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# Wellington Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Te Upoko o te Ika Conservation Board

Annual Report  
1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018

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ANNUAL REPORT  
1 JULY 2017 – 30 JUNE 2018

*Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority  
Pursuant to Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987*

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# 1. Chairperson's report

I am delighted to inform you that, following endorsement from the Minister for Conservation, the Hon. Eugenie Sage, the **Wellington Conservation Management Strategy 2018-2028 (CMS)** has been approved by the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA). On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank all the individuals and respective groups and statutory authorities who worked with us to have this document approved before Christmas.

It is timely to remind ourselves of the purpose of this document, as we bring it into play, which is to implement general policies and establish objectives for the integrated management of natural and historic resources, including any native species, managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) under various statutes<sup>1</sup>, and for recreation, tourism and other conservation purposes. The CMS also implements treaty settlements which give effect to the legislative responsibilities under Section 4 of the Conservation Act.

The process to bring this document to this point has been long and sometimes frustrating, but public participation is vital if the CMS is to have any credibility. This takes time. The document has placed more emphasis on community needs, community participation, the introduction of Te Reo and capitalizing on the willingness of communities and iwi to actively contribute to preserving and enhancing our natural heritage.

This has been a long journey for some of our board members, and I do wish to thank Barry Wards, in particular, for his consistent attention to detail through this entire process. Our Board is also very appreciative of the professional and personal commitment of the Department's planners, Lyn Hansberry and Sarah Smylie to this task. Senior management officials of DOC have also been key drivers in helping the Board achieve this outcome; we thank them most sincerely for their support.

This Board has spent the best part of the last two years bringing the CMS to the table. Having considered DOC's stretch goals, intermediate outcomes and priorities, we now need to work with the Department to fully implement the CMS through the Departments' business plan and associated budgetary framework. Implementation also involves aligning the CMS with the expectations of the Minister of Conservation and ensuring that communities are well-informed about the progress made in achieving milestones

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<sup>1</sup> Including the Conservation Act 1987, Wildlife Act 1953, Marines Reserves Act 1971, Reserves Act 1977, Wild Animal Act 1953, Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 and the National Parks Act 1980.

and outcomes. This will involve developing a new monitoring and reporting, framework that works for DOC, the Board and conservation stakeholders.

It is critical for the Board that the CMS is a living document and remains continuously relevant throughout its ten-year life. This will involve an ongoing focus on integrated conservation management to ensure that we continue to protect and enhance our natural environment, in all its machinations.

## **Board meetings**

Our Board meetings are well attended by members; following the appointment of two new members, Christy Kimble and Anne Sophie Page, and the reappointment of Raewyn Moss, Bill Day and myself, we now have a full complement. The Board has discussed the need for more meetings in this term and has finalized the development of a Communications and Engagement Plan and Board Charter over the past year to better enable a more long-term consistent approach to our work. We are very keen to connect with our wider community and we will be implementing our Communications plan this coming year.

There has been a steady flow of public attendance at the Board meetings this last year, and the Board appreciates this direct connection that community people bring to their issues.

**Sites visits** are important for the Board; they give us a firsthand opportunity to see the work DOC is doing within and alongside the communities that we visit. Such visits also enable the Board to meet with local groups, including farmers and conservation and environmental groups and engage with local iwi.

During the 2017-18 year, we have visited: Brancepeth Station and the surrounding catchment area, Waikanae Estuary and the Tiniwaitara Marae (Turakina) During the latter visit, we were briefed by Chris Shenton, representing the Kaitaki Taiao Lands and Environment, Te Runanga o Nga Wairiki/ Ngati Apa Developments Ltd/Ngati Apa Charitable Trust, followed by a visit to the coastal land close to the marae. One of our meetings was held at the historic Brancepeth Station in the Wairarapa, which gave the Board a valuable opportunity to understand more about the environmental issues facing this farm and the local farming community.

The Board is committed to its **Treaty of Waitangi** obligations under Section 4 of the Conservation Act and, where possible, we meet with local iwi to progress those obligations face-to-face. A highlight of the past year was the Board meeting at the Tiniwaitara Marae and our ongoing plan is to schedule one board meeting annually on a marae and continue to monitor post settlement discussions.

**The NZCA** chairs meetings are becoming more relevant for our Board. These meetings

provide the opportunity to engage and network with other board chairs and help to build a more integrated national Board structure serving local community interests and conservation efforts. Minister Sage has expressed an interest in engaging more with Conservation Boards and receiving advice on a range of matters. The current NZCA representative to our Board is David Barnes.

### Relationship with other Boards

Board members have liaison responsibilities with neighboring Boards, in particular, and, where possible, attend other Board meetings at least once a year to maintain those relationships and be aware of other Board issues. The boards we frequently meet with, and which border the Wellington Conservation Boards area, are the East Coast Hawke's Bay, Taranaki/Whanganui, and Tongariro Taupo Conservation Boards.

**Fish and Game** meetings held within the Wellington Region are also occasionally attended by Board members. This relationship continues to be very important to the Board, as some of the issues can be complex and challenging.

The Board has also taken an active interest in ongoing discussions between the Department, Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO) operators and recreational hunters. This is an important area of interest to the Board, especially since the issues were one of the priority areas raised during the revision of the CMS. The discussions have been productive this past year and it is expected that progress will continue to be made over the 2018-19 year to achieve the outcomes of the CMS.

Of the many issues concerning the management of public conservation lands in our region, over the past year the Board has been exposed to matters relating to stewardship land, access to conservation land, Old Man's Beard (*Clematis vitalba*) management in the Taihape district, wilding pines in the Rimutaka Ranges, fish netting and whitebait concerns near Waikanae, biodiversity and pollution impacts in Lake Horowhenua, management of the Carter Reserve and the Rewa Bush Conservation Area in the Wairarapa.

While the Board has the ability to make submissions on various conservation matters, the priority focus on revision of the CMS has made this a lesser priority over the past year. It did, however, make a submission on the **draft GWRC Pest Management Plan** and expects to maintain a watching brief on other consultation documents over the coming year.

The Board greatly acknowledge the support and assistance of the Department in fulfilling its responsibilities. During the past year, Chris Visser has been appointed Statutory Manager for the Lower North Island Region and Sara Robinson is now

providing a consistent administrative support for the Board following a turnover of secretarial support during the last five years.

### **Conclusion**

The Board has had a very busy 2017-18 year. We were able to submit the revised CMS to the NZCA for approval and are now delighted to see that document approved. This puts the Board on a new path and gives it added focus to ensure the outcomes of the CMS are achieved. This is an exciting challenge and we look forward to it.

It has been my very great pleasure to chair the Board over the past year. A lot has been achieved and Board has worked well together as a team, with the Department, to deliver those achievements. I look forward to continuing that work over the coming year.

Jenny Rowan, QSO, JP

Chairperson

## 2. Introduction

The Wellington Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Te Upoko o te Ika Conservation Board (the Board) is one of 15 statutory Conservation Boards appointed by the Minister under Section 6P of the Conservation Act 1987. The functions and powers of the Board are outlined in Sections 6M and 6N respectively. Each Conservation Board covers a geographically-defined area and comprises up to 12 members.

## 3. Work Programme Overview

The Board set a work programme during the year which included planned activities around the Board's statutory functions and in relation to the Minister's Letter of Expectations. A key focus for this year was completing the Conservation Management Strategy for the region, and significant focus went into achieving this.

Further detail on the work programme and the Board's activities is included within section 8 of this report.

## 4. Membership of the Board

Members are appointed to the Board by the Minister of Conservation and are representative of the different communities and interests across the region.

During 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 the Board has consisted of 8 members, as per Table 1.

**Table 1 - Board membership 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018**

Name	Location	Date first appointed	Term ends
<b>Jenny Rowan (Chairperson)</b>	Kapiti Coast	17 August 2015	30 June 2021
<b>Jim Rainey</b>	Mangaweka	1 May 2014	30 June 2019
<b>Barry Wards (Deputy Chairperson)</b>	Upper Hutt	1 May 2014	30 June 2019
<b>Mike Tuohy</b>	Palmerston North	1 July 2017	30 June 2018
<b>Raewyn Moss</b>	Wellington	1 July 2016	30 June 2021
<b>Esther Dijkstra</b>	Masterton	1 July 2016	30 June 2019
<b>Rama Rewi</b>	Wellington	1 July 2017	30 June 2018
<b>Bill Day</b>	Wellington	1 July 2016	30 June 2020
<b>Jennie Smeaton</b>	Porirua	1 July 2017	30 June 2020



## 5. Board's district

### 5.1 District

The Board's district (Fig. 1) extends from the bottom of the North Island to the mouth of the Turakina River in the west, up the Turakina River and over the top of the Ruahine Forest Park, down the eastern boundary of the Forest Park and then out across to the east coast near Waimarama. It includes the three Wellington harbour islands, Matiu/Somes, Mokopuna and Makaro/Ward, as well as Kāpiti and Mana islands.



Figure 1 - Map of Wellington Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Te Upoko o te Ika Conservation Board district

## 5.2 Significant areas of natural and historic importance

### **MANAWATŪ**

#### **Ruahine Forest Park**

Vegetation in the Park varies as the forests in the north are generally a mix of podocarps, including red beech, rimu, miro, mataī and mountain beech, with kahikatea dominating swampy areas. Further south, the dense growth of leatherwood (tūpare), forms the largest unbroken expanse in the country.

#### **Manawatū Gorge Scenic Reserve**

One of only a few places in the world where a river passes through a dividing range. Tawa and other podocarp species dominant the steep bush clad hills. A long-term collaborative project with many conservation partners is enhancing the biodiversity and recreation opportunities of the area.

#### **Manawatū Estuary**

Listed under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands as a Wetland of International Importance. This estuarine wetland has one of the most diverse ranges of birds to be seen at any one place in New Zealand; a total of 95 species have been identified at the estuary. It is a significant area of salt marsh and mudflat and a prized feeding ground for many birds, including the migratory eastern bar-tailed godwit (kuhikuhiwaka).

#### **Manawatū/Horowhenua Coastal Dunes**

These dune systems are habitat for fragile and rare wetland plants and hold particular importance for whānau, hapū and iwi. The Foxton Beach dune fields are recognised as one of the largest parabolic dunes systems in the southern hemisphere.

### **WAIRARAPA**

#### **Pukaha National Wildlife Centre**

Located in the northern Wairarapa, the centre plays an important role in the captive breeding of many of New Zealand's endangered bird species, as well as fulfilling an educational role by giving the public the opportunity to see and learn about these birds. Native birds are also being returned to the adjoining Pukaha forest.

#### **Tararua Forest Park**

With increasing altitude from the edge of the Park, lowland podocarp/tawa or podocarp/kamahi forest passes into montane podocarp/beech, then subalpine pure beech (forming a sharp treeline), to alpine tussock grasslands.

### **Aorangi Forest Park**

Beech forest dominates the north of the range with hīnau and mataī characterising the hardwood forests and lower altitudes. The shrublands of the river terraces and coastal foothills are generally dominated by tauhinu while mānuka and kānuka are the prevalent species at low altitude. Small areas of sub-alpine shrubland occur on the higher peaks.

### **Lake Wairarapa and Lake Onoke**

The lakes and their associated wetlands and scattered forest remnants are the largest wetland system in the lower North Island. The wetlands contain mudflats, lagoons, sand flats, marshlands, salt marshes and back waters. The area is of national and international importance for indigenous plant and animal communities.

## **WELLINGTON**

### **Remutaka Forest Park**

Beech forest dominates much of the park, joined by podocarps at lower altitudes. These forests support hundreds of indigenous plant species and provide habitat for a range of invertebrates, freshwater fish, reptiles, and birds, including reintroduced brown kiwi.

### **Turakirae Head Scientific Reserve**

Turakirae Head is characterised by its earthquake-raised beaches that record a continuous geological upheaval over the past 7,000 years. It also has Wellington's largest fur seal colony.

### **Waikanae Estuary**

This nationally-significant reserve protects a natural mosaic of freshwater lakelets, saltwater lagoons and marshes, tidal sand flats and sandy beach at the mouth of the Waikanae River. It is connected to the Kāpiti Marine Reserve and Kāpiti Island Nature Reserve, providing a rare sequence of protection for animals that move between sea, river and land habitats.

### **Kāpiti Marine Reserve**

Kāpiti Marine Reserve links the world-renowned bird sanctuary on Kāpiti Island with the protected Waikanae estuary on the mainland, creating a rare continuum of protected land and sea. The reserve covers two areas – a small section to the north of the seaward side of the island, and a larger section between the protected areas of Kāpiti Island and Waikanae Estuary.

### **Kāpiti Island Nature Reserve**

This 1,965-ha sanctuary is 5 km off the west coast of the lower North Island. It is home to many native species that are either very rare or entirely absent from the mainland, including: kōkako, brown teal/pāteke, saddleback/tīeke, stitchbird/hihi, takahē, North Island tomtit/miromiro and little spotted kiwi/kiwi pukupuku.

### **Mana Island Scientific Reserve**

Many bird species can be seen on Mana Island, including takahē, little penguin/kororā, brown teal/pāteke, fluttering shearwater/pakahā, Australasian gannet/tākapu, yellow-crowned parakeet/kākāriki, little spotted kiwi/kiwi pukupuku and North Island robin/toutouwai.

### **Matiu/Somes Island Scientific and Historic Reserves**

Matiu/Somes Island, the largest of three islands located in Wellington Harbour, is a predator-free scientific reserve. It is also a historic reserve with a rich multicultural history. Ownership of the Wellington Harbour Islands was transferred to the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust as part of its Treaty settlement package. The Department has a co-management relationship with the iwi of the Harbour Island Kaitiaki Board under the Reserves Act.

### **Taputeranga Marine Reserve**

Taputeranga Marine Reserve is 6 km from the city centre on Wellington's south coast, providing easy access to study, interact with and record marine life and habitats.

## 6. Board meetings and field visits

During 2017/18, the Board's formal programme comprised four meetings and three site/field trips. Meetings of the Board were held in Masterton, Turakina, Keneperu (Porirua) and Paraparaumu. Site/field trips were to Brancepeth Station, Tiniwaitara Marae and the Waikanae Estuary.

### 6.1 Meetings

The Board scheduled four full-day meetings, with one of these split over two half days.

#### Board meetings 2017/18

Meeting Date	Meeting Venue	Location
18/19 Aug 2017	Brancepeth House/Hotel Copthorne	Masterton
17/18 Nov 2017	Tiniwaitara Marae	Turakina
9 Feb 2018	Department of Conservation, Keneperu Office	Keneperu
25/26 May 2018	QE Park	Paraparaumu

The Board scheduled meetings/workshops to discuss the CMS.

Meeting Date	Meeting Venue	Location
14 July 2017	National Office	Wellington
26 July 2017	National Office	Wellington
18 Aug 2017	DOC office, Masterton	Wairarapa
12/13 Sept 2017	National Office	Wellington
4/5 Oct 2017	National Office	Wellington
6/7 Nov 2017	National Office	Wellington
26 Jan 2018	National Office	Wellington
1 Mar 2018	National Office	Wellington
28 Apr 2018	National office	Wellington

## 6.2 Field trips

Visits to specific locations provided opportunities for the Board to:

- Become more familiar with the conservation values of key places;
- Discuss management challenges and approaches with Department staff and conservation stakeholders; and
- Increase understanding and opportunities for conservation growth.

### 2017/18 field trips:

August 2017: Tour of Beetham Homestead, Brancepeth Station:

- Provided the opportunity to learn about the history and establishment of this long-time farming area and to understand more about the environmental issues facing farms in the Wairarapa area. Visited areas revegetated within station catchment.

November 2017: Tiniwaitara Marae and surrounding coastlands

- Briefed by Chris Shenton, representing the Kaitaki Taiao Lands and Environment, Te Runanga o Nga Wairiki/Ngati Apa Developments Ltd/Ngati Apa Charitable Trust on historical and local issues affecting the marae and coastal land close to the marae.

May 2018: Waikanae Estuary

- Opportunity to meet with key stakeholders, DoC management and staff, and locals to understand the issues associated with the use of the Estuary and surrounding beach areas in particular during whitebaiting season.

## 6.3 Board member's attendance

Table 3: Board attendance at 2017/18 meetings and field trips

Board Members	Number of meetings attended (4 held)	Number of field trips attended (3 held)
Jenny Rowan	4	3
Barry Wards	4	3
Jim Rainey	1	1
Esther Dijkstra	4	3
Bill Day	3	3
Raewyn Moss	4	3
Mike Tuohy	3	2
Jennie Smeaton	3	2
Rama Rewi	1	1

For approved Board activities, Members are paid \$180 per day and the Chairperson \$240 per day.

## **6.4 Board sub-committees**

### **Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)**

CMS sub-committee members were Jim Rainey, Barry Wards, Jenny Rowan. The Board representatives on the panel hearing submissions on the Conservation Management Strategy were Jenny Rowan and Barry Wards.

### **Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan**

Raewyn Moss, Jenny Rowan and Bill Day have developed the Board's Communications and Engagement plan as a basis for connecting with our stakeholders and our wider community.

## **6.5 Liaison roles**

Stakeholder liaison is an important part of the Board's responsibility and essential to fulfilling its role. The appointment of Board members recognises the liaisons, connections and various types of engagement members have with the wide range of sectors and stakeholders involved in conservation and the conservation estate. It is important that Board members maintain these and bring the wisdom, knowledge and experiences gained to the Board table.

The Board considers some stakeholder liaison activities are more crucial to the Board's role than others; liaison with the Department, for example, being considered the most important. If the Board is to effectively fulfil its advisory role with the Department, as its primary 'community of interest', it must establish good working relationships with key Department staff and a mutual understanding and respect of values, styles of engagement, areas of tension and cultural differences etc. Such relationships take time to develop and maintain and are enhanced through regular engagement, including at Board meetings, through remote means and at meetings / events outside Board meetings.

Similarly, the Board considers stakeholder relationships with other key conservation partners must be maintained. These include Fish and Game Councils, conservation NGOs (eg, Forest & Bird), NZCA, Councils, other Conservation Boards and community conservation interest groups within the region. The level of liaison and engagement will be dependent upon the importance the Board places on the benefits and the contribution to its role, responsibilities and business priorities.



In order to network and raise its profile, the Board agreed to assign liaison roles with the following for 2017/18:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ▪ Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board  | Rama Rewi                                     |
| ▪ Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board   | Jim Rainey                                    |
| ▪ East Coast Hawke's Bay Conservation Board   | Jenny Rowan                                   |
| ▪ NZCA  | Jenny Rowan                                   |
| ▪ DoC Senior Management Wellington  | Raewyn Moss                                   |
| ▪ DoC Operations offices  | Jim Rainey,<br>Mike Tuohy,<br>Esther Dijkstra |
| ▪ Rangitikei Environment Group  | Jim Rainey                                    |
| ▪ Fish & Game Manawatu  | Jim Rainey                                    |
| ▪ Fish & Game Wellington  | Barry Wards                                   |
| ▪ Wairarapa Liaison (includes local Fish & Game,<br>hunting groups and Wairarapa Marine Protected Area) | Esther Dijkstra                               |
| ▪ Aorangi Steering Group  | Esther Dijkstra                               |
| ▪ Carter Reserve  | Esther Dijkstra                               |
| ▪ Project Kaka  | Barry Wards                                   |
| ▪ Forest & Bird   | Barry Wards                                   |
| ▪ Wairarapa Moana   | Esther Dijkstra                               |
| ▪ Ruahine User Group  | Mike Touhy                                    |
| ▪ Local Government  | Jenny Rowan                                   |
| ▪ Iwi   | Jennie Smeaton                                |
| ▪ Strategic Advisory Committee for Kāpiti Island Reserves (KISAC)<br>(DG appointment)                   | Barry Wards                                   |

## 6.6 Other meetings and activities

### Conservation Board Chairs' Meetings

Jenny Rowan (Chair) attended the Conservation Board Chairpersons conference. Once a year an opportunity is made by NZCA to allow the conservation Board Chairs to meet and discuss their respective issues. To be able to understand other boards concerns in a national forum is helpful, and I find these meetings very informative.

## 7. Public involvement

The Board informs and interacts with the public through forums, correspondence, an annual report, DOC website, media releases and the Conservation Board Newsletter.

The Conservation Boards' Newsletter can be found at:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/news/newsletters/conservation-boards-newsletter/>

The Board's formal relationships with specific organisations are described in section 13.

### 7.1 Public Forum

During 2017/18, the Board welcomed individuals to a Public Forum, an allocated time period scheduled at each meeting, to enable people to speak to the Board about agenda items or other conservation issues.

Matters raised by speakers who participated in these Forums included:

- Improvements for Carters Reserve, including weed control, pest control, involving families in working bees and an enlarged car park.
- Concerns in relation to Lake Horowhenua Domain and issues that affect the environment.
- Fire risk at Taita Scientific Reserve and potential resource consent for an adventure park in Porirua.
- Waikanae Scenic Reserve, the protection of the local wildlife birds.
- Deer impacts at Hutt Bush
- CMS progress
- Possible liaison with the NZ Botanical Society and Otari

The Board regards the Forum as an important opportunity to hear from the community and is continually encouraging people to participate in these forums in 2018/19.

## **7.2 Correspondence**

The Board values receiving information from people who have interests and/or a long-term association with specific areas within the Wellington region. The issues raised by correspondents include the dumping of Asphalt at QE Park and Deer devastating Hutt Bush.

## **7.3 Distribution of the Board's Annual Report**

The primary audience for the Board's Annual Report is the New Zealand Conservation Authority. The Board will circulate the Report more widely to increase awareness of the Board's role and conservation issues in the Manawatū, Wairarapa and Wellington regions.

The Board's webpage can be found at:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/conservation-boards/wellington/>

## **7.4 The Board's website**

The Board posts information about the region, meeting agendas and minutes, the Board Members and Annual Report on its pages of the DOC's website, together with providing Board news of interest six-monthly in the Board's newsletter section on the Department's website.

## **7.5 Media**

Media releases were considered at meetings in particular in and around progress of the CMS, and within the context of the Department's own media releases on the CMS.

There were no issues of significant note during the year to draw media attention in relation to the Board's activity.

## **8. Work Programme**

The Board set a work programme during the year which included planned activities around the Board's statutory functions.

### **8.1 Development of statutory management plan including Conservation Management Strategies and determining priorities for CMS implementation with the Department**

The Board planned to have the Conservation Management Strategy finalised by the end of the annual reporting year. The CMS was recommended to the NZ Conservation Authority in April 2018 following a small delay resulting from the need to provide increased clarity on some policies. NZCA reviewed the proposed CMS and following consultation with relevant iwi groups and endorsement from the Minister of Conservation, approved the CMS in December for implementation from 20 January 2019.

Alongside this, the Board has worked closely with Department staff to ensure CMS priorities and early milestones flow into the 2019/2020 business plan and budget, and milestone reporting can be readily undertaken over the 10-year period using the Departments business planning reporting tools.

### **8.2 Nurture working relationships with Fish and Game Councils regarding issues of mutual interest**

Fish and Game office liaison points have been assigned to Board members within the Wellington Conservation Board area. Board members have attended relevant Fish and Game meetings providing update briefings to these meetings and reporting back to the Conservation Board from these meetings. We are yet to meet the new CEO and hope to make this happen during the coming year.

### **8.3 Advice on proposed changes of status for nationally and internationally important areas, when sought by the Department**

No proposals for status changes were brought to the Board's attention during the reporting year. We are aware of, and are encouraged by, discussions in the Wairarapa to work towards RAMSAR status for the wetlands associated with the Wairarapa Moana area. We will continue to keep a watching brief on this development.

## 8.4 Advocacy and statutory planning processes

Pursue opportunities to advocate at community forums and in any statutory planning processes together with supporting biodiversity improvement actions for our regions

In exercising its role and responsibilities, the Board can advocate its interests in ways it deems appropriate or expedient to service the interests of the community it represents. This may be through communications, public forums, stakeholder events and in statutory planning processes etc.

During 2017/18, Board members attended a range of community forums, stakeholder events and hui. The Board lodged a submission on Greater Wellington Regional Council's Pest Management Plan and awaits its final release. We expect to maintain a watching brief on other consultation documents over the coming year.

## 8.5 Maintain relationships with the Department

*Maintain good working relationships and open dialogue with DoC Managers and staff*

To fulfil its primary advisory functions, as well as those related to approval, advocacy and liaison, and to engage strategically in conservation for the region, the Board engages with the Department frequently and relies on it for administrative support. The Department is also the main recipient of the Board's advice. Developing and maintaining a constructive and collaborative working relationship with the Department and having mutually understood and accepted expectations is critical to ensuring this relationship works.

To support existing documentation and to detail Board operational processes and procedures, the Board drafted a "Board Charter" which sets out, amongst other things, the Board's expectations of the Department. These expectations include (but are not limited to) timely provision of essential administrative services and open and constructive dialogue between the Board and the Department. The Board Charter will also act as guidance for future Boards in clarifying past decision-making, processes and procedures, to better enable understanding of activities and operations through ongoing working relationships with the Department.

Board meetings have been attended by the Statutory Manager, the Lower North Island Operations Director and local Operations Managers. Other Department staff have attended meetings as required for specific discussions. During 2017/18, these have included rangers, planners, and the Pou Tairangahau. The presence of these staff

members at meetings has facilitated open dialogue and good working relationships between the Board and the Department.

The Board received an Operational Report from the Department at each Board meeting. Items in this report that are of any interest or concern are discussed at the meetings with the Operations Managers.

The Board recognises that its focus is on policy issues, strategic direction and planning and not on the operational details of the Department of Conservation. To this end, it continues to work with the Department to ensure that two-way dialogue and information exchange best meets respective roles and responsibilities.

## 8.6 Ministerial priorities for the Department

### *Taking account of Ministerial priorities for the Department*

The Board stayed well abreast of Ministerial priorities for the Department via regular briefings at meetings by the Lower North Island Operations Director and the Board Statutory Manager together with receiving media releases and briefings from the Minister.

The Board Chair met with the Minister once formally during the year and the Chair and Board members liaised with the Minister more informally at stakeholder events including during Conservation Week and at the opening of the new Waikanae nursery at the Waikanae Estuary.

The Board awaits a Letter of Expectations from the Minister for the current year and remains committed to working to previously communicated expectations in the interim.

## 8.7 Working with adjoining Boards and the NZCA

### *Board members will liaise with neighbouring Conservation Boards in order to progress cross boundary CMS issues and other matters of mutual interest*

Board liaison with neighbouring Boards provides opportunities to inform and upskill Board members on roles, responsibilities and common issues across districts. It also assists in ensuring that Boards are exercising their role and responsibilities consistently and effectively across the country, continually learn off each other and are providing advice with fuller knowledge of situations outside the Wellington district.

We continue to have nominated Board members as liaison points with neighbouring Boards. Jo Blakeley of the East Coast Hawkes Conservation Board attended the Masterton meeting of the Wellington Conservation Board and provided a briefing on the City to Cape biodiversity initiative.

We attended a meeting of NZCA to present the CMS we were recommending for approval. David Barnes, our NZCA liaison, attended a meeting at the Kenepuru office and updated us on the process for NZCA's review of the Wellington CMS and likely timeframes.

Jenny Rowan, Board Chair attended the Board Chairs meeting in September 2018. This is a useful gathering to share experiences across Boards,

## 8.8 Giving effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi

### *Understand and support the Board's and Department's obligations under Treaty settlements as well as principles under Section 4 of the Conservation Act*

The Board is established under the Conservation Act and, therefore, Section 4 of the Act applies to it in the exercising of its role and discharge of its functions and responsibilities.

The Board regularly stays briefed via its operations reports from the Department on Treaty settlement progress and matters which the Board need to be aware of as a result.

In finalising the CMS, the Board were very mindful of ensuring that section 4 obligations were met, and that iwi and their interests are well recognised within the policy framework and activity that will result from the CMS. We continue to liaise with iwi via our public forums and through individual Board members. We enjoyed our visit to Tiniwaitara marae and wish to hold one meeting per year at a marae within our rohe.

## 8.9 Engaging with the community

### *Board members will liaise regularly with other conservation entities, such as district and regional councils, NGOs and community groups, to enhance the profile of the Board and pursue good working relationships on issues of mutual interest and concern.*

A key function of Conservation Boards is to represent the views of the communities they live, work and engage with. To give effect to the Boards advisory role, Board members need to establish, develop and maintain effective liaisons and relationships with a wide ranges of conservation stakeholders. Depending on Ministerial and Government priorities and the Boards work programme, the nature and focus of various community relationships may change over time.

To ensure enduring engagement, it is also important that Boards increase their profile and make themselves, and the work they do, known to their communities. To this end the Board adopted a Communications and Stakeholder Engagement plan this year which sets a framework for our communication and engagement activity. We will begin

implementation of this plan in the coming year to improve our broader engagement with stakeholders and communities.

Board members have nominated liaison activities assigned within this plan and undertake a number of engagement activities within their own communities depending on their area and interests. Liaison activity is shared routinely at our Board meetings.

The Public Forum within our Board meetings continue to be well attended and provide a vehicle for communities to bring conservation concerns to the Board's attention. Advice is provided by the Board on possible means to resolve issues together with advocacy to the Department and others to assist in progress. Over the past year the Board has been exposed to matters relating to stewardship land, access to conservation land, Old Man's Beard (*Clematis vitalba*) management in the Taihape district, wilding pines in the Rimutaka Ranges, fish netting and whitebait concerns near Waikanae, biodiversity and pollution impacts in Lake Horowhenua, management of the Carter Reserve and the Rewa Bush Conservation Area in the Wairarapa.

The Board has also taken an active interest in ongoing discussions between the Department, Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO) operators and recreational hunters. This is an important area of interest especially since the issues were one of the priority areas raised during the revision of the CMS. The discussions have been productive this past year and it is expected that progress will continue to be made over the 2018-19 year to achieve the outcomes of the CMS.

Board members stay across biodiversity improvement initiatives within their particular areas. Significant biodiversity initiatives that the Board regularly engage on through local members include Pukaha to Palliser, Wairarapa Moana initiatives, Predator Free groups in Wellington, old man's beard eradication through Rangitikei groups and the Kapiti Bio Diversity initiative at the southern end of the district.