

name of project

PROJECT KAIWHARAWHARA

award category

THE NEW ZEALAND POST  
COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS AWARD



THE 2006 NEW ZEALAND POST MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

# PROJECT KAIWHARAWHARA: A COMMUNITY- BASED CATCHMENT RESTORATION PROJECT

Kaiwharawhara is the largest stream system in Wellington City. It has many small tributaries which feed its two main branches, Te Mahanga and Korimako.

Te Mahanga is the largest and drains the headwaters around the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary before flowing through the suburb of Wilton. Korimako flows down the southern side of Mt Kaukau through the suburb of Ngaio.

This stream restoration project has involved community and environmental groups in the catchment area. It has been jointly managed by Greater Wellington Regional Council and Wellington City Council in partnership with:

- > Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust
- > Trelissick Park-Ngaio Gorge Working Group
- > Ngaio Progressive Association
- > Stream Care volunteers
- > Wellington Botanical Society
- > Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Trust
- > Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society
- > Bells Track Working Group
- > Otari School

The project commenced in 2001 with key milestones achieved in the last two years. These will be highlighted in the application.

## The need for and expected benefits of the project and how it furthers Wellington City Council vision and strategic direction

The Kaiwharawhara Stream is significantly affected by urban development particularly in the lower reaches. However, large areas of the upper catchment remain in a relatively natural state. There was a need to:

- > Gather baseline data on the health of the stream and surrounding catchment vegetation to assess its current state and identify what improvements were required, see case study below
- > Co-ordinate and support community initiatives
- > Develop education programmes to raise public awareness of the importance of the catchment and how to keep it healthy.

The project came out of Greater Wellington's responsibilities for water quality and the management of streamside environments, and Wellington City Council's Bush and Streams Restoration Plan (2001). This plan advocated the development of community stream case plans.

It fits with the Wellington City Council's strategic priorities (2006–2009). Wellington City Council will:

- > Increase its efforts to improve the protection of streams
- > Strengthen its partnerships with stakeholders to increase environmental awareness, community participation and the achievement of environmental goals.

### Case study:

#### *Priorities for ecological restoration of the Kaiwharawhara catchment.*

This 2004 study had the following major objectives:

- > To identify and prioritise sites within the catchment that require revegetation to
  - Improve riparian habitats, corridors and biodiversity values
  - Stabilise slips, unstable areas, and steep slopes
  - Replace areas of weed infestation.
- > To identify riparian habitats that require stabilisation using engineering techniques
- > To document landscape implications of proposed revegetation priorities
- > To identify active erosion areas and sediment sources and areas of sedimentation in the catchment.

As a result of the study, Capacity Water Management commenced a programme to assess stabilisation of banks and related stormwater issues.

Priority areas for revegetation were identified and planting started in winter 2005.

### Effective project management techniques

The project has demonstrated that by having a common purpose, and with the two Councils managing and co-ordinating different community groups, an effective result can be achieved.



JOHN HOLMES FROM GREATER WELLINGTON AT THE LAUNCH OF THE INFORMATION SIGNS, NOVEMBER 2005

LOWER KAIWHARAWHARA CATCHMENT BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT IN SCHOOL ROAD



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**Planning included:**

- > A workshop of all parties in 2001 where a vision for the catchment was developed along with a series of goals and action points (see Appendix 1)
- > The joint management of the project by officers from Greater Wellington and Wellington City Council. Wellington City Council allocated \$10,000 and Greater Wellington allocated \$25,000 a year for three years
- > Development of a resource kit for community groups containing information on the catchment including its history, hydrology and ecology. It also listed the key goals and action plans for this project
- > Background studies and analysis of the catchment to gain quality information and data prior to revegetation works starting. This included a report prepared in 2004 on Ecological restoration of the Kaiwharawhara catchment.

**Implementation:**

- > The two project managers met at the start of each financial year to agree on the level of support to be given by each Council and the key projects to be achieved. These projects were then incorporated into business plans for each Council unit
- > A meeting with community groups to discuss and agree on the programme for the year and allocation of resources
- > Follow-up quarterly meetings of the project team to assess progress.

**A participatory approach to communicating with and getting 'buy-in' from stakeholders associated with the project.**

The project was started from the ground up. The development of the resource kit was a tribute to the work of the local community and expressed the community's vision for the future health of the stream.

The project was based on the need to work together and to have a shared vision. Using the metaphor of a jigsaw, different groups of the community held pieces of the puzzle, no one had all the pieces but we all knew what the final picture could look like and through a collaborative approach we achieved our result; a healthy stream and catchment area.

**The key elements in this project were:**

- > The initial workshop and development of the resource kit which were a reflection of a shared vision for the stream and whole catchment
- > Each community group was free to work on projects that suited their interests and skills
- > Groups were supported in their work by the local authorities. Examples include:
  - Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust were recipients of a Take Care Grant from Greater Wellington
  - Trelissick Park/ Ngaio Gorge Working Group were given an allocation of free native plants each year
  - Stream Care volunteers who monitored water quality were trained and resourced by Greater Wellington
  - The Community Forum held four times a year provided a platform for discussion on any issue affecting the stream. This forum provided the groups with the chance to raise issues about their own projects.

### Case study:

*Project Kaiwharawhara not only involved community groups but also businesses in the lower catchment on School Road. In 2005 an approach was made to all of the businesses in the lower catchment with plans to improve the ecology as well as landscape of the lower stream area. It was a wasteland used by local factories as storage space and was full of weeds. Plans were developed and discussed with the businesses. Some agreed to change their practices to improve the stream side environment. Seats were installed and more than 2000 natives planted. Since the change some businesses have started maintaining the areas themselves and weeding the plants.*

### Innovation and originality

- > A catchment-based project that looked at all the elements that affected the stream and surrounding catchment.
- > An integrated approach from Wellington City and Greater Wellington. Within each Council there was a cross disciplinary approach to the project. Stormwater specialists, resource planners and parks staff all worked together.
- > Councils became the facilitators of the project and supported the work of the community based on a bottom up approach.
- > A resource kit that provided baseline information and background for the project to proceed.
- > The community forum was the glue that held the project together and provided several key functions including:
  - A forum for all concerns relating to the catchment where groups could be heard by officers and Councillors
  - An educational forum where expert speakers would come along and talk about issues affecting the catchment including forest health, native fish, and stormwater management.
- > A wide range of projects that worked towards achieving the vision for the stream:
  - *Information and analysis* – including a study of stream life carried out by Ian Boothroyd, a freshwater scientist
  - *Education* – the Korimako Stream Project carried out by the Ngaio Progressive Association. This involved delivering a brochure to every house on the Korimako Stream encouraging homeowners to care for the section of the stream that flowed through their properties
  - *Advocacy* – installation of signage throughout the catchment informing the public of the project and its benefits
  - *Action* – major revegetation programmes being run by several groups including Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, which planted a 1km stretch of the stream over five years with more than 30,000 plants. There has been a very high success rate from planting, with some trees now over 4m high and long-dormant native seeds under the trees are also beginning to grow.



### Case study:

*Installation of signage throughout the catchment. In early 2005 a decision was made at the community forum to develop a series of signs throughout the catchment to increase the public understanding of the work being carried out.*

*There were two types of sign developed:*

1. Large information signs at three high profile places in the catchment. These explained the concept behind the project, the unique features of the catchment and what people could do to improve it health.
2. Smaller signs at 15 places throughout the catchment reminding people the catchment of a stream includes areas they live.

### Successful results, in both financial and non-financial terms.

Examples of the successful results of Project Kaiwharawhara include:

- > The lower stream around School Road was landscaped in 2005 and planted in natives. Local businesses are helping to maintain these plantings
- > Removal of redundant sewer pipes and associated infrastructure from the stream
- > Major signage throughout the catchment educating the public about the project (2005)
- > Darwin's Barberry eradication programme in private properties in Ngaio organised by the Ngaio Progressive Association (2004)
- > Regional and City Councillors went on a tour through the catchment to meet the volunteers and look at progress towards the vision. (November 2005)
- > A collaborative approach between the Wellington City Council and Greater Wellington that achieved desirable results that met their objectives: water quality and management of streamside environments.

The Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust has planted more than 30 000 plants in the last five years.

In the appendix of this submission there is a list further outlining the major goals, actions and progress that has been achieved by this project.

### Why the project was a good sensible and right thing to do

The project galvanised the community to take action on issues regarding the catchment. It showed that community-led projects can work effectively with targeted facilitation and resourcing from local authorities.

The project has taken on a life of its own. It has spawned a number of spin-off projects as a result of all the groups working together. Examples include:

- > Over the next 12 months the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust are running a weed busters campaign and targeting all home owners adjoining Otari-Wilton's Bush. Homeowners will be encouraged to grow plant species that are not likely to become weeds in the reserve.
- > The Trelissick Park group have won a \$25,000 Sustainable Management Fund grant from the Ministry for the Environment to develop an Adopt a Spot Scheme in Trelissick Park. This allows individuals or groups to adopt a part of the park and plant it in natives.

# APPENDIX 1



## Vision

The natural landscape and its ecosystems are protected and enhanced; providing habitat for native plants and animals, as well as people's homes and recreation areas. The stream and its surroundings are a focus for local people, including children who are actively involved in caring for their community's environment.

## Vision

### Healthy Habitat

Increases and improved habitats are protected and enhanced. The stream and its surroundings are a focus for local people, including children who are actively involved in caring for their community's environment.

### Ecological Corridor

The project focus area remains a key link in the Kaiwharawhara ecological corridor with excellent pest control and a healthy habitat for increasing numbers of native birds.

### Living in Balance

People living in the area live in balance with the environment. They have a good quality of life and their property values are high. The area is a focus for local people, including children who are actively involved in caring for their community's environment.

### Licence to Occupy

In giving the area a licence to occupy, the area is protected and enhanced. The stream and its surroundings are a focus for local people, including children who are actively involved in caring for their community's environment.

### Enhanced Amenity Value

The stream and its surroundings are protected and enhanced. The stream and its surroundings are a focus for local people, including children who are actively involved in caring for their community's environment.

### Improved Water Quality

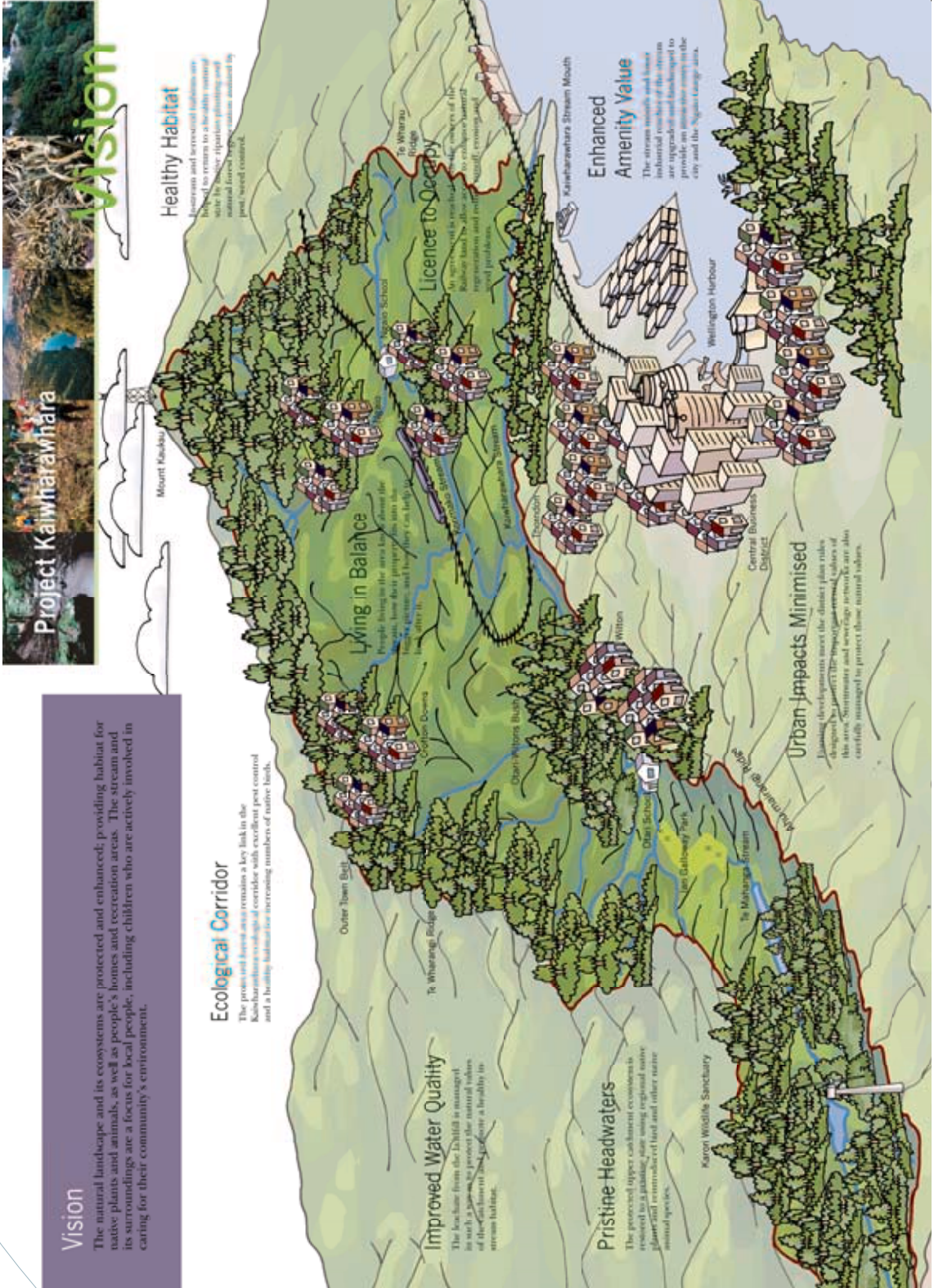
The focus from the initial management plan is to protect the natural values of the catchment and create a healthy stream habitat.

### Pristine Headwaters

The protected upper catchment ecosystem is restored to a pristine state using regional native plant and animal species.

### Urban Impacts Minimised

Planning developments meet the district plan rules designed to protect the riparian values of this area. Stormwater and sewage networks are also carefully managed to protect these natural values.



# APPENDIX 2

## Examples of some of the successful results of Project Kaiwharawhara

Management zone	Key actions	Progress
Otari-Wilton's Bush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Monitor water quality at exit point</li> <li>&gt; Remove or modify barriers to fish passage</li> <li>&gt; Continue to support community plantings and control invasive weeds</li> </ul>	<p>Being done. Results are available to monitors and public on Greater Wellington website</p> <p>Achieved resource consent for this process</p> <p>Take Care funding continuing for Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust</p>
Korimako / Kaiwharawhara confluence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Support community-based native riparian planting to achieve 50 percent shading of stream</li> <li>&gt; Community care group water quality monitoring scheme</li> <li>&gt; Remove or modify barriers to fish passage</li> </ul>	<p>Continuing. Have not yet achieved 50 percent cover</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>Achieved resource consent for this process</p>
Lower Kaiwharawhara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Implement the Lower Kaiwharawhara enhancement concept</li> </ul>	<p>The lower stream around School Road was landscaped in 2005 and planted in natives. Local businesses are helping to maintain these plantings. Planting at the estuary carried out in 2003-04 and now maintained</p>
Johnsonville Rail corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Negotiate with railway landowners through Queen Elizabeth Second National Trust to allow pest management and replanting work</li> </ul>	<p>Partly achieved. A licence was negotiated in 2004 for part of the stream to allow a new track and associated planting and weed control to take place</p>
Surrounding subcatchments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Manage future subdivisions to retain as much of the natural environment as possible in line with Wet and Wild Policy Document</li> <li>&gt; Encourage private protection of regenerating forest areas</li> <li>&gt; Monitor water quality to rapidly detect and repair sewage leaks</li> <li>&gt; Foster alternatives to stormwater discharge into the stream</li> <li>&gt; Encourage reduction of storm water pollution and siltation at source by providing public education resources</li> </ul>	<p>Subdivision development is subject to the provisions of the Resource Management Act (1991) and operative District Plan</p> <p>Several land owners have been approached</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>A study on ecological restoration of the catchment was prepared by Blaschke, Forsyth and Anstey in 2005. This identified issues including Stormwater discharges which Capacity (the regional water management company) and others are working through.</p> <p>Greater Wellington carried out a brochure drop to all households in the catchment in 2004.</p>