

October 2022

Progress Update:

Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Implementation Programme

As of 12 October 2022:

At this stage, this progress update is being considered by Ngāti Toa Rangatira. Once their response is received, our commitment is that we will ensure that Ngāti Toa Rangatira are central in the design, delivery and evaluation of the significant work programmes in and around Te Awarua-o-Porirua. Our commitment to working in partnership will contribute to their position that the health and wellbeing of Te Awarua-o-Porirua is paramount and that the actions of today will have the right outcomes for future generations to come.

Whaitua is the Māori word for space or catchment.

How it was developed

A committee of community members, iwi representatives, and local and regional council representatives completed [Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Implementation Programme \(WIP\)](#) document in 2019.

The product of four years of hard work, the WIP includes 75 water and land management recommendations to maintain and improve freshwater quality in the whaitua.

At the same time, Ngāti Toa Rangatira shared mana whenua aspirations for freshwater through the [Ngāti Toa Rangatira Statement](#). Together, these two documents set out what needs to be done to restore the rivers and harbour of Te Awarua-o-Porirua.

Excerpt: Ngāti Toa Rangatira Statement

“Our vision is that the mauri (life force) of Te Awarua-o-Porirua is restored and its waters are healthy, so that all those who live in the region, including Ngāti Toa and our manuhiri (visitors), can enjoy, live and play in our environment and future generations are sustained, physically and culturally.”

“Te Awarua-o-Porirua is integral to the identity of Ngāti Toa. The harbour has played a fundamental role over the generations in sustaining the physical and cultural needs of our people. As kaitiaki, we have a reciprocal obligation to nurture and protect our environment, and to ensure that it can sustain our future generations.”

Read the full Ngāti Toa Rangatira Statement here:
www.govt.nz/ngati-toa-rangatira-statement

Who’s contributing to freshwater improvements?

After these documents were released, Greater Wellington, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Porirua City Council, Wellington City Council and Wellington Water became responsible for implementing the WIP recommendations.

Ngāti Toa Rangatira are the kaitiaki (guardians) of Te Awarua-o-Porirua and play a vital role in restoring healthy water in the area.

Many community groups, and individuals, also play a key role improving the environment in Te Awarua-o-Porirua. Some have invested decades on important restoration work.

What's been achieved so far?

Achieving the vision set out in the WIP and Ngāti Toa Rangatira Statement requires substantial change. The WIP set out a range of pressures on freshwater in Te Awarua-o-Porirua. The most significant included: inadequately performing stormwater and wastewater networks; increased sediment in streams and the harbour; and loss of habitat for freshwater and marine species, as well as birds.

Here are a few highlights of what's been done to help reduce these pressures and improve freshwater quality in the whitua.

Activity	This supports
<p>Greater Wellington and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira co-manage the Community Environment Fund. Each year, community groups can apply for funding for restoration projects. Priority is given to projects that support the freshwater aspirations in the Ngāti Toa Rangatira Statement.</p> <p>This activity supports recommendation 17.</p>	<p>CGL E P</p>
<p>Greater Wellington is working alongside Ngāti Toa Rangatira to strengthen environmental regulations. These changes would strengthen freshwater quality targets, improve urban design so fewer contaminants enter waterways and much more.</p> <p>Changes to rules and regulations support around a third of the recommendations.</p>	<p>CP E P</p> <p>R&R W/S</p>
<p>Greater Wellington has more Land Management Advisors. They offer landowners obligation-free advice about farm environment planning, restoration works and any subsidies available. This includes helping them to reduce the amount of sediment, and other contaminants, reaching rivers and the harbour.</p> <p>This activity supports recommendations 60, 61 & 64.</p>	<p>CGL E P</p> <p>ES</p>
<p>In 2021, Porirua City Council updated a bylaw to reduce the impact wastewater from industrial businesses has on rivers and the harbour.</p> <p>This activity supports recommendation 44.</p>	<p>B R&R P</p> <p>W/S</p>
<p>To reduce the amount of sediment entering waterways, Porirua City Council launched a silt and sediment education programme for businesses that do earthworks. They're also checking that work at approved earthworks sites meets the rules.</p> <p>This activity supports recommendation 53.</p>	<p>B ES</p>
<p>Porirua City Council, Ngāti Toa and Sustainable Coastlines, with support from Greater Wellington, will plant more than six million plants along the streams that feed into Te-Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour.</p> <p>This activity supports recommendation 13.</p>	<p>CGL E ES</p>
<p>Some structures built in rivers (like culverts or weirs) can make getting from the river to the sea difficult for native freshwater fish species, threatening their survival. Greater Wellington is identifying where these structures are in rivers and prioritising which ones should be fixed first so that we can get this work done.</p> <p>This activity supports recommendation 11.</p>	<p>CGL E</p>

Key

B Helping businesses improve how they do things	CGL Supporting community groups & landowners	CP Improving city planning	E Achieving healthy ecosystems
ES Limiting erosion and sediment	P Limiting pollution entering water	R&R Improving rules & regulations	W/S Improving wastewater or stormwater management

What's next?

Restoring freshwater in Te Awarua-o-Porirua will take the hard work and commitment of many people, over many years.

Progress has been made against nearly three quarters of the WIP recommendations. But there's still much more to do.

For example: We'll keep using research to strengthen the regulations that support the community's vision for freshwater.

A change to the [Regional Policy Statement](#) has recently been proposed. This will be followed by changes to the [Proposed Natural Resources Plan](#) next year, with further changes to come in 2024.

Work on the ground will also continue. In 2022 we've collaborated with Porirua City Council and Sustainable Coastlines to plant 15,000 plants in a former grazing area in west Belmont Regional Park.

Over the next five years, over 100 hectares of grazing land at Waitangirua will be restored to native forest – improving water quality and biodiversity in the area.



Find out more

If you'd like more information about Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whitua, including a detailed report showing progress against each WIP recommendation, please visit: www.gw.govt.nz/te-awarua-o-porirua-whaitua

Success stories

Find out about some of the work that's been done to help improve freshwater in Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua.

Funding boost for Te Awarua-o-Porirua

In April 2022 Te Awarua-o-Porirua, received a multi-million-dollar boost when a transformational project to improve the water quality of the city's streams and waterways was launched.

Porirua City Council, in partnership with Ngāti Toa and Sustainable Coastlines, is implementing a streamside planting and management project throughout the Porirua area.

The 20-year project aims to plant more than 6 million plants on the banks of the 588km of streams that run into the harbour, to help restore the mauri (life force) of Te Awarua-o-Porirua and its waterways.

Government has committed \$3 million to the project over five years, as part of its Jobs for Nature programme. Porirua City Council will invest \$4.8 million and Sustainable Coastlines are also financial contributors.



Getting insights from studying sediment

Towards the end of 2020, Greater Wellington had a close up look at the sediment in Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour. It was part of an underwater survey checking the ecological health of the Onepoto and Pāuatahanui estuaries.

This is the sixth underwater survey conducted by NIWA divers and monitors the diversity of animals in sediments, the quality of the sediments and the amount of storm water contaminants and

mud. The key issues identified were sedimentation, pollution and ecological degradation. The number and type of species living in the sediment is changing as more mud is settling on the harbour floor.

This reduces the ability of the estuaries to support food gathering and recreation, or to protect us from storm surges and flooding. Estuaries are important for storing carbon as they act as kidneys for our

environment by filtering freshwater before it enters the open coast.

Results from the surveys like this one and other monitoring is critical. They can help guide estuary and harbour policy and management actions, sediment and contaminant reduction, and restoration of the catchments and streams that flow into Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour.

Clearing the way for freshwater fish

There are around 20 species of freshwater fish living in streams, rivers and connecting pipes in the Porirua area. Most of them need to migrate to and from the sea but often hit barriers along the way.

Greater Wellington is working with mana whenua, catchment experts, students and landowners to do something about it.

The main issue is poorly designed, installed and maintained man-made structures such as weirs, culverts, fords and dams. They pose a real threat to freshwater fish species, 72 percent of which are already or at risk of extinction.

Greater Wellington will continue advancing work underway to prioritise which structures should be fixed first and get this work done.



Community Environment Fund Projects 2021/22

Kids improving waterways

The Kids Enhancing Tawa Ecosystems Project enables kids in Tawa – from kindergarten age up – to help improve the health of local waterways.

As well as planting projects, students are involved in a wide range of activities including pest plant and animal control, litter clean-ups and informing others about what they can do to improve stream health. This project is supported by the [Community Environment Fund](#), as well as local restoration groups including the Friends of Tawa Bush Reserves and the Growing Places Trust.



Friends of Maara Roa make a difference you can see

Based at Canon's Creek in Belmont Regional Park, the Friends of Maara Roa have worked to restore biodiversity in the area for over 22 years.

The [Community Environment Fund](#) has helped them put in a pest animal control network of self-resetting traps. These traps are useful in areas that are hard for volunteers to reach, as they don't need constant clearing, rebaiting and resetting.



Before



After