

Environmental wellbeing

From “Understanding the Landscape of Auckland & Northland: An Evidence Review”

Written by the Centre for Social Impact (July 2018)

This topic extract is taken from the above report which summarises the key findings of an evidence review completed by the Centre for Social Impact to inform the implementation of Foundation North’s 2018 Strategic Plan. These key findings have been used to inform the development of funding priorities for the Foundation alongside the development of a broader range of positive outcomes that best contribute to the Foundation’s overall vision.

Key Findings

There are 10 topic-specific extracts from the full report.

All extracts and the full report are available at www.foundationnorth.org.nz/how-we-work/resources

1. Population profile | 2. Population change | 3. Income inequality and deprivation | 4. Economic wellbeing | 5. Social cohesion | 6. Education | 7. Children and young people | 8. Housing | **9. Environmental wellbeing** | 10. Community sector

(i) Why is the environment an important indicator?

- 1) A healthy natural environment can support community wellbeing. Addressing environmental pressures, unsustainable land use and biodiversity loss can help to give communities access to quality green spaces and waterways and create opportunities for community enterprise.
(Local Government New Zealand, 2016).
- 2) The environment impacts on everyone. The health of the environment influences land use, agriculture and industry, recreation, tourism, cultural practices and other social indicators of wellbeing.
(Local Government New Zealand, 2016).
- 3) Key shifts and changes to the environment will have significant potential to cause unequal impacts on communities, localities and generations, depending on how we respond to them. This can exacerbate existing inequalities and associated outcomes relating to health, income, housing, education and social cohesion.
(Local Government New Zealand, 2016).
- 4) For Māori the concept of kaitiakitanga (stewardship, protection and guardianship) is of cultural significance. The Conservation Act 1987 gives effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and recognises the importance of partnership with tangata whenua to enhance the conservation of resources and heritage.
(Department of Conservation, 2007).

(ii) What are the regional trends and issues?

1) National biodiversity trends are concerning. A third of native species has been lost, the threat status is getting worse for 40 species and native land cover is decreasing. <i>Source: Statistics NZ, n.d./c.</i>	Biodiversity indicator	Data
	Loss of native species to date	32%
	Threat status change 2002-2005	Worse for 40 species
	Native land cover 1997-2002	Loss of 16,500ha
2) Communities’ ability to steward and future-proof our natural environment will be impacted by climate change. Climate change-related events (droughts, floods, fires and cyclones) will impact community wellbeing and resilience. Climate change will also impact on key industries such as agriculture and will therefore affect economic wellbeing. <i>Source: Local Government NZ, 2016.</i>	Key impacts of climate change	
	Flooding in urban areas	
	Potential for ‘climate change refugees’ from the Pacific region	
	Increase in fires, floods, droughts and cyclones affecting communities	
	Economic impacts on key industries such as agriculture	

3) Major environmental challenges in Auckland include the declining health of marine and freshwater ecosystems, including urban streams, biodiversity pressure from urban expansion, soil pollution and air quality pressure from population increases. <i>Source: Auckland Council, 2017c.</i>	Council priorities	Data	
	Native species protection	38 priorities (2015) – up from 14 (2009)	
	Waste reduction	Zero waste to landfill by 2040	
	<i>Other priorities include reducing: air pollution emissions, marine sediments, water consumption, vulnerable ecosystems</i>		
4) Major environmental challenges in Northland include maintaining and enhancing water quality for swimming and shellfish food collection, flood protection in urban Kaitiāia and Whangārei, and sustainable land management. <i>Source: Northland Regional Council, 2015</i>	Council priorities	Data	
	Flood protection	26 river catchments at unacceptable risk of flooding	
	<i>Other priorities include: farm water quality, air quality, improving regionally significant spaces, pest control</i>		
5) Community satisfaction with the state of coasts, rivers and lakes is declining in Auckland and Northland, and is particularly low in Northland. <i>Source: Statistics NZ, n.d./d.</i>	Region	Satisfaction with coasts, rivers, lakes	
		2008	2012
	National	72.4%	72.7%
	Auckland	80.3%	73.5%
6) Community satisfaction with the state of green spaces including forests, bush reserves and other green spaces is increasing, but is still below the national average in Northland. Perceived ease of access to green spaces is also lower in Auckland. <i>Source: Statistics NZ, n.d./d.</i>	Region	Satisfaction with green spaces	
		2008	2012
	National	82.7%	84.2%
	Auckland	81.6%	86.6%
	Northland	78.1%	80.5%

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