



Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet Strategic Directions and Activities – 2025

These notes were compiled in 2025 by the GOPI Committee to guide decision making around the following questions:

Who are we?

How do we fit in with Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour accord?

What do we offer that is not already effectively covered by other groups?

What is our strategy for the future?

The Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet (GOPI), a registered charity, aims to promote, protect, maintain, and foster the natural, historic and cultural values of the Pāuatahanui Inlet while supporting the implementation of the Porirua Harbour Strategy and Action Plan.

Our vision is: For the Inlet to be clean, clear, teeming with life and a respected and valued resource for the community.

Our mission is: To provide the information, education, knowledge and resources to bring our vision to reality.

We can do this by:

- Informing the community about the current state of the Inlet, and how this is changing both positively and negatively over time;
- Educating the community about how their behaviour contributes to these changes, with practical, achievable actions they can take to make a difference;
- Encouraging the community to participate in collective action to bring about the change we wish to see;
- Providing Advice and Submissions to local and central government and other relevant agencies (such as NZTA) on legislation, plans, resource consents, bylaws and project proposals;
- Holding landowners, residents, recreational users, developers and contractors to account in complying with regulations designed to protect the health of the Inlet;
- Holding national and local government, as well as those organisations with statutory obligations in the Inlet such as service providers to account in enforcing regulations designed to protect the health of the Inlet;
- Celebrating our successes.

We would like to draw those elements together for the greater good of the Inlet, working towards restoring it to be a great example of an estuary and all of the wildlife that is associated with such estuaries. The recently signed Harbour Accord between PCC, WCC, GWRC, Wellington Water and Ngāti Toa is seeking to achieve these goals and we want to determine how best we can support their objectives.



A great deal of resource over many decades has already been invested in protecting and enhancing the Inlet by a large number of different bodies including local government, DOC, Ngāti Toa as well as community organisations such as GOPI, Schools, Rotary, Forest and Bird, Residents Associations etc.

Below are a number of opportunities that we either currently are involved with

and need to decide on the future level of activity or are thoughts of projects that may contribute to the overall aims of the Harbour Accord. Financial implications for GOPI are outlined.

Science in the Inlet

1. The key science project which we have been involved in is the **3 yearly cockle survey**. We should plan on continuing this survey. Key benefits are information on population trends of cockles in the intertidal zone through a comparable series of surveys; and raising public awareness of the Inlet and its challenges and involving the wider community in GOPI activities.

Financial Implications: Currently fully funded through sponsorship, may change, up to \$10,000 each 3 years. In the order of 500+ volunteer hours just for the event.

2. Access to technical information about the Inlet is a significant challenge. GOPI will contribute to this process by producing a regularly updated, partially annotated, **bibliography of scientific and technical work** on our website. This has been partially completed for the whole of Te Awarua – o - Porirua (see: <https://porirua.govt.nz/your-council/city-planning-and-reporting/our-strategic-priorities/healthy-harbour/research-publications/>). We will expand the scope of this to include technical work which has been carried out in the Harbour catchments – which are the source of many of the problems and solutions relating to the health of the Harbour. For example, there has been significant work done in support of the GW Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee and in support of the construction of Transmission Gully motorway. In time this could also provide a portal for the community to access other community groups such as Residents' Associations, and get an understanding of who is doing what.

Financial implications: Potentially significant volunteer hours.

3. **Support for other scientific work** could make a significant contribution to our understanding of how the Harbour works. Where further work is proposed by scientists from institutions such as universities and GWRC we will, where appropriate, offer financial and/or in-kind support.

Financial implications: Potentially significant volunteer hours.

4. **Harbour Report Card**. In the past, a report card has been compiled by PHT based on indicators which are measured primarily by GWRC. This not only provided an easily digested "State of the Harbour" statement but also provided an opportunity to consider whether the monitoring being done is adequate and appropriate. In the future we could offer to organize/coordinate a revived "Report Card" or encourage other organisations (GW/PCC?) to do so. The advent of the **Harbour Accord** (the first pan-agency agreement since 2015 on



the harbour and its future state) should be the basis for this. It is important to have ongoing timely notifications (by PCC and GWRC) on Harbour water quality and these need to be extended beyond summer water-quality at selected swimming sites.

Financial implications: Potentially significant volunteer hours.

Re-vegetation Projects

GOPI has, over the past few years, managed to obtain grants that have enabled us to make a positive contribution to re-vegetation in and around the Inlet. This also provides opportunities for members of the local community to participate and take ownership of caring for the Inlet. We strongly believe that this is a very positive and highly visible role for GOPI and should continue, when funding opportunities arise.

Ongoing maintenance of the planting is an opportunity for participation with minimal cost and a very important part of the re-vegetation process. However, all of this work is dependent on active community engagement.

Re-vegetation projects will be strongly supported when funding opportunities arise, especially as it provides opportunities for members and others to participate in hands-on activities that will benefit the harbour ecosystem. It's important to publicise these planting events and encourage follow up (watering, removing detritus etc) as it provides opportunities for members and others to participate directly in activities that will benefit the harbour ecosystem.

Financial implications: \$1,000 2025-26. Minimum \$300 pa supporting events plus many volunteer hours.

Inlet Clean-up

This is an annual event that is usually very popular with the local community and we regularly see family groups participating. This event is both popular and important to GOPI's visibility and functions. As with the planting project, it also provides hands-on opportunities for members and people from the wider community.

Weighing of the litter collected provides a useful statistic and helps to cement a sense of achievement for participants. We will also find some way to include statistics for those members and non-members who pick on a regular basis throughout the year.

Financial implications: \$100 – cost neutral if sponsorship is provided plus many volunteer hours.

Publicising Activities and Information.

GOPI (particularly Michael Waldron) has for some time produced excellent summaries of various science/technical topics in its newsletter. This will be continued as far as possible. Some



consideration should be given to a compilation of the articles that have been prepared to be made available in some other areas of social media. (**Note** this is already available on the website).

GOPI's work on science and related activities (such as the Cockle Count) and community information are much appreciated and will continue being available on the GOPI website (<https://gopi.org.nz>) and, where appropriate, on other social media.

Financial implications: Newsletter costs \$100 pa, Website costs \$100 pa plus significant volunteer hours.

Further to the long running "Living Waters" video series released in 2012 [<https://poriruaharbourtrust.org.nz/living-waters-teacher-resource/>] we will support *Off the Map Productions Ltd* in providing a series of videos (Wai Ora – Living Waters Series II) on different aspects of the Inlet, focus on the wildlife, both above and under the water. This will provide a platform for multi-media information and education on the value of the Inlet.

Financial implications: \$2,000 toward initial publication materials. Overall \$200,000 budget is beyond GOPI financial resources but volunteer actions to achieve sponsorship and further contributions as agreed by the Committee to be within the annual budget of the Society.

Other opportunities include:

1. Promote what we have achieved over the years with evidence such as before and after photographs. Likewise illustrate damage that has been caused to the Inlet by things such as Transmission Gully with before and after evidence.
2. Work with PCC and Ngāti Toa on informational signage around the Inlet to highlight the biodiversity, history and value of the Inlet.
3. organise more meetings where like-minded people from the community can come together and agree on various priorities and activities (although this is happening through connections with PHACCT and groups such as Friends of Taupo Swamp and Catchment, predator-free groups, Ngāti Toa and various agencies and authorities).

Financial implications: Signage costs could be prohibitive. Maximum \$2,000 plus support from other agencies/organisations and volunteer hours.

Advice and Submissions

GOPI, often together with the Porirua Harbour Trust, has made many formal submissions, especially to Porirua City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council on any significant plans, by-laws, resource consents or development proposals that could adversely affect the health of the Inlet and its surrounding catchment. A list of recent ones is available on our website. In addition to formal submissions, we provide informal advice to relevant staff of local authorities and agencies such as NZTA and Wellington Water. This is a technical area of major importance in setting the plans and



rules for future harbour quality. Working with PHACCT helps with providing a wider range of expertise to support this often-time-consuming activity.

Financial implications: Minimal but significant volunteer hours.

Pest Trapping

As a part of a recent DOC grant, GOPI became involved in trapping of rats and other predators around the Inlet. There are already a significant number of Pest (Predator)-Free groups and we need to work more closely with those groups to fill in the gaps and avoid duplication. GOPI Members have endorsed working more closely with Pest-Free groups.

*Financial implications: Trap Maintenance currently \$25 per trap pa = \$1,400 pa
Sponsorship covers 2025-26 year plus volunteer hours.*

Photographic Competitions

Between 2005 and 2019, and in 2021 and 2023, GOPI ran a very successful annual photographic competition that raised the profile of our organization and various aspects of Pāuatahanui Inlet. This encouraged a range of hobbyists in the art, from beginners to the very skilled, to provide a window on the Inlet that has resulted in a comprehensive photographic album. We use some of these images on our website and in other promotional material.

In recent years PHACCT has expanded this concept to one that covers the whole Harbour and its catchment. GOPI has supported PHACCT with this bigger and more widely publicised biennial photo competition, replacing of our historical competition.

Financial implications: Donation \$500 to PHACCT and volunteer support.

END.