



NGĀ HAPŪ O ŌTAKI  
HE WAKA EKE NOA

Tuesday 30 January 2023

Re: **Proposed Change 1 to the Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region  
Hearing Stream 6 - Indigenous Biodiversity**

Tēnā koutou katoa, tēnei te mihi atu ki a koutou katoa. Ko Melanie McCormick tēnei.

Good morning, Madam Chair, Commissioners, Staff Officers. My name is Melanie McCormick, I have been engaged by Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki (**Ngā Hapū**) to provide the oral submission on Hearing Stream 6 – Indigenous Biodiversity to Proposed Regional Policy Statement Change 1. Also, appearing with me today is Whaea Densie Hapeta, Chairperson of Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki and Dr Aroha Spinks, environmental consultant for Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki.

I would also like to acknowledge mana whenua who have spoken or are speaking today, tēnā koutou e nga Rangatira, e nga mana whenua o Te Whanganui a Tara.

As mana whenua, Ngā Hapū have observed the depletion of our taonga species, indigenous biodiversity throughout our rohe, and the wider Wellington rohe. This includes across all ecosystems and habitats, in our pae maunga, inland waterways, the ngahere, coastal landscapes (including the dune systems). In particular, the loss of taonga species and mahinga kai has impacted our traditional ways of being, our customary practices and the transmission of intergenerational knowledge of our mātauranga. This loss not only represents a physical loss of species, reduction in observed biodiversity (i.e. the extent and richness of indigenous biodiversity), but also the impacts on our hauora, our taha wairua, taha hinengaro, taha tinana, taha whānau and of course our connection with the whenua.

Generally, Ngā Hapū are supportive of the proposed amendments that relate to indigenous biodiversity. In large, the relief sought by Ngā Hapū have been included in the proposed amendments. We thank the Reporting Officer, Ms Guest for the time and effort and supporting the values that have been put forward by mana whenua.

### **Chapter Introduction**

We are generally supportive of the changes made to the Chapter Introduction, in particular recognising the importance of whānau, hapū and iwi in regard to the restoration of indigenous ecosystems. We also support the amendments that have updated the significant issues in regard to indigenous biodiversity in the region.

However, we seek greater reference to the wording of *'decision-making principles'* of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity. In particular, the importance and prioritisation of mauri. Use of the word 'mauri' recognises the Ngā Hapū world view within the framework, applying mauri to the management of indigenous biodiversity will lead to greater outcomes as it recognises the life-essence and vitality of all living things, not only the ecosystem services that biodiversity provides to communities.

*Relief sought:*

The decision-making principles for indigenous biodiversity prioritise the mauri and intrinsic value of indigenous biodiversity and recognise that the health and wellbeing of people and communities depend on the health and wellbeing of indigenous biodiversity and that, in return, people have a responsibility to care for and nurture it...

*Reasons for relief sought:*

The amendments provide greater alignment with the wording of the NPS-IB, and recognise the Māori world view in regards to kaitiakitanga and our responsibility to care for the environment.

**Objective 16**

We support the amendments proposed to Objective 16, in particular that the objective seeks to achieve protection, enhancement and restoration of indigenous biodiversity.

In addition, we support the inclusion and definition of the term 'ecosystem functions' which form an important part of the ecosystem.

**Objective 16B**

We support the proposed amendments to Objective 16B, and Objective 16C. We support the proposed amendments that recognise the role of mana whenua and our relationship with te taiao. We acknowledge the importance of the community and landowners, and in order to achieve the meaningful improvement to indigenous biodiversity it requires a collective approach.

**Policy 23**

We support the proposed amendment to Policy 23. While we acknowledge the alignment of the date to (4 August 2028) with the national direction, Ngā Hapū encourage local authorities to identify and schedule indigenous ecosystems and habitats with significant indigenous biodiversity values.

In particular we support subclause (e) which provides for the recognition of our cultural values in regard to indigenous biodiversity.

**Policy 24 and Policy 24A**

We support the proposed amendments to Policy 24 and Policy 24A. The amendments clarify and provide certainty that the effects management hierarchy must be applied in regard to protecting significant indigenous biodiversity from subdivision, use and development in accordance with the national direction.

We agree with the Reporting Officer and the evidence of Ms Maseyk that as you move along the spectrum of the effects management hierarchy, certainty of outcomes for indigenous biodiversity decreases. However, we recognise that biodiversity offsetting and compensation have a place within the

framework, we support the proposed amendments which seek to provide rigour and robustness to the application and appropriateness of the use of biodiversity offsetting and compensation in the Wellington rohe.

#### **Policy 47**

In principle we support new clause (j), we are pleased that mana whenua values are being explicitly provided for in regard to indigenous biodiversity when considering an application for resource consent, notice of requirement, or plan change / variation / review.

However, we are concerned that the subclause could limit indigenous biodiversity values to significant sites that are identified in a plan. It is acknowledged that Proposed Change 1 provides further opportunity and the requirement to identify such indigenous biodiversity values in a plan, we have some residual concerns that some significant sites are, intentionally omitted from regional and district plans.

#### **Policy 61**

We support as the overall intent of Policy 61, in particular we support clause (c) which recognises the relationship between land use and the effects on indigenous biodiversity. We encourage Policy 61 as it provides clarity between regional councils and territorial authorities, and that both have a duty and responsibility to maintain indigenous biodiversity. Ngā Hapū are well aware of the impacts of land use on indigenous biodiversity both terrestrial and aquatic. This recognises and provides for an integrated approach, ki uta ki tai, which aligns with Ngā Hapū values and approach to environmental management.

#### **Policy IE.1**

We support the proposed amendments to Policy IE.1. It is encouraging that mana whenua roles and values are being recognised and included as policies within the regional planning framework. We are pleased that mātauranga Māori, our practices such as kaitiakitanga and mahinga kai have been provided for, and are required to be included in lower order planning documents. Policies that recognise mana whenua and our role as kaitiaki.

We agree with Ms Guest's drafting of clause (d) which does not limit new occupation, use and development of Māori land. This provides opportunity for mana whenua to develop their whenua, particularly for those iwi and hapū that are pre-settlement (Te Tiriti) and may re-acquire their whenua.

In regard to clause (b) Ngā Hapū look forward to identifying taonga species, population and ecosystems that are unique to our rohe.

#### **Policy IE.2**

Similarly we support the proposed amendments to Policy IE.2, in particular recognition of kaitiakitanga, the decision making principles, mātauranga Māori and the practice of mahinga kai in regard to resource consent consideration, notice of requirement, or plan change / variation / review that may impact on indigenous biodiversity.

#### **Policy IE.2A**

We support proposed Policy IE2.A which recognises and indigenous biodiversity that does not have significant indigenous biodiversity values and is not on Māori land, which is in accordance with Clause 3.16 of the NPS-IB. We are pleased that indigenous biodiversity outside of Significant Natural Areas,

must also be managed in accordance with the effects management hierarchy and provided for in regional and district plans.

### **Policy IE.3**

We support the proposed amendments to Policy IE.3, we agree with the 'Explanation' that sets out a partnership with mana whenua and in collaboration with communities and landowners is required to give effect to this policy.

### **Method IE.1**

We support Method IE.1, Ngā Hapū look forward to identifying the local approach to give effect to the *decision making principles* for indigenous biodiversity.

### **Method IE.2**

We support Method IE.2, particularly that Ngā Hapū and other mana whenua can identify projects / opportunities for offsetting and compensation. While we recognise it is the less preferred management tool (and effects management hierarchy), if offsetting and compensation it is to be utilised, then the use of an inventory would achieve the greatest outcome.

### **Method IE. 3**

We support the proposed amendments to Method IE.3 and look forward to developing a Regional Biodiversity Strategy with GWRC, territorial authorities and the community and other stakeholders.

### **Method IE.4**

We support the amendment to Method IE.4 and Ngā Hapū are keen to establish a partnership with GWRC to develop our own kaitiaki monitoring programme.

### **Method 32**

We support the proposed amendments to Method 32, in particular clause (1) which carves out the role and responsibility of whānau, iwi and hapū to identify areas and sites of significant to mana whenua. We also agree with Ms Guest that in order to achieve the greatest outcome for indigenous biodiversity a collective partnership approach may be required in regard to identification and protect of other significant values.

### **Method 21**

We support the proposed amendments to Method 21.

### **Method 53**

We support Method 53 and appreciate the correction to the cross-references provided by the submitter.

### **Method 54**

We support the proposed amendments to Method 54.