MAHI | JOBS
MŌ TE TAIAO | FOR NATURE

Annual Review – Year Four
Arotake ā-Tau – Tau Whā

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

MŌ TE TAU I MUTU AI I TE 30 PĪPIRI 2024

Photo credit: Ko Maehau ki Tai Project

Mihi

Tū ake rā ki runga i te taumata o Hine-tū-pari-maunga,
Ka huri te kanohi mai i te tōpito o te whenua, ki te ara a Tangaroa,
Ka kekeho atu nei ki te tahatū o te rangi,
Tēnei te whakamiha ki te taiao e taiāmio nei i a tātou.
Maimoatia, matapoporetia,
Kia ora ai te taiao,
Kia ora ai te tangata,
Tērā te kōrero;
“Toitū te marae a Tāne,
Toitū te marae a Tangaroa,
Toitū te tangata.”

Standing at the summit of Hine-tū-pari-maunga
Scanning from the edge of the land, across the passageway of Tangaroa
Looking forth to the horizon
In awe of the environment which surrounds us
Cherish it, care for it
So the environment lives on
So the people live on
There is a saying
“If the land is well
And the sea is well
The people will thrive.”

The Jobs for Nature Programme is a $1.185 billion investment in nature-based work to support a greener recovery for Aotearoa New Zealand following the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report provides the background on achievements and progress to date, and plans for the final full year of the programme and beyond. It was prepared by the Jobs for Nature Secretariat.

The Secretariat would like to thank agencies for their contributions over the past year. Each agency's work with its funding recipients and other stakeholders has helped build a cohesive, cross-agency programme.

Photo credit:
Ko Moehau ki Tai Project

Photo credit: Back Country Trust Project

Contents

A word from Anne Haira, Deputy Secretary for Partnerships, Investments and Enablement, Ministry for the Environment

As the Deputy Secretary responsible for Jobs for Nature – Mahi mō te Taiao, I am incredibly proud of the opportunities the programme has created for New Zealanders, and the gains made for the environment.

Over the past four years, Jobs for Nature has created employment for 14,770 people and funded more than 500 projects.

These projects range from weed control in Rakiura/Stewart Island to predator control in Halfmoon Bay through to restoring dunes and landscapes in Te Paki in the Far North. You can read more about these achievements in this report.

Marking the end of year four, the impacts on people and communities are clear. Jobs for Nature has increased Aotearoa New Zealand's nature-based workforce capability. It focused on environmental restoration while providing people with upskilling opportunities through challenges like the pandemic and severe weather events. It has empowered Māori to deliver environmental outcomes and created opportunities to use and share mātauranga.

The programme is now entering its fifth and final year with 332 projects still in delivery and a lot of work still to be done. I am excited to see what the next year brings, particularly the focus on drawing lessons for the future.

Although Jobs for Nature ends in June 2025, this doesn't mark an end to this important work. The programme has provided tools to continue this mahi, and to build on the relationships that have grown. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for nature-based employment.

Overview

$485M

Department of Conservation

$430M

Ministry for the Environment

$188M

Ministry for Primary Industries

$41M

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

$40M

Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand

Jobs for Nature began in 2020 as part of the Government's COVID-19 response to the forecast economic downturn for Aotearoa New Zealand and is the largest nationwide investment in people and the environment.

The $1.185 billion programme is run across five government agencies: Department of Conservation (DOC), Ministry for the Environment (MfE), Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment through Kānoa – the Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit (Kānoa).

Jobs for Nature was given three core objectives:

1. Create approximately 11,000 employment opportunities in regions which need work the most
2. Establish enduring benefits for healthy waterways, biodiversity, climate change, and cultural values
3. Support sustainable land use and the implementation of regulatory requirements, including for freshwater, biodiversity, and climate change.

Jobs for Nature has financed nature-based work, including planting vegetation to support land stabilisation and restore freshwater and biodiversity, fencing waterways, pest control (including wilding conifers and animal pests), remediating fish passages, and skills training for career development. Funding recipients include community groups, councils, iwi and hapū, charitable trusts, and private companies.

The cross-agency level supports and oversees overall programme delivery, including through monitoring, risk identification and management, social and economic evaluation, and reporting on the benefits and expected long-term outcomes of Jobs for Nature. Projects continue to experience the challenges of inflation and supply chain issues which hinder output delivery. Jobs for Nature continues to make a difference for people and the environment as demonstrated through case studies, programme evaluation and benefits reporting.

The programme Transition Strategy will help ensure benefits from Jobs for Nature investments last beyond the life of the funding. The Strategy also provides a framework for agencies to support projects in their individual transition.

FOUR YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

2020-2024

Jobs for Nature programme highlights

11,422,708
hours worked

14,770
people employed

516
approved projects

513
contracted projects

184
completed projects

11,635,941
plants in the ground

703,385
hectares of land under plant pest control

2,110,249
hectares of wilding conifers controlled

2,518,529
hectares of land under animal pest control

6,139
hectares of freshwater under restoration

6,722
hectares of land under restoration (excluding freshwater areas)

4,497
kilometres of fencing constructed

Photo credit: Big Bay Project

Photo credit: Te Awarua o Porirua Project

THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

2023/24

Jobs for Nature programme highlights

3,106,095
hours worked

2,261
people employed

25
approved projects

52
projects contracted

89
completed projects

3,176,955
plants in the ground

97,501
hectares of land under plant pest control

163,742
hectares of wilding conifers controlled

507,993
hectares of land under animal pest control

1,764
hectares of freshwater under restoration

1,490
hectares of land under restoration (excluding freshwater areas)

928
kilometres of fencing constructed

What's happening to the programme

Context changes this year

This year the programme moved to a new reporting structure following the change of government in 2023. Hon Andrew Hoggard (Associate Minister for the Environment) was delegated the role of lead Minister for the programme. This replaced the previous Sustainable Land Use Ministers group.

The Secretariat reports programme-wide progress to Hon Andrew Hoggard quarterly, who keeps other portfolio Ministers informed. Other agencies are responsible for reporting to their respective portfolio Ministers on their projects.

The cross-agency oversight process has also been slimmed down, reflecting the completion of some agencies' involvement, and the relatively smaller number of projects being managed.

Over this period, delivery agencies have been through considerable internal change processes. An outcome from MfE's process is that the Jobs for Nature Secretariat is continuing in a reduced form to see the programme through to final reporting in November 2025.

How the programme has evolved

There have also been changes to the overall funds available from Jobs for Nature since its inception. In 2020, the original funding level across the programme was $1.245 billion. Since then, total funding has reduced to $1.185 billion, as successive governments responded to developing needs:

- In June 2021, $26.6 million was reprioritised to the roll-out of cameras on fishing vessels
- In March 2023, $11.55 million was reprioritised to the Environmental Monitoring and Reporting System initiative
- $7.679 million unallocated funding was returned via Budget 2023
- $14.018 million was returned from Vote Environment as a result of Budget 2024 decisions.

The Secretariat will stay in place until November 2025 to ensure the final reporting on the programme is completed, though it will operate with fewer resources. Agencies are also scaling back their resources to fit the programme's needs and budget requirements. Both the agencies and the Secretariat will support projects in transitioning to new models as necessary.

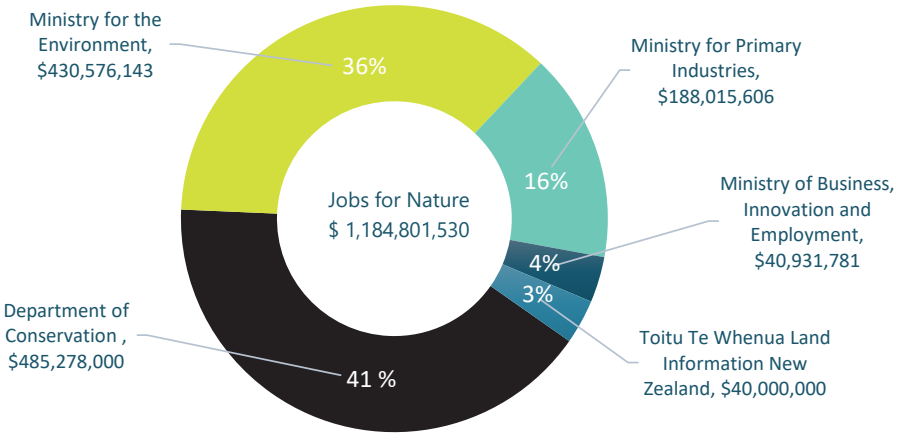
Jobs for Nature by the numbers

Financial metrics

By the end of Year Four, $1.155 billion had been contracted across 513 projects. The remaining funds are allocated to the MfE's At Risk Catchments and Essential Freshwater Funds, and MPI's Agriculture and Investment Services funding. As of June 2024, 76.8% of the total funding had been paid to approved projects.

How the funding has been spent

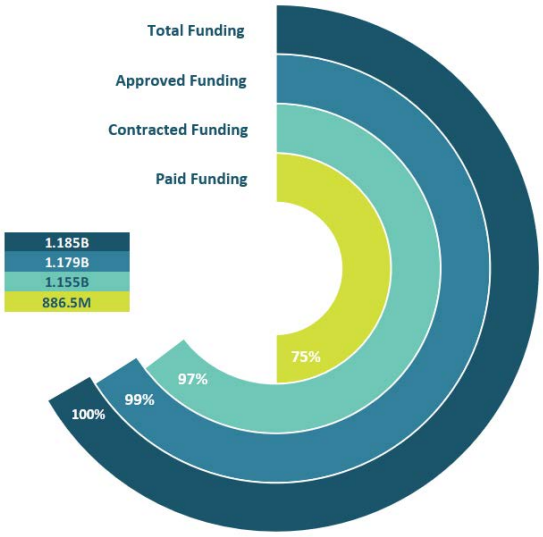
The $1.185 billion programme funding was split across the five participating agencies across a mix of new and existing funds, and programmes which had increased baseline funding as part of Jobs for Nature.



The funding was distributed throughout the regions through the funds managed by each agency:

Agency	Programme	Funding Amount
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment		**$40,931,781**
	PGF	$40,931,781
Ministry for Primary Industries		**$188,015,606**
Te Uru Rākau, New Zealand Forest Service	One Billion Trees	$35,000,000
Biosecurity New Zealand	Containing Wallabies to Protect Agriculture, Forestry and Native Plants, and Boost Regional Economies	$26,790,606
	National Wilding Conifer Programme	$100,000,000
Agriculture and Investment Services	Agricultural Investment Services	$19,100,000
	Māori Agribusiness	$7,125,000
Ministry for the Environment		**$430,576,143**
	Freshwater Improvement Fund	$53,863,532
	At Risk Catchments	$12,000,000
	Essential Freshwater Fund	$131,508,016
	J4N Admin (MfE and Secretariat)	$36,176,143
	Kaipara Moana Remediation	$100,000,000
	PWERF	$67,028,452
	Te Mana o te Wai	$30,000,000
Toitū te Whenua | Land Information New Zealand		**$40,000,000**
	Boffa Miskell - Aquatic and Terrestrial Weeds and Pests Control - Canterbury	$8,653,196
	Overheads	$3,784,000
	Strategic Projects Workstream	$27,562,804
Department of Conservation		**$485,278,000**
	JFN Overheads DOC	$16,268,000
	Kiwis for Kiwi	$17,700,000
	Predator Free 2050 Ltd	$76,000,000
	Prevention of North Island Indigenous Forest Collapse	$53,806,000
	Kaimahi for Nature	$198,600,000
	JFN Community Fund	$16,000,000
	Māori Land Grant	$25,680,000
	Nga Awa	$42,918,000
	Private Land Biodiversity Fund	$18,000,000
	Programme 1 Quickstarts	$7,206,000
	QEII National Trust - Covenanting	$8,000,000
	South Island Threatened Species Recovery	$5,100,000

The status of the funding



Quarterly financial reporting provides key metrics of contracting levels and funding paid. Contracted funding represents the total commitments made for the entire duration of the programme, while funding paid reflects the amounts paid up to the end of the financial year.

Of the contracted projects, 36% have been completed at the end of Year Four. Key completed projects include those by LINZ and MPI – Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) programmes (Wilding Conifer and Wallaby control).

The chart below illustrates how completed projects are distributed across the agencies.

Project completion – how the agencies are tracking

The table provides detailed information on the number of approved versus completed projects for each agency, along with their respective completion rates at 30 June 2024.

Agency	Approved	Completed	Completion Rate
Department of Conservation	224	82	37%
Toitū te Whenua | Land Information New Zealand	12	12	100%
Ministry for the Environment	176	18	10%
Ministry for Primary Industries	69	39	57%
Agriculture and Investment Services	27	11	41%
Biosecurity New Zealand	13	13	100%
Te Uru Rākau	29	15	52%
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	35	33	94%
Total	**516**	**184**	**36%**

On the following pages the projects are mapped across New Zealand and the amount of funding is split by region.

TE IKA-A-MĀUI
NORTH ISLAND

JOBS FOR NATURE | MAHI MŌ TE TAIAO

AGENCY

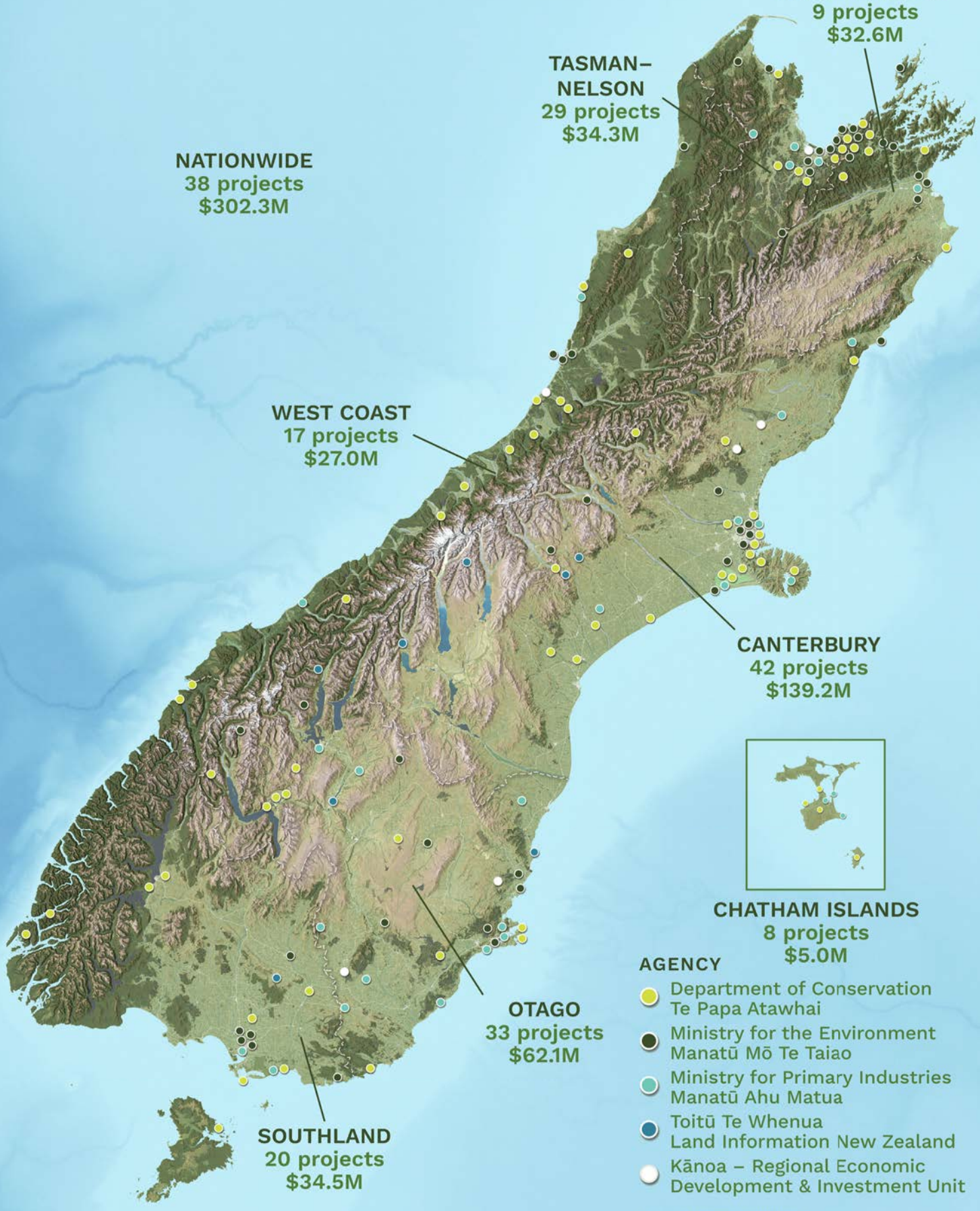
- Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai
- Ministry for the Environment Manatū Mō Te Taiao
- Ministry for Primary Industries Manatū Ahu Matua
- Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand
- Kānoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit

Location of projects is approximate.
Projects with more than one location are not presented on the map.
Published in September 2023 by Toitū Te Whenua LINZ.
Includes data reported through J4N quarterly reporting to 30th June 2023.
Land Cover, Terrain, and Imagery – Toitū Te Whenua LINZ
Bathymetry – GEBCO Compilation Group (2021) GEBCO 2021 Grid
Hillshade – Eagle Technology; Textures – South Arrow Maps

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

TE WAIPOUNAMU
SOUTH ISLAND

JOBS FOR NATURE | MAHI MŌ TE TAIAO



AGENCY

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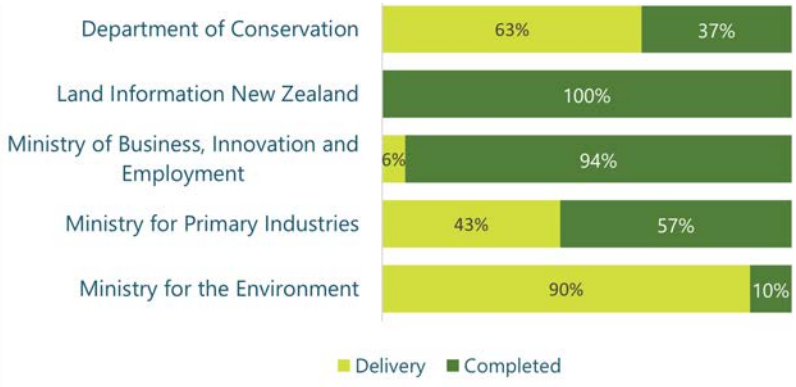
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

How the funding has been paid out



Seventy-five per cent of the funding has been paid to projects. The rate varies between agencies, depending on the duration and maturity of their projects.

The table below shows how the agencies expect projects to complete over time.

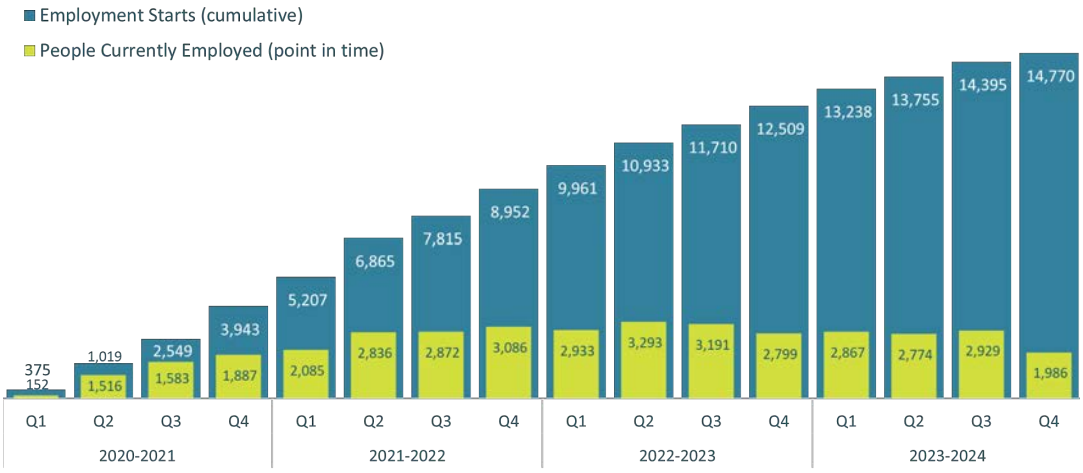
As of 30 June 2025, 437 projects (85% of the total projects) are expected to be completed – with a big spike of completions in Quarter 4. The remaining projects (15%) are scheduled to complete after June 2025.

Time period		Projects Completing
Programme start (2020) – 30 June 2024		184
1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025	Q1 81	
	Q2 48	
	Q3 13	
	Q4 111	253
1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026		74
1 July 2026 – outyears		5
Total		516

How have we supported employment?

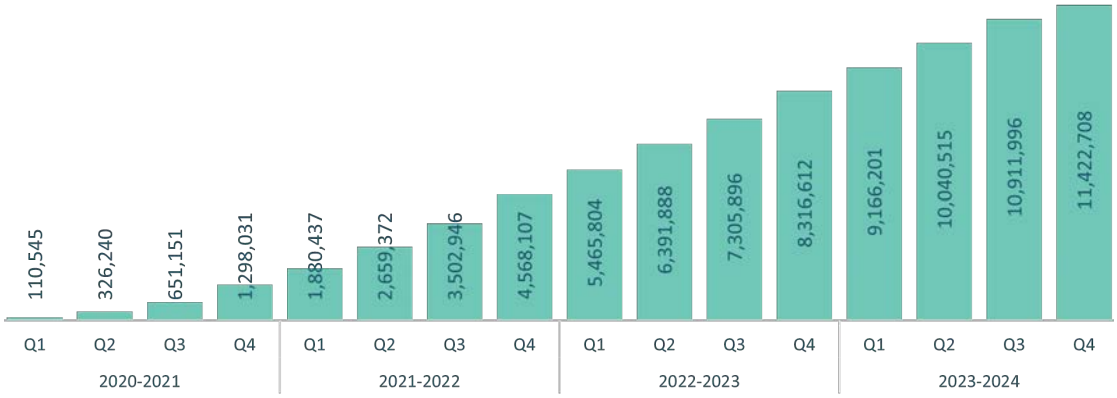
Since the programme's inception, a total of 14,770 employment starts have been recorded. The number of people employed fluctuated each quarter, reflecting seasonal shifts and the natural progression of project lifecycles. Over the 2023/24 financial year, the average number of people currently employed was 2,639, with the lowest number of 1,986 in Quarter 4 due to the completion of 89 projects in this period.

Programme Employment



Hours worked cumulative

The total number of hours worked has grown consistently throughout the programme, with a notable increase during the earlier stages. By Quarter 4 of 2023/24, the cumulative total reached 11.42 million hours, reflecting the sustained efforts across multiple projects, even as employment numbers fluctuated.



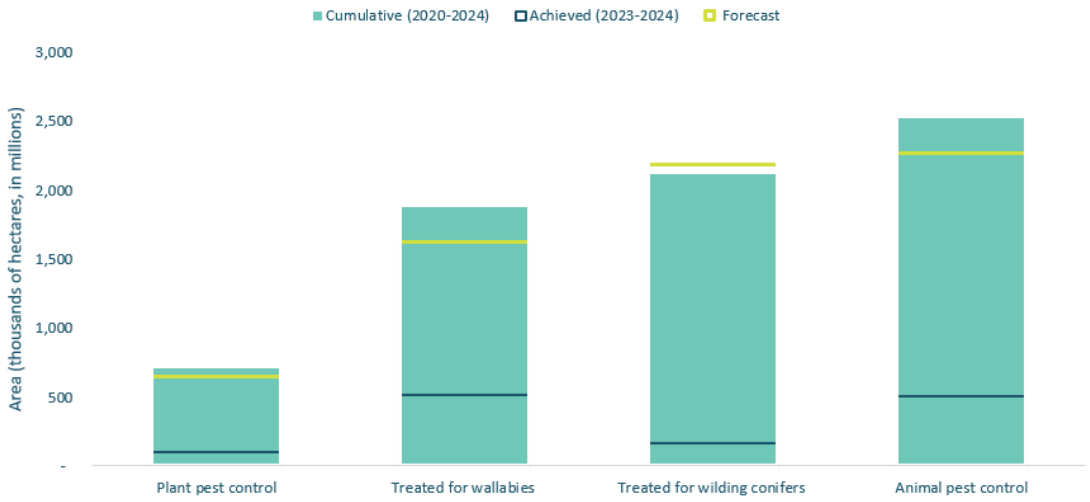
The table below shows the key employment metrics for the 2023/24 financial year.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Hours Worked	849,588	874,314	871,481	510,711	3,106,095
Employment Starts	728	517	640	375	2,261

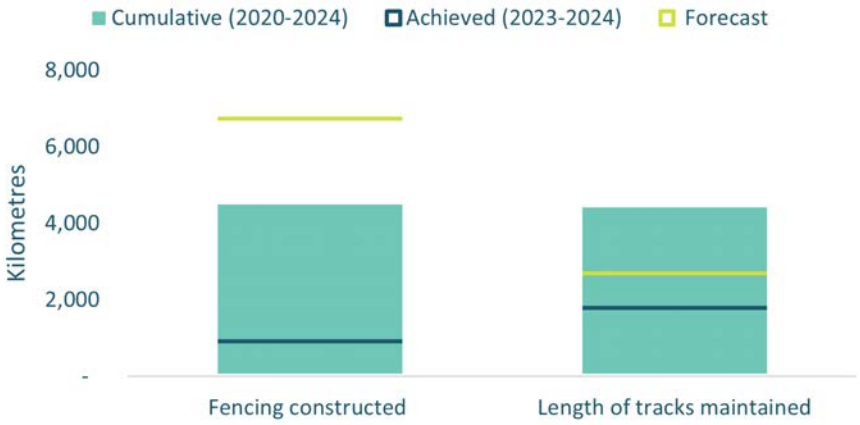
How have we supported the environment?

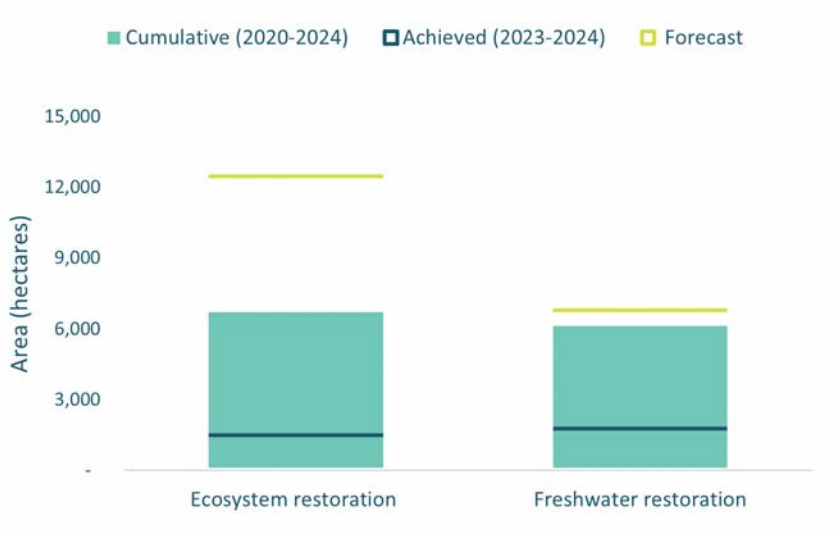
The programme tracks outputs across a wide range of environmental activities, reflecting the breadth of the programme. Key metrics are measured against forecasts collected by the agencies. (Note: not all projects have provided forecasts). Based on these, some activities are on track to outperform expectations while others have been more affected by external factors including rising costs and weather events and potentially through over optimistic forecasts.

The programme has made considerable gains through both the Wallaby and Wilding programmes. Animal pest control covered the biggest area (noting some areas may have repeated treatments) and includes all predator control (including goats, pigs, possums, stoats, etc).



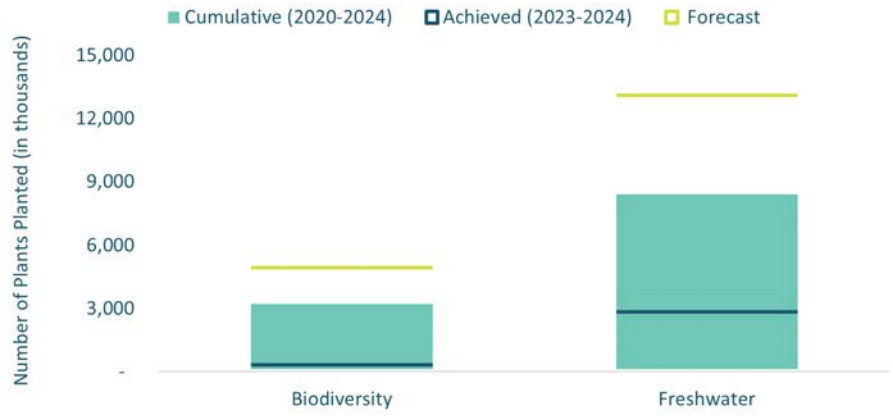
The programme constructs and maintains physical infrastructure, such as fencing, including of waterways, and the maintenance of tracks. While track maintenance is ahead of forecast, fencing has been more difficult to achieve, and quite a few fencing projects are now complete. This work has been reporting issues for some time, including the knock-on effects of lockdowns, rapidly increasing prices and supply chain issues which have all adversely affected projects.

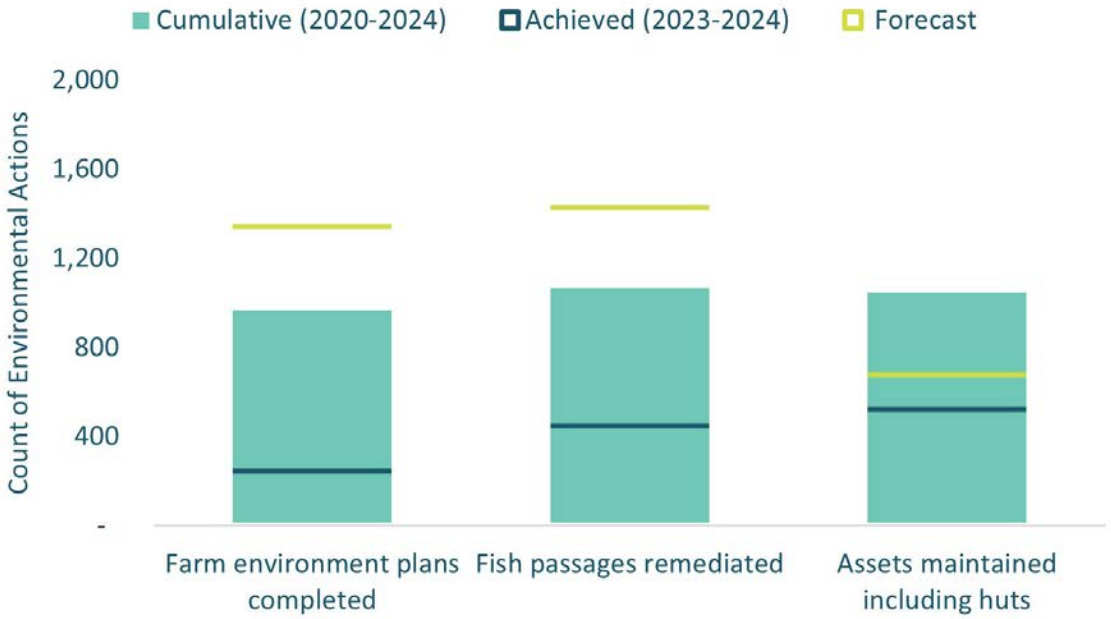




Restoring ecosystems and freshwater are key objectives of the programme. In the case of freshwater systems, the programme is close to forecast outputs. There has been less progress on ecosystem restoration, but it is unclear what the constraints have been, or whether the forecasts were unduly optimistic, given the reality encountered.

Jobs for Nature projects have planted over 11 million plants, covering restoring biodiversity and (mainly) riparian planting to support freshwater objectives, and the projects and their partners have brought more than 150,000 hectares under farm environment plans, representing almost a thousand plans.





Metric	Achieved (2023-2024)	Completed To Date	Lifetime Forecast
Area of freshwater restoration (ha)	1,764	6,139	6,796
Area under farm environment plans (ha)	31,398	152,458	265,328
Fencing constructed (km)	928	4,497	6,736
Number of farm environment plans completed	247	968	1,344
Number of fish passages remediated	449	1,068	1,428
Number of plants planted - Freshwater	2,856,208	8,413,188	13,107,263
Area of ecosystem restoration (ha)	1,490	6,722	12,471
Length of tracks maintained (km)	1,800	4,420	2,705
Number of assets maintained including huts	522	1,048	678
Number of plants planted - Biodiversity	320,747	3,222,753	4,938,554
Area of animal pest control (ha)	507,993	2,518,529	2,266,382
Area of plant pest control (ha)	97,501	703,385	649,472
Area treated for wallabies (ha)	517,348	1,872,332	1,627,300
Area treated for wilding conifers (ha)	163,742	2,110,249	2,178,968

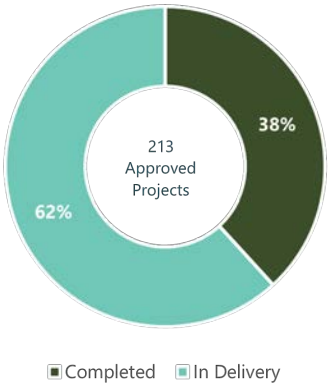
Environmental area legend: **freshwater**, **biodiversity**, **pest control**

Risks

For the third year, agencies have reported in their regular quarterly updates on how confident they are that projects will deliver as promised. These reports aggregate data from projects funded at $1 million or more to assess the overall state of the programme. At the close of year four, 38% of projects over $1 million had completed.

Status of Projects Over $1 Million

Agencies evaluate their projects quarterly using five key criteria: time, cost, dependencies, outputs, and skills/ capability. Each project is assigned a 'RAG' status—Red, Red-Amber, Amber, Amber-Green, or Green—where Green represents the highest level of delivery confidence. As of the end of year four, the overall status for projects exceeding $1 million currently in the delivery phase shows 92% are rated Green or Amber-Green, indicating strong confidence in their successful completion. Only 1% are rated Red or Amber-Red.



Overall RAG Status of Projects Over $1 Million in Delivery Phase

External factors such as severe weather events, COVID-19, inflation, and supply chain disruptions can influence RAG ratings without necessarily indicating poor project management. Delivery confidence reporting highlights which projects are on track and those who may require additional support. This enables targeted interventions such as time extensions or minor scope adjustments.

The programme continues to monitor risks with agencies in regular operational meetings. Year four saw a continuation of risks from previous years such as skill and capability shortages leading to recruitment delays and ongoing issues including in the form of cyclone recovery. It has also seen the emergence of new risks and issues to the programme.

The emerging risks include:

- **Ongoing financial management obligations** under the Public Finance Act may not be met post-June 2024 if agencies don't have enough resources to manage ongoing contracts and meet their reporting obligations
- **Demonstrating success**: If the benefits and outcomes aren't effectively demonstrated and communicated, this may create a reputational risk for the programme as to whether it has been value for money
- **Evaluation reporting**: The final programme evaluation may lack sufficient evidence to determine whether the programme outcomes have been achieved if agencies aren't providing final project reporting in a timely manner before the programme concludes
- **Transition planning**: If the project partners can't transition some or all aspects of their projects beyond 2025 when the programme ends, some outcomes may not be achieved or sustained.

With more projects completing and the conclusion of MPI-BNZ and LINZ programmes new issues have emerged where key project staff have begun looking for future opportunities and project partners are losing the capability needed to support projects to completion. Agencies continue to work with project partners in these situations to ensure successful delivery of the projects.

Programme achievements

What we have delivered to make a difference to people and place

The programme has seen a significant investment in the health and resilience of New Zealand's freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity. By supporting a diverse range of projects, encouraging collaboration, incorporating mātauranga Māori, and driving innovation, these initiatives are well-positioned to deliver substantial environmental benefits.

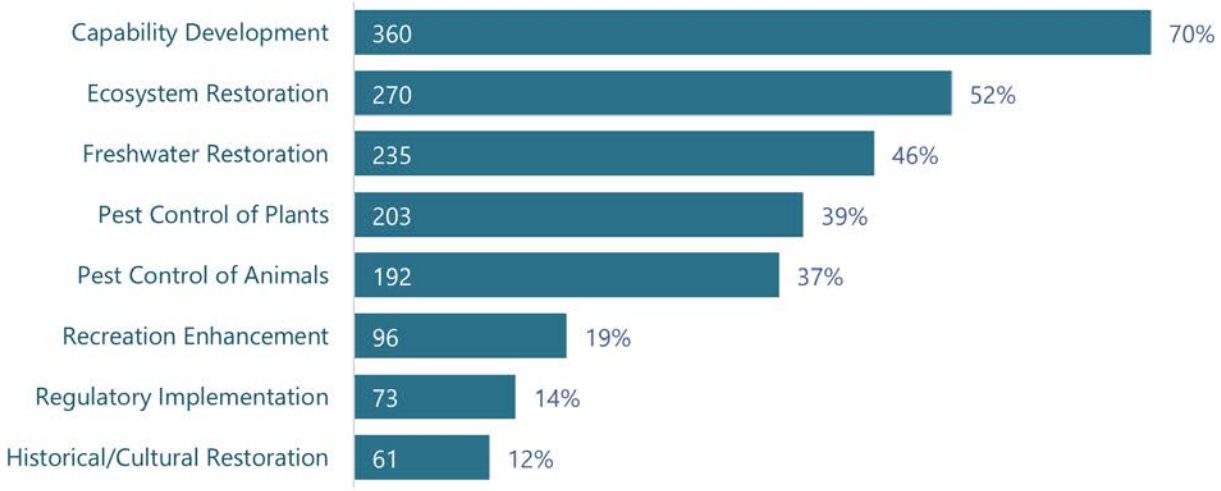
This requires sustained effort and collaboration over the long term, as ecological restoration takes significant time and building community and iwi involvement is an ongoing process.

Projects group their intentions into a range of environmental objectives, with most projects supporting more than one field of activity.

Number of projects who support different environmental objectives

Environmental objectives	Approved projects	Percentage
Capability development	360	70%
Ecosystem restoration	270	52%
Freshwater restoration	235	46%
Pest control of plants	203	39%
Pest control of animals	192	37%
Recreation enhancement	96	19%
Regulatory implementation	73	14%
Historical/Cultural restoration	61	12%

Proportion of approved projects by environmental objective



Delivering for the environment

Improved aquatic life and ecosystem health

To date we've invested at least $495 million in improving our aquatic life and protecting and restoring our freshwater ecosystems through freshwater and catchment management activities. This accounts for approximately 41% of our total investment. These projects are focused on tackling major pressures on freshwater ecosystems.

Jobs for Nature contributed to ecosystem restoration and other environmental benefits to improve our freshwater by

- freshwater restoration which increases carbon sequestration, reduces erosion control, and helps with forest fire prevention by establishing 8.4 million plants in over 6,000 hectares of freshwater areas
- helping mitigate flooding by restoring at least 13 wetlands across 7 regions which absorb rainwater and release it gradually. Overall, New Zealand has lost 2,221,304 hectares of wetland, and only 249,776 remain
- improving management of farmland and forestry, diversifying land use and mitigating biodiversity loss. 152,458 hectares are under farm environment plans with 968 farm environment plans completed
- reducing pollution by implementing 703,385 hectares of weed control, restoration planting, and 4,497 kilometres of fencing to help reduce sediment deposition and improve water quality
- rehabilitating habitats for threatened species, such as the NZ dotterel and other rare flora and fauna. This includes protecting and restoring coastal scarp and wetland areas
- modifying or removing 1,068 barriers to fish passage, improving migratory pathways for native fish. Restoring fish passages directly supports the recovery and sustainability of fish populations, especially for migratory species.

Photo credit: Big Bay Project

Biodiversity protection and improvements

The programme has supported biodiversity through

- increasing protection for at least 15 threatened species, including kiwi, whio, kōkako, and hoiho, through habitat restoration, predator control, and community engagement
- investing approximately $484 million in biodiversity outcomes. Over three million plants have been planted to support biodiversity, covering 6,722 hectares of land. These plantings contribute to habitat restoration and support biodiversity by providing food and shelter for native species
- reducing pressure on native flora and fauna, aiding vulnerable species' recovery through Animal and Plant Pest control on over three million hectares (not including wallaby and wilding conifer treatments)
- supporting the regeneration of native vegetation, creating healthier forests and waterways through strategic weed control over nearly 700,000 hectares.

Climate change resilience

The programme invested $706 million in projects supporting climate resilience as part of their work, helping the natural environment's ability to withstand extreme weather events. This investment mitigates the economic impact of climatic events, which it is estimated could reduce economic growth by $100 million annually if left unaddressed.

Climate Resilience Benefits include

- flood and drought impact reduction, riparian plantings and wetland restoration to stabilise stream banks and absorb excess water, reducing flood impacts
- improving community resilience to respond to climate-related weather events by building social capital. We've built a workforce which is capable of effectively addressing and managing climate emergencies, ensuring communities are better equipped to face environmental challenges
- economic diversification: Supporting Māori communities and regional economies in exploring climate-resistant industries provides economic stability and new employment opportunities
- innovative adaptation: Incorporating traditional Māori knowledge into climate planning fosters new tools and technologies for environmental management.

Biosecurity Protection

The programme has supported rural communities, ecosystems and our agricultural industry by safeguarding our native ecosystems, ensuring their health and resilience. This is crucial for protecting our biodiversity and supporting industries dependent on healthy ecosystems.

To date the programme has implemented animal and plant pest control for over 9.7 million hectares, targeting wallabies, possums, rats, stoats, feral cats, goats, and deer. This extensive effort protects native flora and fauna and supports agriculture by reducing pest-related damages. Specific projects focused on controlling wallabies to protect agricultural lands and native ecosystems from these invasive species.

$103 million has been invested in wilding conifer and pine management and over 2.1 million hectares have been treated to control wilding conifers. These invasive trees threaten our biodiversity and harm our agricultural productivity. These activities help maintain healthy ecosystems and supports both agricultural and tourism industries by preserving landscapes.

Avoiding Economic Losses

Controlling pests like wilding conifers and wallabies has saved significant amounts in avoided damage to agriculture and ecosystems, maintaining the productivity and sustainability of New Zealand's primary industries.

Effective biosecurity measures prevent the spread of plant and animal pests, maintaining New Zealand's biosecurity reputation and supporting international trade, which is vital given the country's significant export earnings from the food and fibre sector. New Zealand's total two-way trade is valued at over NZD $256 billion annually in recent years, with exports around NZD $99 billion and imports around NZD $157 billion.

Photo credit: Big Bay Project

Case Study

Kaipara Moana Remediation

The Kaipara Moana Remediation (KMR) is a 10-year transformative programme addressing environmental degradation in New Zealand's largest harbour. The Kaipara harbour has suffered from severe sedimentation, with an estimated 700,000 tonnes of sediment deposited annually, this is seven times higher than natural levels. This sedimentation is extremely damaging to water quality and biodiversity and has reduced the harbour's ecological resilience. The KMR programme was awarded $100 million funding over ten years through the Jobs for Nature programme, and aims to unlock a similar sum from local partners.

The health of the Kaipara Harbour is closely linked to the well-being of local communities. The harbour is at the centre of many recreational activities such as fishing, boating, and bird watching, which are key to the community and improving quality of life. A key component of KMR is to support projects led by mana whenua and community groups through Whenua Whānui grants. These investments help reconnect communities with their ancestral lands and traditional practices. As of June 2024, 76 mana whenua or community-led projects were underway across the catchment.

Photo credits: Kaipara Moana Remediation

The KMR programme recognises Māori as foundational partners and ensures their perspectives are integral to decision-making processes. The programme is centred on collaboration and values traditional Māori knowledge, this works to reduce barriers to iwi/hapū participation in the Kaipara Harbour restoration.

The Kaipara Moana holds significant economic value for the Auckland and Northland regions, driven by agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism. The programme is anticipated to create around 700 employment opportunities. This not only gave a quick boost to the economy but is also helping create long-term jobs in environmental management and restoration.

As of June 2024, two and half years into programme delivery, over 129,000 hectares are now managed under KMR plans, promoting better land use practices and environmental stewardship. Over 1.88 million plants and trees have been planted or contracted for planting, close to 500 hectares of land has been planted or contracted to plant, more than 201 hectares of area has been protected to assist natural regeneration of native forest, and more than 800 km of fencing has been completed or contracted, which is more than the distance from Cape Reinga to Napier.

The KMR programme has become an incredible example of how councils, government agencies, and iwi can work together to provide positive outcomes for the environment.

Delivering for the economy

While the Jobs for Nature programme is primarily focused on delivering social, cultural and environmental benefits, it also is delivering substantial economic benefits across NZ.

The Secretariat worked with MartinJenkins Ltd to assess the economic impact and cost-effectiveness of the programme through a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and economic impact assessment (EIA).

How much value does nature-based investment bring to New Zealand?

- the programme is expected to deliver $3.943 billion in benefits over 30 years
- for every $1 dollar spent, the programme is expected to return approximately $3.37 in economic, environmental and wellbeing benefits
- the programme has contributed significantly to GDP and employment. The total GDP impact is $1,490,719 with 8,856 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs supported nationwide.
- the regions with the highest benefits are Canterbury, Bay of Plenty and Otago. These regional impacts show how Jobs for Nature has successfully leveraged investments to stimulate regional economies and create regional employment opportunities.
  - » Canterbury. The programme invested $128.1 million. This investment resulted in $265.8 million in GDP benefits and supported 1,219 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs
  - » Bay of Plenty. The programme invested $89.7 million. This spending generated $171 million in GDP benefits and supported 830 FTE jobs
  - » Otago. The programme invested $53.7 million. This led to $103.2 million in GDP benefits and supported 491 FTE jobs
- the payback period for the investments is 5.279 years, reflecting the time required to recover the initial investment through the benefits generated.

How much does NZ save and what are the productivity gains?

The programme achieves substantial cost savings by avoiding expenses related to environmental degradation, such as flood damage and water treatment costs. These avoided costs represent the financial benefits of proactive environmental management. These savings are estimated as

- reduced water treatment costs of $2.6 billion. By improving water quality through wetland restoration, the programme decreases the need for expensive water treatment processes
- improved biodiversity is valued at $447 million. Based on the investment there is a greater variety of plant and animal species thriving in their natural habitats. This contributes to healthier ecosystems that can better withstand environmental changes
- improved productivity for farmers is $242 million. By reducing competition for grazing, the programme contributes to improving economic returns for the primary sector
- reduced fire risk saves $169 million. Through effective land management and reduction of flammable vegetation, the risk of wildfires is decreased, protecting both natural habitats and human settlements from potential fire damage.

Photo credit: Kaipara Moana Remediation

Delivering for people

Given the level of investment into people, how has this made a difference?

A highly skilled workforce created and new employment pathways

The programme created 14,770 employment opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups, such as regional communities, Māori, and young people, helping to reduce unemployment in these areas.

Creating nature-based employment was important for addressing high unemployment rates in regions with significant socio-economic deprivation. It provided opportunities for communities to engage in meaningful work.

The programme has helped to fill labour market gaps by providing employment opportunities in environment-based roles and by offering training of more specialised professionals in the required fields and attracting skilled workers from other sectors.

Increased skills and capability of individuals to collaborate and respond to environmental management issues

Approx $61 million has been invested in access to nature and training. Investing in a skilled environmental workforce now prevents higher costs in the future by mitigating environmental degradation, preserving biodiversity, and maintaining ecosystem services and protecting agriculture.

At least 360 projects include a focus on training and upskilling local people in environmental management. The projects are building long-term skills and capability in conservation, encouraging individuals and their local communities to be stewards and kaitiaki of their environment.

The programme has created a variety of roles aimed at enhancing conservation and environmental management. These roles are essential for the practical implementation of conservation projects and addressing complex environmental challenges.

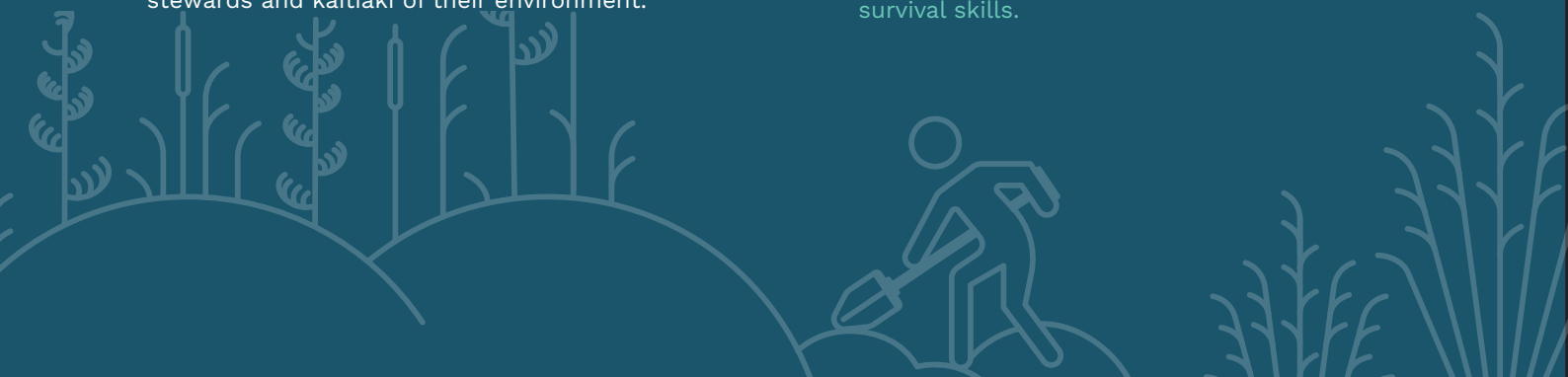
These roles can be broadly categorised into three main types:

1. Conservation and Environmental Management Roles eg, pest control managers, catchment coordinators, kaitiaki/rangers, wilding conifer control teams, aquatic weed control, nursery staff, and biodiversity monitoring
2. Project Management and Support Roles. These roles are responsible for the planning, execution, and administrative support of Jobs for Nature projects
3. Specialised roles. These roles are responsible for the planning, execution, and administrative support of Jobs for Nature projects and include GIS specialists for geographical data analysis, national predator control advisors, environmental educators, and those trained in te ao Māori.

The programme provided training in a range of environmental skills, including fencing, nursery work, planting, pest control, and more. This training equipped participants with valuable skills which could be applied to future employment opportunities. For instance, 51 people were reported as achieving NZQA credits in environmental restoration.

Thirteen projects that included education and training in their objectives have delivered:

- 25 formal qualification examples including NZ diploma in environmental management, health and safety, or Kauri Dieback training. 3,213 individuals have undertaken informal and formal training, with 1,897 people currently in formal training and 919 having completed.
- 18 informal learning opportunities include: Training in effective communication for community engagement, data management for handling and analysing environmental data, te ao Māori, pest and weed training, outdoor education training in bushcraft navigation and survival skills.



The qualifications equip individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle New Zealand's most confronting environmental challenges. Across the programme the workforce has gained the following skills:

- biodiversity, ecology, conservation science, ecosystem health, freshwater ecology, plant-biotic interactions and molecular ecology
- plant identification, ecosystem management
- marine, terrestrial, and conservation operations
- health and safety to ensure safe work practices in outdoor environments
- technical data and mapping skills to analyse environmental data
- pest control techniques and best practices for controlling invasive species
- Māori knowledge and practices related to environmental stewardship, enabling greater participation and autonomy in addressing environmental challenges.

The projects also contributed to building civil defence capacity, as seen during Cyclone Gabrielle. The skills developed through projects, such as chainsaw use and four-wheel driving, were utilised in emergency response efforts. This demonstrates the broader societal benefits of environmental projects, which can enhance community resilience to natural disasters.

The programme trained workforce is now able to better implement effective biodiversity conservation strategies, leading to improved biodiversity, more predator-free environments, and fewer ecosystems in disrepair. In the longer term these skills will lead to a higher number of sustainable jobs in environment-based roles which also improves the level of environmental outcomes expected.

Improved health and wellbeing

The programme provided structure and purpose to participants, which was particularly important during challenging times such as extreme weather events. Continuing to work on projects was described as an important part of recovery for communities affected by such events, helping to reduce anxiety and stress.

Improving economic and social wellbeing and contributing to reducing environmental degradation

Photo credit: Sustainable Business Network, Partnering to Plant Project

in the long term by building an understanding, skills, and shared responsibility for the environment.

Healthier forests, wetlands, and rivers provide direct benefits for community wellbeing and resilience. This includes mahinga kai (food gathering places), clean water, flood protection, and recreational opportunities.

We've directly improved recreation experiences through track, hut, and infrastructure upgrades and expansions. Controlling pests and weeds has made our natural areas more attractive and accessible for locals and tourists.

Increased awareness of environmental issues in the general population

By engaging diverse groups in environmental restoration this has empowered communities to participate in their community and local environmental issues creating community connections and a sense of belonging.

The programme supported environmental stewardship by educating participants about climate change, biodiversity, and freshwater restoration, empowering communities to contribute to environmental resilience with:

- school education programmes delivered to involve local youth in conservation
- community workshops and wananga held to discuss local conservation issues
- the use of mātauranga Māori (traditional knowledge) to promote cultural understanding and connection to the environment.

Case Study

Protecting the Pūharakekenui Styx River

The Styx Living Laboratory Trust has been working to protect the awa for nearly 25 years. The Trust was originally formed to fulfil one of the visions for the river; to develop a 'living laboratory' in the Pūharakekenui Styx River catchment. They aimed to do this by raising awareness and understanding of the awa including its ecology, drainage, landscape, culture, heritage and recreation values, and to maximise opportunities for community involvement.

Photo credits: Protecting the Pūharakekenui Styx River Project

The Trust's capability took a massive leap forward in 2021 when they were awarded $4.2 million over 5 years from MFE's Freshwater Improvement Fund and Jobs for Nature. The Trust is now about to start year four of Project Kōtare and as you move around the catchment there are signs of progress at every turn. The team has planted over 150,000 plants at 34 different sites, fenced over 3 km of waterways, completed 20 ha of weed control and 112 ha of animal pest control. Many local schools have taken part in education days in collaboration with the Kahukura Rongoā Māori Trust to provide a full day of learning events for children. The Trust has gone from having one part time employee to providing 37,500 hours of employment to conservation staff including eight full time roles, and three annual short term 'creative communicator' positions.

The team at Project Kōtare are determined to make the most of the final two years of funding and are lining up landowners to join their efforts and finalising planting plans. The Trust is focussed on the future and are planning for how this remarkable project can carry on.

Supporting our culture

Over $60 million of programme funding is directly allocated to iwi and has empowered Māori as kaitiaki, restoring cultural landscapes and incorporating Māori knowledge and values into delivering environmental outcomes.

Increased social inclusion and participation of Māori in nature-based work

Jobs for Nature projects created meaningful employment opportunities for Māori, particularly in regions affected by unemployment due to COVID-19 with at least 4,318 employment opportunities provided by Māori led projects reporting 4,137,504 hours worked. This has supported financial stability, income support for whanau, and increased Māori participation in the workforce contributing to reducing labour market disparities.

Nature-based projects encouraged participation from iwi, hapū, and whānau while supporting them to engage with the environment and cultural heritage. At least 4,300 people in Māori organisations were provided an opportunity to learn about nature. The programme has facilitated training for communities with Māori organisations reporting 360 instances of formal training completed outside of their organisation and 277 NZQA credits were gained. These projects helped to retain rangatahi (young people) by providing them with invaluable skills for personal and community development.

Inclusion in environmental management activities has strengthened social cohesion by bringing together diverse groups within Māori communities to work towards common environmental goals. Shared activities such as planting, pest control, and restoration of waterways have built trust and improved cooperation among participants and the community.

Photo credit: Myrtle Rust Jobs for Resistance programme - Te Rātā Whakamaru Project

Increased connection to land and intergenerational knowledge transfer

The programme has reconnected Māori communities to their lands and waterways, strengthening social bonds and cultural identity.

Māori communities through the programme have now reconnected with their ancestral lands, giving them a greater sense of belonging and cultural identity. Elders have shared traditional knowledge and cultural practices with younger participants creating a deeper understanding of Māori heritage and strengthening community bonds.

The incorporation of Mātauranga Māori has helped to strengthen cultural identity for many participants. This reconnection with ancestral lands and cultural practices has also led to a greater sense of pride and community.

The projects contribute to improving holistic wellbeing of Māori communities, aligning with the Te Whare Tapa Whā model, which includes improvements in spiritual, mental, physical, and family wellbeing through engagement with the natural environment. Protecting and restoring wāhi tapu (sacred places) directly improves the spiritual wellbeing of Māori communities. These sites are seen as places where spiritual energy, or wairua, is concentrated, and they play an important role in the spiritual practices and traditions of Māori.

Māori are enabled to realise their environmental aspirations

The programme has supported Māori by creating opportunities for Māori to exercise rangatiratanga (leadership and authority) over their lands and resources. This empowerment has been instrumental with Māori communities in some places now at the forefront of environmental restoration efforts.

Māori have taken the lead and managed projects, and as a result communities have taken charge of their environmental and cultural resources and given them a voice decision-making process. The programme contributed to providing resources and opportunities for Māori to restore and manage their lands and resources. In the Te Tau Ihu, the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance Māori actively participated in the decision-making process, ensuring that funding was aligned with their cultural and environmental priorities. Māori-led projects engaged in caring for their taonga tuku iho (inherited treasures), such as forests and waterways which made a real difference to community well-being.

Preservation of our cultural and natural heritage

For Māori, the preservation of cultural and natural heritage is deeply intertwined with their identity and spiritual beliefs. The protection of sacred sites helps preserve Māori cultural heritage and ensures traditional knowledge and practices are passed down to future generations. This is essential for maintaining the continuity of Māori cultural identity and heritage.

Sacred sites, or wāhi tapu, hold immense cultural and spiritual significance for Māori. These sites are often linked to ancestral heritage, historical events, and spiritual beliefs, serving as a tangible connection to their ancestors and cultural identity.

Projects like the restoration of the Warawara forest and the enhancement of geothermal and freshwater sites in the Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa rohe align cultural and environmental objectives, providing both ecological benefits and cultural revitalisation.

Incorporating traditional ecological knowledge, such as the use of maramataka (Māori lunar calendar) in resource management, has contributed to the improvements of our conservation efforts.

Photo credit: Ko Moehau ki Tai Project

Case Study

Te Taiwhenua o Te Whanganui a Orotū

Based on the coast of the Hawke's Bay, the Te Taiwhenua o Te Whanganui ā Orotū project is working toward restoring and maintaining the Ahuriri Estuary. The programme, delivered by a mana whenua organisation, was awarded $1.47 million from Jobs for Nature programme.

The estuary has great importance to the local community, often used for water recreation and sport, and is important for a diverse array of flora and fauna, including wading and breeding migrant birds, and twenty-nine native fish species. A primary focus of the programme is reconnecting people to employment and the environment by upskilling the team members and local community. This has given employees the opportunity to practice kaitiakitanga over their whenua. The mahi opportunities included planting, weed and pest control, fencing, and the restoring of culturally significant sites. This mahi contributes to enhancing biodiversity and improving water quality.

Photo credits: Te Taiwhenua o Te Whanganui a Orotū **Project**

Supporting Māori health and wellbeing is fundamental to the project's initiatives. This has been done through access to restoring the grave of an ancestor, re-learning about rongoā, and creating a site where kura children can visit. With the positive restoration work there is also an opportunity to share knowledge of traditional food gathering techniques which have previously been impacted by poor water quality.

This project has upskilled people and left them with invaluable knowledge on restoration work and cultural values about the landscape.

Beyond Jobs for Nature

All of the funding streams which make up Jobs for Nature are time limited. Most of this funding was sourced from Budget 2020, with the remainder from earlier government budgets. There is no additional government funding to expand the Jobs the Nature programme beyond its current life.

Each project who receives Jobs for Nature funding has an individual completion date set in its contract, which will be honoured in accordance with Budget 2024 decisions. 332 projects are still underway, with the majority due to complete this financial year (up to 30 June 2025).

What happens to projects?

A Transition Strategy was published in June 2023, which sets out a programme-wide approach to supporting a long-term legacy beyond the life of current funding. This strategy is available on the programme website (Jobs-for-Nature-Programme-Transition-Strategy.pdf (jobsfornature.govt.nz).

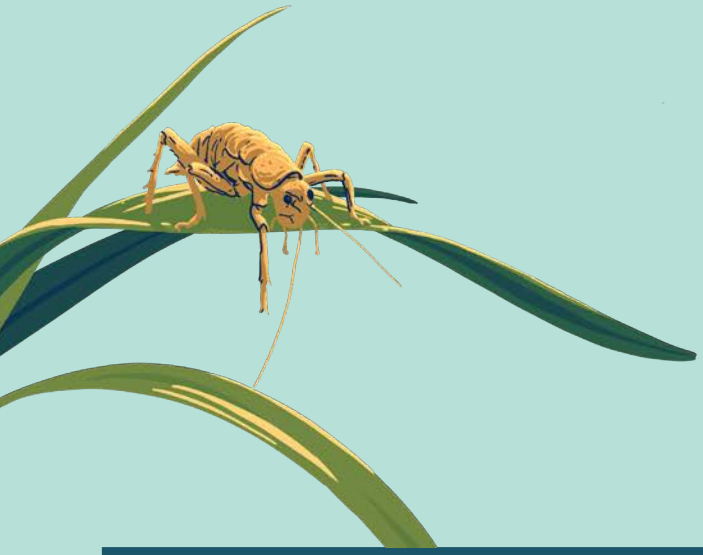
While there is no additional funding available for Jobs for Nature, agencies still have a role under the strategy to support projects to plan for their own transition beyond the programme.

Over the last year Agencies and the Secretariat have:

- launched Tūhono Taiao / Nature Connections, which is a new national collaborative online platform for environmental groups (detailed in the next section)
- concluded the MPI - Biosecurity New Zealand's Jobs for Nature funding to deliver the Wilding Conifer and Wallaby Control programmes. Wilding conifer and wallaby control work will continue in some areas beyond Jobs for Nature, as part of the MPI-BNZ's strategies for these work areas, using baseline funding
- concluded the 12 Jobs for Nature projects funded by LINZ. LINZ is engaging some of its delivery partners to continue biosecurity work beyond Jobs for Nature on LINZ-administered land
- enabled some MfE and DOC delivery partners to vary their contract conditions, to access sustainable business planning advice from a list of approved suppliers. This is to help organisations plan for long term sustainability

Photo credit: Kaipara Moana Remediation

- established a regional approach to transition planning at the DOC, including an engagement toolkit for regional office staff (delivery managers)
- worked with delivery partners to produce individual project profiles to publish on the programme website (www.jobsfornature.govt.nz/publications/). This is to help delivery partners communicate what they have achieved in regions more widely
- connected DOC and MfE delivery partners with the Ministry of Social Development's early response teams and Regional Labour Market Managers, to help transition people upskilled through Jobs for Nature to future employment
- advised delivery partners of opportunities to submit on wider developments. For example, a significant number of submissions received on the biodiversity credits markets discussion document (late 2023) were from organisations who are also Jobs for Nature delivery partners
- shared information across agencies about the Regional Infrastructure Fund prior to its launch in July 2024, as potential new funding which organisations may be eligible to apply for
- made licenses for the Grants Expertise Management System (GEM Local) available to help not-for-profit Jobs for Nature delivery partners access potential wider funding opportunities. These licenses will be allocated according to certain criteria in the 2024 calendar year.



TŪHONO TAIAO

Tūhono Taiao (Nature Connections) is a new online platform developed with participating organisations and stakeholders in the Jobs for Nature programme through workshops and surveys and the GovTech accelerator programme.

The platform is a key aspect of the Jobs for Nature Transition Strategy for organisations involved in environmental restoration activity (including any Jobs for Nature project partners) providing a mechanism to:

1. help people connect and collaborate around getting the mahi done in the real world, whether it's happening in their back yard or nationally
2. connect people to collaborate on their specific environmental topics and domains
3. support people working to restore the environment to thrive in the long term.

Over this annual report period, the platform has developed from a minimum viable product in testing in year three (May 2023) to a fully operational website released to the public in year four of the programme (June 2024). Over 80 organisations from within Jobs for Nature projects were invited to participate in website development and testing prior to its release. Since release it has over 180 organisations registered as part of the community and is still growing.

Users can connect with each other across domains and regions, share stories and resources, and find pathways for employees and connect and collaborate on their mahi.

Year five of the programme will focus on building the community, further development to increase the functions on the website and create more value for users, and establish and operating and funding model to support the website beyond year five and the end of the programme.

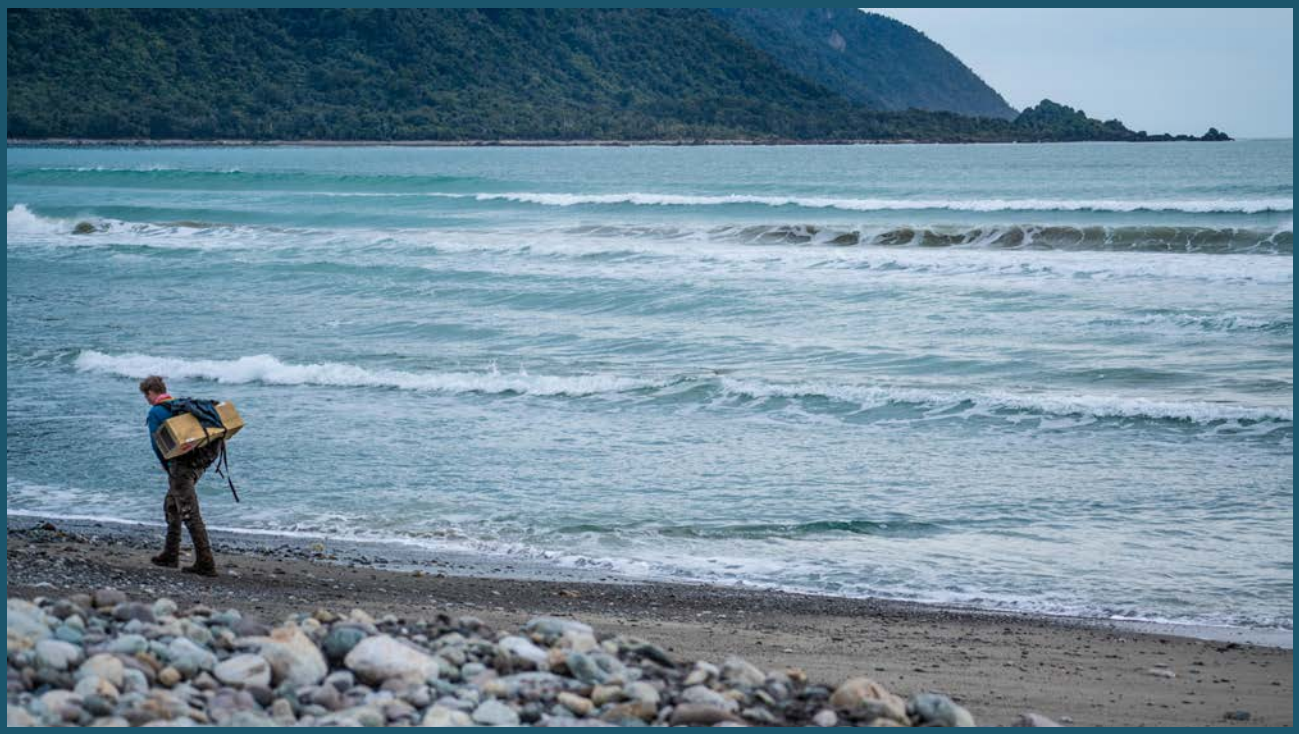


Photo credit: Big Bay Project

The next 12 months

What happens to the programme?

The Jobs for Nature programme will formally conclude on 30 June 2025, although a small number of project contracts will continue beyond this.

- final reports from projects concluding up to 30 June 2025 will be captured in a final programme report and evaluation, to be completed once data is reported in the 2025/2026 financial year
- a cross-agency governance arrangement remains in place, with engagement continuing over this period to ensure final reporting
- contracted projects due to conclude after this date will continue to be overseen by their respective funding agencies (DOC, MfE, and MPI (Agriculture and Investment Services and Te Uru Rākau – New Zealand Forest Service).

Programme closure

The Secretariat will be coordinating key programme closure activities in the final year. These will include:

- an end of programme report/final review of the fifth year, summing up the activities of the programme over its formal lifetime
- a report back to Cabinet
- the final independent external evaluation, bringing together all the information gathered on the outcomes of the programme, its economic, environmental and social outcomes.

Programme reporting

The last quarterly reporting period will be up until 30 June 2025. This final reporting will contribute to the final programme review and report back to cabinet. The Jobs for Nature website will continue to operate for the required period to ensure the programme information remains available.

The DOC, MfE, and MPI programmes all have projects completing beyond June 2025. Without the centralised reporting, agencies will individually continue to report on their uncompleted projects and update their appropriate Ministers as required.

Acknowledgements

Our project partners

It can't be said enough how important our project partners are for delivering the Jobs for Nature programme and for the environment and New Zealand in general. From establishing a desire or idea to do something about improving the environment for and with their communities. Whether they are a catchment group with local farmers, an iwi or hapū, a community or volunteer organisation, trusts, councils, and NGOs. Then turning it into action. It takes dedication and hard work, with individuals spending their own time forming and submitting funding applications, working with other organisations in their area or catchment to coordinate efforts and then executing their plan.

We'd like to say thank you for your time and efforts in restoring your own slices of New Zealand. This programme would not be what it is without all of you.

Delivery agencies

Thank you to the dedicated staff at each of the programme agencies. It takes a lot of process and systems to be able to tell the good stories about what is happening on the ground and ensure the programme is being run responsibly. The staff who support the programme work hard and often with little time to ensure everything operates smoothly.

The Jobs for Nature programme minister

We'd like to thank Rt. Hon. Minister Hoggard. The Minister has been actively engaged with the programme as it nears completion. Minister Hoggard has ensured that programme risks are well managed and that the benefits to New Zealand are captured and communicated.

Previous programme governance

We'd like to thank the previous Sustainable Land Use ministers who held oversight for the programme from inception to the change of government in November 2023 and guided the programme through successive lockdowns and significant weather events.

The people of New Zealand

Programmes like Jobs for Nature only work when there is widespread uptake and encouragement. It is immensely helpful for projects to receive the help of volunteers, shares on social media, to get in-kind support from businesses and councils, and funding from business and philanthropists.

Photo credit: The Hem of Remutaka Coastal Wetland Restoration Project

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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