level approach to environmental restoration.

Key challenges identified in the region included establishing and delivering projects at pace. There was a shortage of skilled environmental training available in the region, and a demand for professional environmental expertise to assist with planning. Staffing and project infrastructure development was particularly challenging in the first three to six months of project establishment. Supply chains for project materials was disrupted by COVID-19, and this impacted on infrastructure projects such as buildings for plant nurseries.

In the isolated rural areas of the region, such as Golden Bay, the project was able exceed anticipated employment outcomes. However, other projects in the region struggled to recruit the anticipated number of employees, and reported that regional economic and employment impacts of COVID-19 were less severe than originally forecast. Some funding recipients reported that it was challenging to meet employment requirements, and that contracting could have been more flexible to allow for changing circumstances. Staff retention was reported as difficult for some projects, due to low staff wages and other employment opportunities available to people with the region. Personnel from some of the J4N projects interviewed stated the initiative needed to have a stronger emphasis on taiao outcomes, rather than employment outcomes in this region.

Mount Richmond Wilding Conifer Control and Waimea Inlet Enhancement

Tasman-Nelson Place-Based Case Study

Mount Richmond Wilding Conifer Control

This project aims to eradicate wilding conifers in a large block of Mount Richmond that encompasses Crown-owned forest, as well as iwi-owned and private land.

The project forms part of the Kotahitanga mo te Taiao strategy. It is funded through the Ministry for Primary Industries conifer control programme as well J4N funding. When the J4N funding became available, the work was rescoped to create more jobs, by using ground teams to undertake eradication activities rather than aerial spraying.

The project will provide training and employment for workers over four years, with the potential for ongoing work in native vegetation restoration in other areas of Tasman District. Project management personnel stated that they had experienced some difficulty employing workers with the skills and attitude to undertake the specialist back country work. It was noted that the Tasman-Nelson area has plenty of seasonal work available, and the regional economy and unemployment had not been impacted as severely as other regions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The J4N funding was described by council personnel as 'amazing', providing an important opportunity for the small unitary council to create jobs and accelerate progress on an existing environmental goal. Interviewees described the project as an opportunity to 'get on top of pest trees' to complement work that had previously been undertaken by DOC. J4N has fast tracked wilding pine control, and project personnel were confident that by the end of the J4N programme, conifer control activities will require only ongoing maintenance.



Waimea Inlet, Nelson.

Waimea Inlet

The Waimea Inlet encompasses the area inside a line connecting the Tasman Bay/Te Tai o Aorere shoreline of Māpua, Moturoa/Rabbit Island and Tahunanui Beach. At 3,462 ha the Waimea Estuary is the second largest estuary in the South Island. This J4N-funded project will restore and create wetlands in the inlet.

Partnership with iwi, particularly Ngāti Koata, is a key feature of this project. This builds on council-iwi relationships established through Kotahitanga mō te Taiao. Estuaries are of high value to iwi, including areas that are wāhi tapu and provide a source of kai. Project personnel stated that J4N provided opportunities for iwi to realise kaitiakitanga in relation to Waimea Inlet. Iwi values had not been captured in earlier management plans for the Waimea Inlet, but a recent refresh of the management plan had incorporated iwi values and priorities with an aim to restore cultural connections to the area. There remains work to be done; while the council has commissioned research to into the presence of taonga species such as Kuku, Pupū, Kawari, Pipi and Tuangi, the iwi history of the Waimea Inlet is yet to be documented in the restoration plan.

Throughout the project techniques for wetland restoration have been enhanced. Project personnel reported that there is greater understanding of the importance of wetlands within the community, which provides the team with the mandate to restore them.

The Nature Conservancy

Tasman-Nelson Place-Based Case Study

Support for the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance

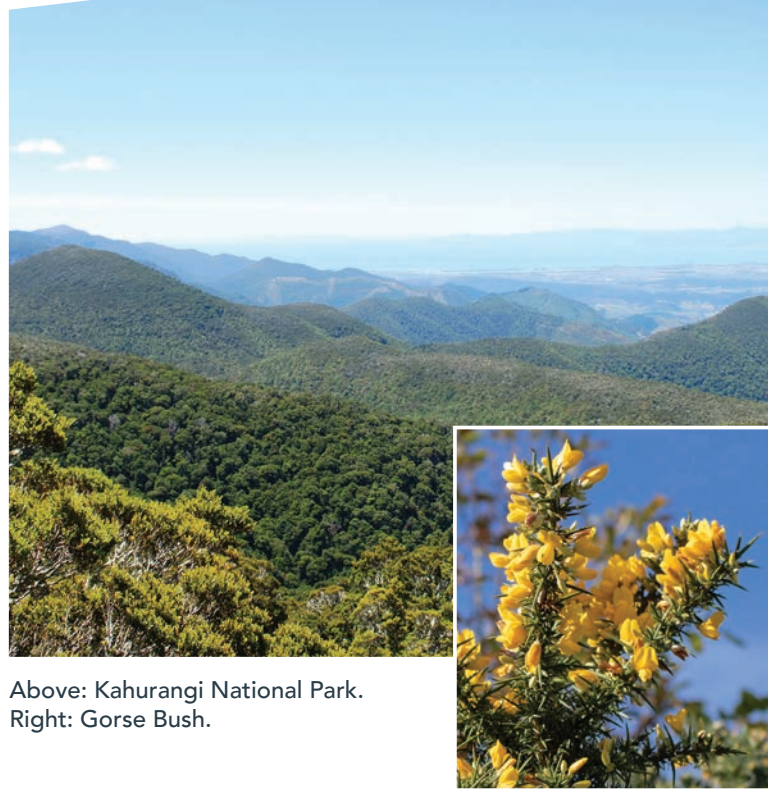
The Nature Conservancy is a global NGO which has a dual role in the J4N programme in the Tasman-Nelson region. It is supporting the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance, a collaboration of 15 entities including iwi, councils, and the Department of Conservation. The alliance aims to work collectively to restore natural landscapes in the top of the South Island. J4N funding is being used to support the delivery of a range of projects under the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao strategy. The Nature Conservancy supports the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance by providing funding, science, global expertise, financial tools and engaging stakeholders around common goals.

The project coordinator, Hudson Dodd, spoke with the evaluation team about their work. Hudson emphasised the value of a regional collective commitment to the environment, that enabled true 'landscape change' with individual projects selected to complement and support each other. The synergy of the work means the gains made are more than the sum of the individual projects. Valuing and investing in an ecosystem approach was identified as important for effective conservation work.

The Nature Conservancy has brought international focus to the work of the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance, which was featured in a short film on the BBC Earth online platform. The project coordinator reported that the international attention around the work being undertaken to restore nature at a regional level brought benefits to New Zealand's international reputation in environmental restoration.

Delivery of large-scale weed management projects

The Nature Conservancy is also responsible for the delivery of J4N-funded projects, including a project to undertake large-scale weed management in significant natural areas across the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao rohe. As well as providing local employment (8 FTE), the project is controlling infestations of weed species such as pampas, blackberry, gorse, ginger, banana passionfruit, Himalayan honeysuckle, willow, flowering cherry and wilding conifers.



Above: Kahurangi National Park.
Right: Gorse Bush.

It covers around 90 sites that have been selected for their ecological significance. Initial intensive weed control will be followed by ongoing maintenance and native plantings to make sure the conservation gains are maintained.

Interviewees identified some challenges with the J4N projects. Employment was not impacted as negatively in the region as anticipated, and there remained employment options available to the community in Te Tau Ihu. Recruitment proved challenging, with J4N roles competing with opportunities in hospitality and tourism. While interviewees philosophically supported paying employees the living wage, the NGO had not been able to secure additional funding to top up the J4N funding to this amount.

There were also challenges in delivering on project milestones within contracted timeframes. Reflecting on the J4N projects, the coordinator noted that there is a need to build in an establishment phase to set up the infrastructure needed for successful delivery of projects at a regional scale. Once it became apparent that the contract milestones for biodiversity restoration and employment numbers were unlikely to be met, it was reported to be difficult to re-negotiate these milestones.

Despite these challenges, Hudson noted that the J4N funding had enabled the acceleration of weed management across the region. More broadly, the J4N funding was identified as a crucial enabler for Kotahitanga mō te Taiao to deliver on its ambitions:

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for conservation".



Eco-restoration Mohoa (Golden Bay)

Tasman-Nelson Place-Based Case Study

The Allen + Clarke team met with the project manager from Eco-restoration Mohoa, a weed and animal pest control project based in Golden Bay. This is led by Project De-Vine, a non-profit group that focuses on the eradication of invasive vines that threaten the native forest, targeting banana passion vine, old man's beard and climbing asparagus. The project aims to achieve zero-density for all invasive plants and trees in Mohua/Golden Bay, Riwaka, Marahau and around the 'halo' of Abel Tasman National Park. This is intended to create corridors of native forest habitats bird life.

J4N funding has enabled investment in equipment and systems to accelerate progress towards environmental goals. The project manager demonstrated how the weed control work is supported by a database and mapping system which accurately maps progress. In line with the project aims of landscape scale ecosystem restoration, the work now joins conservation estates across Golden Bay. The system also supports contract reporting, with the project manager describing J4N reporting requirements as 'easy'.

Project De-Vine has grown its weed eradication workforce from 10 to 30 people. The organisation takes pride in being a good employer, and would like to think they have a reputation for taking care of people who they employ. The project manager noted some workforce stability challenges due to the seasonal and weather-dependent nature of the work, and that a relatively high proportion of the workforce were reluctant to comply with COVID-19 vaccination mandates.

These challenges have led to relatively high turnover, although a core staff of ten has been with the organisation for most of the project. Many of these core team members have expressed an interest in remaining with Project De-Vine after the J4N funding comes to an end, and the organisation is aiming to create extra work streams to enable the team to remain with the organisation.

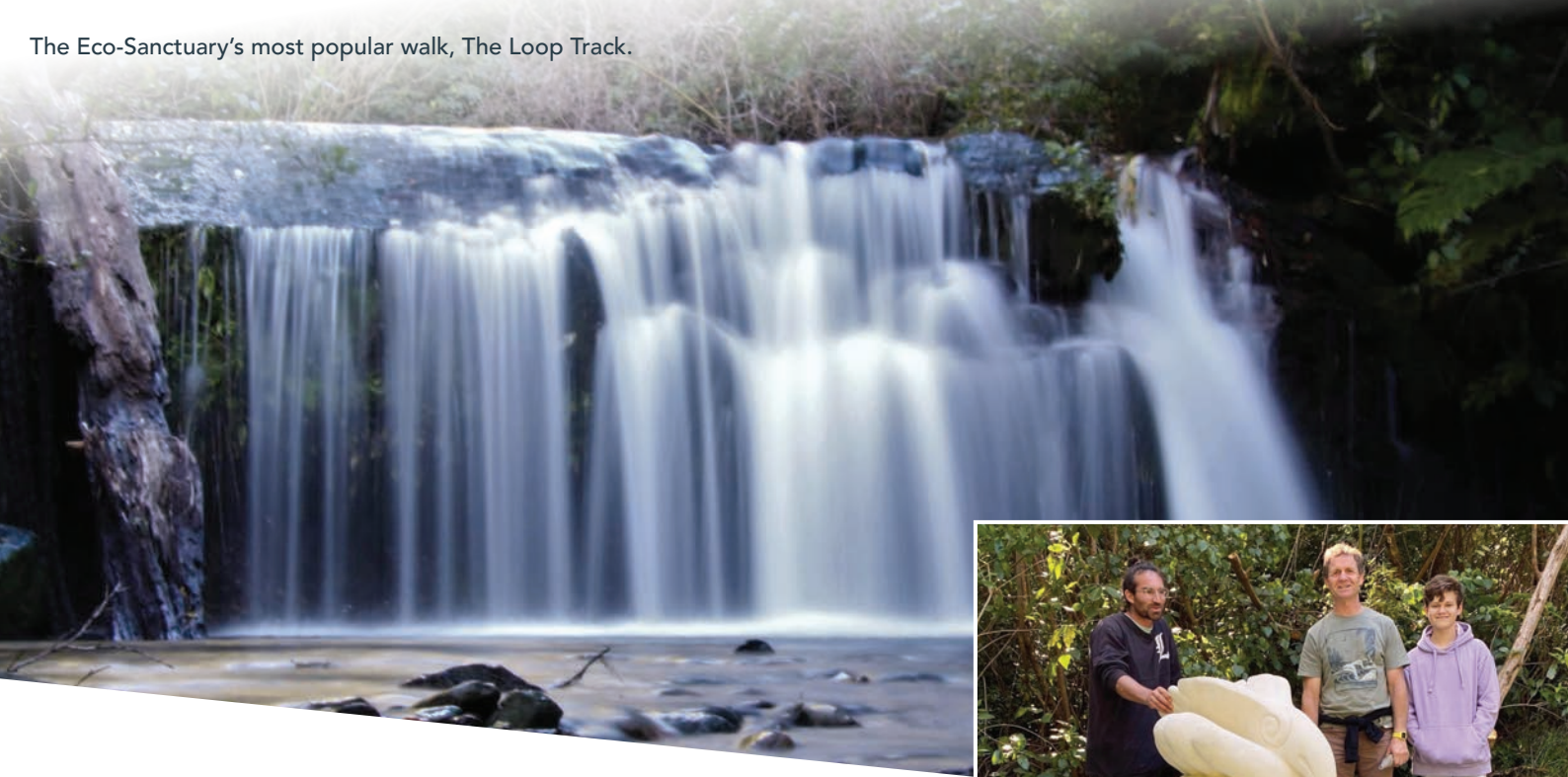
Partnerships are vital to the success of the Eco-restoration Mohoa project. They work closely with the Tasman District Council, the Department of Conservation, iwi and landowners.

The project manager spoke about the importance of local hapū support for the work. Iwi and hapū relationships are maintained through formal channels, such as sending periodic written project updates to iwi in Golden Bay and Motueka. Having personal relationships with hapū members is also vital to ensure buy in and support for the work.

The landscape-scale environment restoration aspirations requires the project to undertake pest eradication activities on private land, such as farms. This has meant the project has needed to work hard at building trust with local landowners.

"Being trusted and relationship management is key to sustainable work with farmers. There are some sights the worker see on farms in regard to pollution, but they are encouraged to remember that they are not there in an auditing role; they are there to weed the land, and are lucky to have those permissions to enter the property."

The organisation is also proactive about seeking partnerships with the business community, successfully securing sponsorship for community working bees and for products such as weed killer.



A sculpted interpretation of the Sanctuary's logo, carved from Oamaru stone by local sculptor Martin Love, who has an ongoing family connection with the Sanctuary.



Beech Glade Classroom is an ideal space from which to watch and listen for birds.

Brook Waimārama Sanctuary

Tasman-Nelson Place-Based Case Study

The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary is the largest fenced sanctuary for endangered native flora and fauna in the South Island. The J4N funding enabled the acceleration of a weed control programme which previously relied on volunteer labour. The J4N resource enabled the employment of paid field workers to control and remove invasive, non-native plants.

The Allen + Clarke evaluation team met with the CEO and project manager of the Nelson-based ecosanctuary. They spoke of their vision of a place where native plants and animals thrive, without threat from introduced pests or predators. The vision would see the sanctuary alive with birdsong, where rare species such as kiwi and tuatara roam freely and where visitors can see native flora and fauna close to home in Nelson.

The J4N funding arrived at an opportune time. In 2017 the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary Trust had been involved in a costly environmental court case which aimed to prevent the Trust from carrying out aerial drops of poison baits in the sanctuary. The costs associated with the case had diverted funding from pest management activities and set back progress on the removal of invasive plant species. The J4N funds enabled the recruitment of a paid workforce and the provision of training. This skilled workforce was able to tackle weed management in parts of the sanctuary that were considered too steep and dangerous for their usual volunteer task force.

"It gave us a fighting chance to catch up. The weather has been extremely warm, and the weeds love it. The removal of wildling pines, old man's beard and other pest plants has advanced our restoration goals, and enabled employment. Long may Jobs for Nature last. We value this and don't want it to stop."

The sanctuary has also used J4N funding for an initiative to employ Māori as trainee rangers, providing training and a career pathway. This has been mutually beneficial, helping the sanctuary to improve their visitor education by including content in guided tours on the sanctuary's pre-European history as a source of food and medicinal plants for local Māori.



Nikau southernmost palm tree.

Te Hoiere Catchment Freshwater Restoration

Tasman-Nelson Place-Based Case Study

Te Hoiere (*the Pelorus River*) is the largest river catchment draining into the Marlborough Sounds, and is a very significant area for Ngāti Kuia. The catchment freshwater restoration project is intended to restore the ecosystem of the whole catchment. The J4N fund holder is the Marlborough District Council, which works in partnership with a range of groups including Ngāti Kuia, the Department of Conservation and the wider community.

The project manager stated that the aspiration was that the J4N funding will contribute towards helping restore Te Hoiere and its tributaries from the mountains to the sea (*ki uta ki tai*) while supporting training and creating jobs.

The J4N funding has enabled the Council to scale up the Catchment Care Programme to deliver better freshwater quality outcomes through stream bank planting, fencing and collaborative catchment enhancement planning. Reported benefits include reductions in soil runoff, improved river and stream habitat, better water quality, the removal of pest weeds and increased carbon sequestration.

The Council found that unemployment numbers were far lower than anticipated, and reported that recruitment and retention was challenging. Key to the job creation aims is the development of a native plant nursery to be built at Titiraukawa. The aim is for locally-sourced plants to be propagated for planting along waterways, which will be protected by fences. However, the development of the nursery was reported as experiencing setbacks due to challenges in securing a water source for the site.

Fulfilling Te Tiriti settlements

Te Hoiere Catchment Freshwater Restoration project complements Ngāti Kuia's Treaty Settlement objectives. Ngāti Kuia have begun training whānau towards a Certificate in Horticulture Level 3, through a partnership with Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT). Graduates are employed by the project to undertake activities such as controlling willows and other weeds that had colonised the wetland, and planting native wetland species.

Education

Community education workshops have also been funded through J4N. The workshops cover topics such as the principles of seed collection. Seeds from the area are collected and grown in nurseries for planting in wetlands and along streams and rivers. The workshops teach the community about local vegetation and why eco-sourcing maximises restoration planting success and maintains genetic diversity. The workshops are reported to be popular and well attended.

The Te Hoiere Catchment Freshwater Restoration project is in Marlborough (not Tasman-Nelson), but is included in this place-based case study as it is supported through the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance which spans council boundaries across Te Tau Ihu.