

Draft Vision Statement

Preamble

“Pauatahanui Inlet is a significant estuarine wetland that is important to the community for a range of reasons. There is concern that the ecology of the Pauatahanui Inlet continues to decline and its qualities are threatened. The whole community needs to work together to restore and enhance the mauri of the Inlet”

Draft Vision

“The Pauatahanui Inlet and its catchment are managed in such a way that sustains nature and the integrity of natural ecosystems and hence sustains people and their economic activities and provides a range of benefits for the wider community now and for future generations.”

To illustrate this statement and make the vision “more tangible” the following draft scenario has been created:

“An active programme to protect natural character and ecological values was introduced in 1999/2000. Housing development spread to include slopes on both the northern and southern side of the Inlet.

- The margins of the Inlet and its contributing streams are predominantly covered in native vegetation in various stages of succession. This includes the faces on the inland side of the ring road around the Estuary. This native vegetation is protected and appropriately managed.
- Gray's Road is set back inland and the northern margins of the Inlet are being restored to a more natural state (e.g. saltmarsh, sandy beaches etc.)
- Urban earthworks are minimised. Houses have been designed to fit the land contours and are arranged in clusters with areas of native vegetation.
- Rural earthworks are minimised with houses being built near the road and in a style that minimised earthworks.
- Sedimentation rates have declined to less than the rate of sea level rise.
- The area of saltmarsh in the Inlet has increased with the remnants being reconnected to both form safe corridors for marsh birds and provide a protective buffer between developed land and the Estuary.
- Indigenous bird numbers have increased as the area of suitable feeding, breeding and roosting habitat increases. Some wetland bird species (e.g. fernbird) have recolonised the Inlet and the migratory species have returned for the summer months.
- An extensive network of silt traps and constructed wetlands, which decrease the amounts of nutrients and sediment reaching the Inlet, has been created and is regularly maintained.

- The numbers of filter feeders including shellfish has significantly increased. Juveniles are now able to grow into adults.
- There are few if any troublesome algal blooms
- Undaria is constrained in its extent and reduced in abundance. Other alien plant and animal species are excluded or kept under control by regular surveillance monitoring and remedial action if required.
- The intertidal eel grass beds have increased from the low point at the turn-of-the-century.
- Marine and freshwater fish populations have recovered to close to the original levels with a productive surplus available for sustainable harvest by recreational and customary fisheries.
- Contamination of fish and shellfish with microbial pathogens and toxic substances is below the threshold of concern for human consumption.
- Residents and visitors to the Pauatahanui Inlet understand and appreciate the needs of the other creatures that are dependent upon the Estuary.”