



Ref: [REDACTED]

Civic House, 110 Trafalgar Street  
PO Box 645, Nelson 7040, New Zealand

18 May 2022

P (03) 546 0200  
E LGOIMA@ncc.govt.nz  
[nelson.govt.nz](http://nelson.govt.nz)

[REDACTED]  
Forest & Bird

Dear [REDACTED]

### **OFFICIAL INFORMATION REQUEST FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS.**

Forest and Bird is currently developing a league table comparing the efforts of every single council in the country and their track record of addressing the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

I refer to your official information request dated 19/04/22 for climate change and biodiversity loss track record.

The information you requested is enclosed below

#### **1. Does your council have a climate change strategy?**

Yes, in part. Nelson City Council has a Climate Action Plan which contains an evolving climate strategy. A full climate strategy with long-term objectives is being developed.

Council has taken key steps to address climate change, including declaring a climate emergency, implementing Council operational emissions reduction targets and establishing climate change as a base "lens through which all work programmes are considered"<sup>1</sup>.

In November 2021, Council adopted the [Climate Action Plan](#), which sets out its commitments to address climate change over the next decade. The Climate Action Plan contains actions to reduce emissions (both Council's operational emissions and Nelson's community emissions) and tackle the impacts of climate change.

The Climate Action Plan involves key stakeholders such as the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum (NTCF), a community-led initiative that draws from the collective strength and leadership of community groups. As part of Council's Long Term Plan (2021-31) it is supporting the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum with \$100,000 a year of funding for the first three years of the LTP.

The initiatives included in Council's Climate Action Plan are aligned with NTCF's Climate Action Book, a guide NTCF developed that details actions that households, community organisations, businesses, farmers and governing bodies, can take to address climate change. The way that groups like NTCF brings together people from all walks of life with the common goal of promoting climate change action is an example of the collective effort required from individuals, community organisations, businesses, iwi, central and local government, necessary to bring about positive change. Additionally, in Te Taihira (the Top of the South) Council also funds Businesses for Climate Action and its programme Mission Zero, which coaches businesses towards positive climate outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> Through Nelson's Long Term Plan 2021-2031.

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BCA is taking the lead in creating a zero carbon Aotearoa within a resilient sustainable economy, adaptable to both the opportunities and disruptions of climate change.

Council is currently developing a strategic framework for climate change that will build on this work and guide future iterations of the Climate Action Plan by setting the long-term direction for climate action in Whakatū Nelson.

## **2. Does your council have an implementation plan for your climate strategy?**

Yes, the [Climate Action Plan](#) includes actions across four areas that cover mitigation and adaptation for Council and the community. The Plan identifies how Council will meet operational targets as well as support the community to adapt to the impacts of climate change and achieve net-zero carbon. The projects are across the following areas and involve multiple Council work programmes:

- **Carbon sequestration** (Urban Greening Plan, ecological restoration plans, Council's Nelson Nature, Healthy Streams and Sustainable Land Management programmes, Jobs for Nature Wakapuaka and Whangamoa projects, seagrass and saltmarsh research)
- **Information, awareness, education and behavioural change programmes** (Council's Eco Design Adviser, Council's contribution to the Warmer Healthier Homes scheme, Council-led shift away from single occupancy use of private vehicles towards public transport and active transport, Enviroschools programme)
- **Waste minimisation** (Rethink Waste Programme, waste minimisation grants, Secondhand Sunday, community workshops, Construction & Demolition Waste Reduction Programme, organic waste reduction – kitchen waste composting trial, home composting workshops)
- **Council collaboration with community groups** (Nelson Tasman Climate Forum, Businesses for Climate Action, Nelson Climatorium proposal, Community Compost's initiative, Tasman Environmental Trust)
- **Supporting infrastructure to promote lower transport emissions:** (electric vehicle chargers, improvements to cycling and walking in the city (e.g. shared walk/cycle paths), improvements to public transport options, Council's Future Development Strategy)
- **Influencing transport emissions/ travel demand management:** (investigate car sharing scheme, Council's Parking Strategy, road map towards low-emission public transport, supporting and promoting active transport and use of public transport)
- **energy efficiency:** energy audits in key Council buildings, water, wastewater and stormwater assets, renewable energy (electric vehicles for Council fleet).

## **3. How do you measure outcomes relating to the achievement (or not) of the objectives of your climate change strategy?**

The initiatives described in the Climate Action Plan are part of Council's Long Term Plan covering the next 10 years. Some of the initiatives have a deadline (e.g. the financial year) for completion. All initiatives are led by specific departments within Council and this is reflected in internal documents (Activity Management Plans).

The Action Plan is a 'living document' that will be updated as the actions are completed or amended, or as new actions are added.

Council has set targets for reducing its operational emissions which are included in the Climate Action Plan on page 12. Council has been working to measure its greenhouse gas emissions for a number of years. Council's greenhouse gas inventories have been independently verified and certified.

#### 4. Does your council have a biodiversity strategy?

Yes. Nelson City Council (NCC) adopted the Nelson Biodiversity Strategy in 2007 and its own Nelson Nature Strategy in 2017.

The Nelson Biodiversity Strategy a collaborative document initiated and developed by 32 member organisations (including Nelson City Council) who now form the Nelson Biodiversity Forum. The Forum works collaboratively to identify and align actions to improve biodiversity in the Nelson area [nelson.govt.nz/nelson-biodiversity-forum](https://nelson.govt.nz/nelson-biodiversity-forum). NCC convenes and hosts the Nelson Biodiversity Forum.

The purpose of the Nelson Biodiversity Strategy is to continue to build a biologically rich and sustainable future for Whakatū Nelson through aligned action on biodiversity. The Nelson Biodiversity Strategy links existing initiatives and actions under a common vision and introduces new actions that address the priority biodiversity management issues in the region [nelson.govt.nz/nelson-biodiversity-strategy-2](https://nelson.govt.nz/nelson-biodiversity-strategy-2).

Each partner to the Nelson Biodiversity Strategy determines the actual work to be done by its organisation in a given year as part of its overall planning and budgetary cycle, and consults on and coordinates its efforts through its engagement in the Biodiversity Forum. Nelson City Council has formally adopted the Nelson Biodiversity Strategy.

The Nelson Biodiversity Strategy was last reviewed in August 2018. The Nelson Biodiversity Forum has agreed to postpone a further review of the Strategy until the after the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity is finalised by Government, as the current draft Policy Statement includes specific requirements for regional biodiversity strategies.

In addition, Nelson City Council has the **Nelson Nature Strategy**, which guides Council's own programme to protect and restore Nelson's biodiversity [nelson.govt.nz/assets/Environment/Nelson-Nature/Nelson-Nature-Strategy-2017-2020-Final-June18.pdf](https://nelson.govt.nz/assets/Environment/Nelson-Nature/Nelson-Nature-Strategy-2017-2020-Final-June18.pdf). This Strategy is currently due for review, but Council is waiting for the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity to inform a revised version of the Strategy.

Additionally, NCC is part of the alliance that developed the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy, which is a co-designed strategic document that provides high-level outcomes to achieve significant conservation gains as well as social, cultural and economic benefits to communities that will grow our resilience as a region.

The Alliance is committed to kotahitanga (working together) to achieve these transformational outcomes. Kotahitanga mō te Taiao is an alliance formed by of all the Councils and some of the iwi in the top of the South Island, and the Department of Conservation.

Nelson City Council participated in the working group that developed the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy and has formally approved the Strategy as a Council.

Council is also a partner to other site-focused biodiversity strategies, for example the Waimea Inlet Strategy and Action Plan [tasman.govt.nz/waimea-inlet-management-strategy](https://tasman.govt.nz/waimea-inlet-management-strategy).

Nelson City Council works hard to ensure the relevant objectives, actions and timeframes in these strategic documents are aligned.

#### 5. Does your council have an implementation plan for your biodiversity strategy?

Yes. The implementation plan for the Nelson Biodiversity Strategy is included within the Strategy as actions. Nelson City Council is responsible for initiating or co-ordinating the implementation of some of the actions in the Strategy and reporting on progress to the Biodiversity Forum, alongside other partners of the Forum.

The priority actions for the Nelson Nature Strategy are contained within this Strategy.

The Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance, which Nelson City Council is a partner of, does not yet have an implementation plan for the Strategy. However, with the support of The Nature Conservancy, the Alliance is currently considering using the Conservation by Design framework to develop a holistic programme that links desired outcomes to prioritised actions and resources, with appropriate measures of success. If endorsed, Nelson City Council will be a partner in applying this framework to prioritise actions under the Strategy <https://mailchi.mp/5e977eba251b/5m84t2cm5l>

The Waimea Inlet Strategy is implemented through the Waimea Inlet Action Plan.

## **6. How do you measure outcomes relating to the achievement (or not) of the objectives of your biodiversity strategy**

The Nelson Biodiversity Forum has developed a Report Card process to measure progress and achievement of outcomes and actions within the Nelson Biodiversity Strategy. The Report Cards are not published, however are distributed, approved and discussed with all members of the Nelson Biodiversity Forum. The Report Cards will be used to inform the next review of the Strategy.

A long-term monitoring programme to assess the achievement of the objectives in the Nelson Nature Strategy is underway by Council as part of the Nelson Nature programme.

Measurement of outcomes of the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy will form part of the Conservation by Design framework, if this is formally endorsed by the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance. In 2020, the Alliance completed a report on ecosystem health of all Top of the South terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems [nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/Metrics-Ecosystem-Health-Report-Oct-2020-6499684.pdf](https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/Metrics-Ecosystem-Health-Report-Oct-2020-6499684.pdf). This will provide a baseline to measure changes in health of these ecosystems over time. Nelson City Council participated in the Working Group which developed the measures and scores.

Updates on progress of the Waimea Inlet Action Plan by Nelson City Council and partners is reported through Annual Action Plan Progress Report [tasman.govt.nz/waimea-inlet-management-strategy](https://tasman.govt.nz/waimea-inlet-management-strategy)

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this response by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [ombudsman.parliament.nz](https://ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact me at [rachel.pemberton@ncc.govt.nz](mailto:rachel.pemberton@ncc.govt.nz)

Yours sincerely



Rachel Pemberton  
Climate Change Manager



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## **7. Has your council mapped its Significant Natural Areas (SNAs)? Are these maps in your operative District Plan?**

Yes, Council has been through a process to identify and map SNAs. To date, this has been undertaken to inform the development of our Draft Whakamahere Whakatū Nelson Plan (the proposed replacement Plan for the current operative Plan). Please refer to the following link for a copy of the Draft Nelson Plan <https://nelson.isoplan.co.nz/eplan/>. The Draft Nelson Plan process is now on hold awaiting the Resource Management Act (RMA) reform. These SNA areas are therefore not included in the operative Nelson Resource Management Plan (NRMP) and there is no proposal to do so at this point. They therefore currently hold no statutory weight.

Below is a link to a set of frequently asked questions that were prepared for the Draft Nelson Plan process.

<http://www.nelson.govt.nz/assets/Our-council/Downloads/Plans-strategies-policies/nelson-plan/draft-nelson-plan-sept-2020/supporting-information/Draft-Nelson-Plan-Engagement-FAQs-Ecosystems-and-biodiversity-September-2020.pdf>

The operative Nelson Resource Management Plan has a conservation zone that includes areas that are largely unmodified and areas of high ecological significance. Please note that these are not mapped Significant Natural Areas.

**8. How many SNAs have you identified in your district/region? Could you please quantify the total area these represent?**

There are approximately 177 SNAs that have been confirmed through desktop and/or field survey, equating to approximately 3,600ha.

**9. How does your council maintain SNAs?**

Nelson City Council supports landowners of sites identified at SNAs through our non-regulatory biodiversity programme, Nelson Nature [nelson.govt.nz/significant-natural-areas](https://nelson.govt.nz/significant-natural-areas). This includes advice for landowners on how they can manage their SNAs to protect biodiversity, and funding for fencing, weed and animal pest control and restoration planting through our Environmental Grants scheme [nelson.govt.nz/environmental-grants-scheme](https://nelson.govt.nz/environmental-grants-scheme).

Council is currently supporting iwi and private landowners to restore sites of high ecological value, including sites identified as SNAs, in two Nelson catchments through delivery of the Jobs for Nature Wakapuaka and Whangamoia project.

**10. How many consents have you issued in the last five years to allow for vegetation clearance in SNAs? How many have been declined?**

Since the SNAs are not officially in the NRMP yet, Council hasn't issued consents for vegetation clearance in SNAs specifically. In the last 5 years there have been 11 consents issued for earthworks and vegetation clearance in the Nelson region. Mostly, activities can comply with vegetation clearance permitted standards without consent, but there are some areas where consent is required. None have been declined.

These consents have mainly been issued to Council, Network Tasman, Mountain Bike Club.

**11. Do you have vegetation clearance rules that enable identification of additional SNAs through the consenting process?**

Currently Council doesn't have vegetation clearance rules that enable identification of additional SNAs through the consenting process. Although it may be considered in the future.

**12. How often does your council monitor SNAs?**

Nelson City Council established baseline monitoring in a number of identified SNAs in 2015 to assess changes in vegetation condition in response to Council's non-regulatory Nelson Nature biodiversity programme. This condition monitoring has yet to be repeated.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this response by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [ombudsman.parliament.nz](https://ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact me at [rachel.pemberton@ncc.govt.nz](mailto:rachel.pemberton@ncc.govt.nz)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Pemberton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'R' and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Rachel Pemberton  
Climate Change Manager