

The natural heritage we share:

a discussion document towards a natural heritage strategy

1.0 Introduction

We are hosting workshops to facilitate the development of a natural heritage strategy for Christchurch. We are also initiating a parallel engagement process with Ngai Tahu representatives. This is an opportunity to come to a shared understanding of where the key pressures and vulnerabilities lie and ultimately to make decisions about how we respond; how do we choose to live with and manage our natural taonga?

2.0 Why natural heritage?

The proposed 'Natural Heritage Strategy' will combine and update the existing Biodiversity Strategy (2008) and Public Open Space Strategy (2010) and incorporate recognition of landscape factors throughout the District.

The overriding message from the 2011 "Share an Idea" consultation was that Christchurch people wanted a greener city. Natural heritage describes the spectrum of 'green' natural features and the connections between them that make up our environment, from geological landforms and waterways to terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, and the network of parks and reserves that we enjoy.

Our natural heritage is one of our most precious assets. It can contribute to economic growth and regeneration, underpins the health and wellbeing of our communities and our identity. Bringing biodiversity, open space and landscape values together in one strategy is a way of working towards a more integrated planning approach, seeking to improve our ability to plan at larger landscape scales and to plan for natural heritage as a 'system', not just the individual features.

3.0 Situational Analysis – a preliminary look at common issues and goals

A background document review is being undertaken to lead into the development of this strategy. The Review is throwing up some common challenges in natural heritage planning in Canterbury and throughout New Zealand. Some of these issues are listed below and may be useful to consider prior to the workshops.

- Planning for multiple values at effective scales and across boundaries.
- Resourcing implementation and how to make better use of limited funding and resources.
- Lack of consistent, quality data, monitoring and reporting.
- Joint stewardship - finding better ways to involve the public and work in partnerships.
- Poor state of waterways and impacts on mahinga kai.
- Rate of urban intensification and landscape change – habitat loss.
- Controlling pest species.
- Preparing for climate change.
- Recognising cultural landscapes.
- More strategic urban green infrastructure planning and design.
- Right level of accessibility to diverse, connected open spaces.
- Catering for changing demographics and needs, including visitor experiences.

Appendix 1: Proposed approach to developing strategy framework

