



GUARDIANS OF PĀUATAHANUI INLET

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To: Greater Wellington Regional Council

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Submission: GWRC Long Term Plan 2018-2028

Summary

This submission addresses those elements of the Greater Wellington Regional Council Long Term Plan 2018 – 2028 which are relevant to the objectives of the **Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet:**

- a) To encourage, promote, protect, maintain and foster the natural, historic and cultural values of the Pāuatahanui Inlet.
- b) To promote recognition locally, regionally, nationally and internationally of the ecological values and standing of the Inlet.

General

This submission is based on the information contained in the *Supporting Information to the Consultation Document* rather than the principal consultation document as it contained the information relevant to the issues of importance to us.

GOPI strongly supports and appreciates the Council's commitment to a "an environment with clean air, fresh water, healthy soils and diverse ecosystems" (P11).

We submit that the term "marine" be included to ensure that salt water and marine ecosystems are explicitly included in this community outcome.

GOPI acknowledges the Council's work on catchment management and related policy and implementation to sustainably manage and improve the quality of Te Awarua-o-Porirua and its contributing catchment. GOPI particularly supports and appreciates the scientific monitoring, analysis and reporting of issues and trends relating to the harbour, and the focus and action on coordinating and supporting community education. We note and endorse the proposed increase in the level of science monitoring. (p27)

GOPI strongly endorses the Whaitua process for Te Awarua-o-Porirua and its catchment. We look forward to the results of the Whaitua process being

incorporated into policy, plans and actions for the harbour and its catchment. We assume that the resources identified in the financial parts of the plan will continue to be applied to and support these important initiatives and activities.

Resource Management

Compliance and enforcement, pollution prevention and control, and state of the environment monitoring are important to our objectives to improve the quality and condition of the Te Awarua-o-Porirua and its contributing catchment.

As acknowledged, we support the increased level of science monitoring (p27), assuming the Inlet and catchment will benefit from this increase.

Land Management

The “rural” parts of the Inlet catchment are principally occupied by life style property owners, many of whom have limited knowledge, much less experience in managing pests and weeds, pasture and animal management, erosion problems from land clearance, not to mention issues such as understanding how septic tanks should operate, or limiting and controlling storm and swimming pool water discharges. Anecdotal evidence suggests this is a major and growing problem in the Inlet catchment.

Accordingly, and in conjunction with the Porirua City Council, education and supporting assistance for such landowners is critical. We urge GWRC to increase its capacity and programmes in this area, especially in the light of increased storm and erosion events exacerbated by climate change. We see this work as a vital part of the Council’s stated “support our communities” and “working with landowners” and partnering with other agencies (pp 23/24)

We note and strongly support the additional investment in the Riparian Programme (p29). This is of major importance in protecting and enhancing catchment and harbour ecosystems.

As part of catchment and riparian management in urban areas, we submit that GWRC should explicitly support and help implement Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD), especially in relation to stormwater management and flood control. WSUD replaces or supplements use of physical assets such as pipes and holding ponds with swales, run off absorption areas and, where appropriate, wetlands. It is both cost effective, environmentally and visually positive, and adds to amenity values.

Harbour Management

The Inlet is an important recreational resource for all forms of water recreation. This last year, with many fine days, recreational use of the Inlet has been intense.

There is increasing conflict among Inlet recreational users, and particularly between

fast moving power boats and jet skis and other craft such as waka ama, yachts and kayaks. Further, we see no evidence that enforcement of the rules occurs. Signage is poor and in summer, power boats and jet skis regularly travel at speed within 200m of the shore, and outside their assigned areas.

Biodiversity Management

We support the key biodiversity programmes (p32). The completion and implementation of the Porirua Catchment Whaitua is important, as is finalising the Natural Resources Plan. Other strategies and programmes (such as the Te Awarua- o-Porirua Harbour Strategy Review) hinge on the Whaitua report completion and adoption.

Regional Parks and Forests

We see GWRC having environmental and related biodiversity responsibility for the parks and reserve areas in the Inlet catchment. Traditionally some of the bigger areas such as the Belmont Regional Park are farmed.

We consider that, within the life of this 10 year plan, increasing emphasis should be placed on reverting as much of the park system as possible to native vegetation, especially in gully areas and other places that might be erosion prone.

There have been noticeable improvements to the Whitireia Park since grazing has been stopped. More native vegetation on areas such as Belmont Regional Park will provide enhanced amenity values as well as being effective in limiting sediment and pollutant incursion into the Inlet and increasing resilience to storm hazards including the increase caused by climate change.

We note that the current Parks Management Plan provides for retirement of pasture in steep parts of the Battle Hill Park. But, with the exception of Cannons Creek (where there is considerable beneficial planting) there are no proposals for vegetation retirement, or riparian planting on the northern slopes and related riparian areas of the Belmont Regional Park.

The LTP says that the Regional Parks Network Plan is currently under review (p 48). This review should explicitly include consideration of an increase in native vegetation planting and related retirement of pasture.

We note and support the intention on p 49 (under *Environment, landscape and heritage management*) to support community group planting and restoration work in parks and forests.

We note the commitment on p84 under *Flood Protection* to using a range of methods such as “undertaking riparian planting and integrated land use and water management planning.” It is not clear whether the financial information (P 86) includes non-physical works and activities such as riparian and other catchment planting and WSUD. <<<end>>>