



Kotahitanga mō te Taiao



Aotearoa New Zealand

*Te Papa Ao Tūroa, Aotearoa
Manaaki Taiao, Tiaki Ora*

Marlborough District Council

Tēnā koutou, ngā rangatira mā

Re: Annual Plan Submission: Leveraging Investment through the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance

In 2016 the Marlborough District Council was one of the founding signatories to the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance (KMTT), a strategic partnership to address the threats to the natural environment and support its communities across the top of the South Island stretching from Marlborough through to Buller. The Alliance Partners now include all the Councils within the region, the Department of Conservation, Fisheries NZ, and all the Te Taihū Iwi plus Ngāti Waewae.

The MOU states:

The Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance aims to help coordinate the achievement of landscape scale collaborative conservation projects across the Buller, Marlborough, Nelson and Tasman region. The drivers are to work collaboratively to achieve significant conservation gains by attracting resources for new work, growing synergy to more effectively achieve existing work and developing social, cultural and economic contributors to future proof the outcomes

A strategy for Kotahitanga mō te Taiao was written in consultation with key knowledge holders in the community and was signed in 2019. We acknowledge your commitment to improving outcomes for the future of the wider region.

In 2020, the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance signatories agreed to partner with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to bring international tools and expertise to assist in operationalising the ambitious Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy. The Nature Conservancy is one of the largest global conservation organisations, operating across over 70 countries and territories around the world and having operated in New Zealand since 2017. The Nature Conservancy is responsible for day-to-day programme management of the Alliance, working closely with the elected Co-Chairs.

Since its inception, the signatories to the Alliance have agreed an Annual Budget and made an ongoing contribution to the operational programme management budget, enabling The Nature Conservancy to focus on bringing in additional support for the projects formed under and aligning with the Strategy. Your investment per annum has been \$20,000.

This investment has been vital to the work of the Alliance, enabling the engine room of the team to co-ordinate the suite of projects under development, engage in operational planning, support fundraising, and the collectivising of effort to enable significant restoration projects supporting both the natural environment and communities to be achieved. Your support contributes to key roles, including administration, programme management, and vital communications across partners and to the wider world.

With backbone funding security, we are able to focus on the planning, coordination and communication work that needs to be done and fundraising for the additional resources required to deliver on the Strategy. For example, during the Covid pandemic, we have been able to leverage around \$24.1 million across the region through the Jobs for Nature response. As an example, one of these projects, the Restoring and Protecting Flora Project, works across all Council areas to implement strategic weed control at identified high priority sites, providing employment and significant biodiversity gains that help achieve your Council's biodiversity goals. It is co-ordinated by The Nature Conservancy.

Senior Council staff provide important governance, guidance and co-ordinating roles in the Alliance. Our work integrates strongly with the biodiversity, biosecurity, and climate activities of Council.

In the past year \$1.18 million has been secured by The Nature Conservancy in national and international funding to help support the next phase of engagement and operational development. These additional funds enable us to focus on leveraging even more impact by bringing in international expertise on sustainable financing options such as carbon markets and impact investments.

The Alliance and The Nature Conservancy both have a commitment to improving diversity and livelihood outcomes as a result of the work, and we are pleased to be able to use this funding to help expand and diversify our workforce, support training and educational opportunities, as well as providing for traditional conservation work on the ground. Our collective work with Iwi partners is highlighting the opportunities that can arise to improve management outcomes and deliver on wider community aspirations.

Projects like the Te Hoiere Project, and the Mt Richmond Wilding Conifer control project in this region have benefitted from the work of the larger collective. We were very proud to have worked closely with the BBC Frozen Earth series to produce a 12-minute documentary on the work of the Alliance featuring the Te Hoiere Project and Picton Dawn Chorus which has been viewed many thousands of times across the world and increases our chances of reaching new funders.

The Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance partners are proud of the work we have been able to achieve, but to reverse the tide of biodiversity loss whilst ensuring climate resilience and thriving communities, and to continue to improve outcomes – we need to keep moving forward.

We are currently undergoing a rapid, necessary and ambitious project to identify opportunities across the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao area, aiming to leverage action in the marine space to improve the quality of our near shore environments, grapple at a landscape scale with the ever-growing problem of predators and browsing pests, improving connectivity and climate resilience in the lowlands, and to utilise novel funding and planning solutions to reduce the impacts of major climatic events. We are working closely with community members to do so.

Our programme is achieving more than was anticipated in 2019. The Alliance partners, including Councils, have agreed that we need to maintain our momentum. However, to do so requires additional backbone finances to maintain the baseline operational budget and enable the team to focus on critical fundraising at scale for landscape scale projects of a similar size or larger to existing Jobs for Nature projects. There will be ongoing benefits to biodiversity and climate resilience, as well as improved connection to nature through educational work, and conservation training and opportunities throughout the region.

We ask for an annual commitment from Council of \$40,000 for the next 2 years, i.e. Jul 2023 – Jun 2024; and Jul 2024 – Jun 2025.

This investment enables us to deliver on your aspirations as Marlborough District and as part of the wider whole.

Thank you for this consideration. We would like to speak to our submission.

For further information on the work of the Alliance, please go to <https://www.nature.org/kmtt> or view the BBC Earth documentary here: [Can Restoring Nature Save Our Planet? | BBC Earth](#)