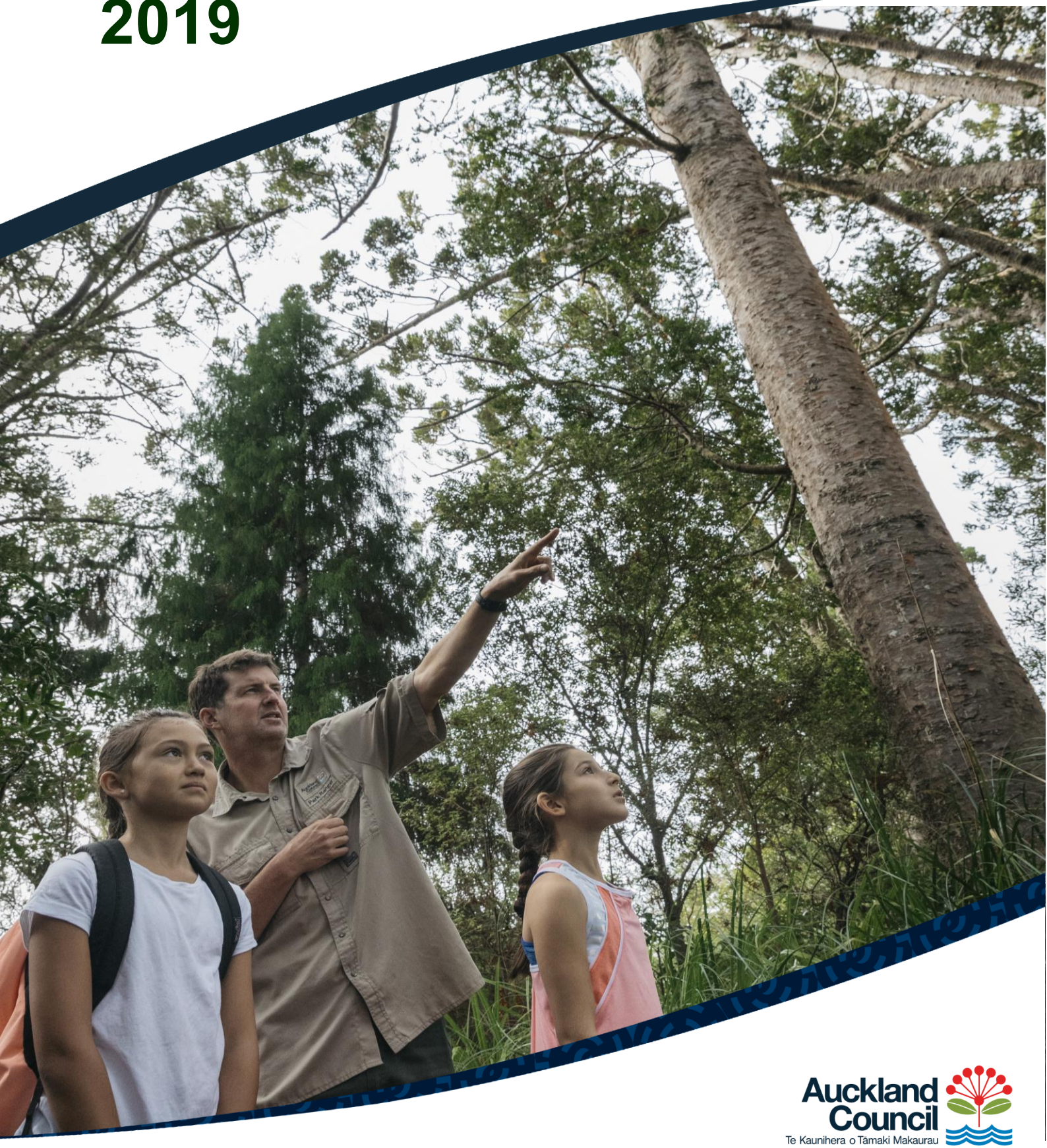
Waiheke Kauri Dieback Action Plan 2019



Auckland Council
Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau

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Version 1 – 30 July 2019

1 Purpose

This action plan sets out the action to be undertaken by Auckland Council, the Waiheke Local Board and others to keep Waiheke kauri ecosystems free from kauri dieback disease.

The plan also provides an overview of previous work, and general information about kauri dieback.

The Waiheke Kauri Dieback Action Plan 2019 builds on information provided to the Waiheke Local Board in 2017 and sets out actions that have been revised in light of the additional funding available through the 10-year natural environment targeted rate (2018 – 2028). Auckland Council's kauri dieback team are seeking endorsement from the local board and will then broaden the discussions to include the other stakeholders working on protecting kauri in Waiheke (Forest and Bird New Zealand, Department of Conservation, Auckland Transport, local Māori and private landowners).

2 Background

2.1 What is kauri dieback?

Kauri dieback is caused by a fungus-like organism named *Phytophthora agathidicida*. The disease can kill kauri of all ages and sizes. Microscopic soil- and water-borne spores infect kauri via the tree's feeding roots, damaging the tissues that carry nutrients within the tree. Kauri dieback is spread mainly through soil movement on equipment such as footwear, machinery, mountain bikes and animals.

There is currently no cure for this disease and nearly all infected kauri eventually die. Preventative measures to ensure kauri dieback is not introduced to new locations are currently the only methods available to manage the disease.

Kauri dieback is an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993. This places statutory obligations on the management of kauri dieback disease.

2.2 Context

Waiheke is home to an urban population. Additionally, Waiheke has a thriving tourism industry with visitors from New Zealand and overseas enjoying the island's vineyards and beaches, and attending multiple sporting, recreational and cultural annual events.

While biodiversity mapping[1] does not show any significant areas of distinct old growth kauri forest on Waiheke, there are areas of mixed kauri forest. Although the kauri on Waiheke may not be of the same ecological status as others in the Auckland region, their significance lies in the circumstance that Waiheke is currently believed to be free of kauri dieback symptomology, and so could form a sanctuary or have identified protection zones for kauri in the future. Sadly, many areas of Auckland are confirmed sites for the disease, including large parts of the Waitākere Ranges and Aotea Great Barrier, Department of Conservation reserves and private land throughout Auckland.

To preserve Waiheke's kauri dieback-free status, a variety of protection measures are needed.

2.3 Risks

Evidence suggests that the risk of kauri dieback introduction to any given location is closely associated with human activities that move soil contaminated with kauri dieback spores. For Waiheke, the large-scale movement of plant, soil and aggregate from the mainland is likely to be the greatest risk. These movements

[1] Singers et al (2017): Indigenous terrestrial and wetland ecosystems of Auckland.

are often associated with the transport of vehicles and earthmoving equipment, as well as the import of soil and aggregate for landscaping and/or other land development.

The large visitor numbers (some of whom arrive on the island with their own bikes), especially in the summer months, also pose a risk, particularly if these visitors have visited a contaminated area prior to their visit to Waiheke.

2.4 Hauraki Gulf Islands Pest Management Programme

The natural environment targeted rate programme also supports the Hauraki Gulf Islands Pest Management Programme, which aims to protect priority ecosystems, eradicate pests from Waiheke, Kawau and Great Barrier islands with community support and expand protection of the Hauraki Gulf island controlled area from pests. The islands of the Gulf offer nationally significant biodiversity and ecosystems, are relatively isolated, and defendable. There is an overlap between the community engagement and outreach work undertaken by the Gulf Islands pest management team and the kauri dieback programme, which is noted in the action plan below.

3 Auckland Council Kauri Dieback Programme

The Auckland Council Kauri Dieback Programme is one of nine environmental programmes funded by the natural environment targeted rate, which was approved by Auckland Council as part of its 10-year budget in June 2018. The pathogens programme, which also includes addressing myrtle rust and dutch elm disease, has a total budget of $102 million over the next 10 years.

The kauri dieback programme is aligned to the suite of natural environment targeted rate-funded programmes, in particular:

- protecting our parks
- region-wide biodiversity
- region-wide biosecurity
- enabling tools
- expanding community action
- protecting our islands.

The overall objective of the kauri dieback programme is to:

Maintain and control kauri dieback-free areas, significantly reduce the rate of spread of kauri dieback, and reduce the impact of the disease in infected areas.

The work programme will be delivered in partnership by the Environmental Services, Community Facilities and Community Services departments. Environmental Services will be responsible for coordinating council responses to kauri dieback, as well as any other region-wide projects such as surveillance, with joint responsibility across the departments for delivering community engagement activities and compliance.

Community Services will be responsible for ensuring that recreational outcomes are considered and delivering track and hygiene station upgrades in regional parks for protection against kauri dieback. Community Facilities will be responsible for delivering asset solutions (such as track and hygiene station upgrades) in local parks.

4 Waiheke Kauri Dieback Action Plan

While Auckland Council is the lead agency for the delivery of the natural environment targeted rate-funded region-wide kauri dieback programme, on many of the islands kauri are located on private land, or land belonging to other agencies such as the Department of Conservation. A meaningful and effective kauri dieback response must therefore include close cooperation with these other parties, which include:

- Forest and Bird New Zealand
- Department of Conservation
- Members of the Waiheke Collective
- Auckland Transport
- Local Māori
- private landowners.

The following action plan shows the five work streams, outlines individual activities in each work stream and shows responsibilities and timeframes.

An annual report will be provided to the Waiheke Local Board in July each year, reporting against the tasks outlined for each work stream for the previous year.

WORKSTREAM 1: Kauri Dieback Surveillance

Reliable, accurate and up-to-date data on the distribution and spread of the disease is essential to manage kauri dieback and monitor the effectiveness of management methods over the long term.

Activity	Timeframe	Responsibility
1. **Active surveillance** – aerial surveillance followed by ground-truthing (including soil sampling) to identify points of interest as well as kauri within 10 m of a track on Waiheke and other inner Hauraki Gulf islands	To be undertaken in summer 2019/20 and repeated at five-yearly intervals thereafter	Auckland Council Biosecurity
2. **Passive surveillance** – responding to reports of dying kauri trees to confirm the absence or presence of kauri dieback	Ongoing	
3. **Incursion monitoring** at key locations, which is specific to Waiheke	Annually	

WORKSTREAM 2: Kauri dieback infrastructure (*Applies to Auckland Council land only)*

In the context of kauri dieback, 'infrastructure' refers to hygiene (cleaning) stations, vehicle and bicycle washdown facilities and any physical works that result in track upgrades to achieve 'kauri-safe' standard.

Activity	Timeframe	Responsibility
1. **Implementing higher maintenance standards** for tracks through or in the vicinity of kauri.	2019/2020 Financial Year onwards	Auckland Council Biosecurity
2. **Track upgrades and/or track-realignments through kauri areas**, with temporary track closures where required until works are completed. This includes undertaking detailed investigations to determine appropriate mitigation works (upgrade, re-alignment, re-routing, other physical works) to protect kauri and carrying out physical works.	September 2019 to December 2020	Auckland Council Community Facilities Auckland Transport
3. **Consideration and implementation of track closures** for an indefinite period of time, as part of the mitigation programme.	September 2019 to December 2020	
4. **Restrict access to high value kauri areas** via unformed or 'paper' roads, as part of the mitigation programme.	September 2019 to December 2020	
5. **Investigate** to what extent the provisions of the Auckland Council District Plan – Hauraki Gulf Islands Section – Operative 2018 can be used to support the protection of kauri from kauri dieback disease, including the limitation of soil movement.	By October 2019	

WORKSTREAM 2: Kauri dieback infrastructure (*Applies to Auckland Council land only)*

In the context of kauri dieback, 'infrastructure' refers to hygiene (cleaning) stations, vehicle and bicycle washdown facilities and any physical works that result in track upgrades to achieve 'kauri-safe' standard.

Activity	Timeframe	Responsibility
6. **Installation and maintenance of effective hygiene stations** in strategic locations, especially at ferry terminals and access to the track network. This involves providing fit-for-purpose cleaning stations for pedestrian and bike traffic at all wharves departing to or coming from Waiheke, including a debrief and refinement of the Pier 2 location/facility, and potential stations at Wynyard Wharf (Sealink), Halfmoon Bay (Sealink), Mātiatia (Waiheke) and Kennedy Point (Sealink).	Commencing in December 2018. Estimated completion by December 2019.	
7. **Vehicle hygiene.** Ensuring that a vehicle and/or working equipment/plant are soil/mud free is the responsibility of the driver. Ferry operators hold 'Pest Free Warrants' and are responsible for ensuring compliance with cleanliness requirements. At Half Moon Bay, local car cleaning facilities are already available, and a space has been secured at Wynyard Wharf to install a dedicated drain and tap system for the redevelopment of the Sealink wharf area. This will serve as an 'emergency' cleaning area for non-compliant vehicles, given the lack of car cleaning facilities in the city centre. This activity also includes working with Auckland Transport to identify upcoming road works on Waiheke which require the relocation of plant and equipment from the mainland, to ensure that these have been cleaned prior to being used for on-island works.	**Work with ferry operators to improve compliance**: Ongoing. **Create a new Hauraki Gulf Islands compliance staff position to improve compliance and audit performance.** By September 2019	
8. **Supply and train users to manage phytosanitary equipment and consumables such as sterigene.**	Ongoing	

WORKSTREAM 3: Working with Māori

Auckland Council is committed to meeting its responsibilities to Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We support mana whenua of Waiheke in their exercise of kaitiakitanga, including ngahere and kauri health, and kauri dieback issues or activities.

Piritahi is the only marae on Waiheke that is managed by the (mainly mataawaka) Piritahi Marae Trust with support of local hapū-iwi.

Activity	Timeframe	Responsibility
1) **Ensure Māori are included in discussions about kauri dieback**.	Ongoing	Auckland Council Biosecurity Piritahi Marae Trust
2) **Capacity building within iwi.** This includes: a) employment opportunities within the ambassador programme b) education/ support for undertaking pest management on kauri lands c) building passive surveillance capabilities.	Ongoing	

WORKSTREAM 4: Community Engagement and Compliance

Preventing the spread of kauri dieback disease requires a combination of bringing about behaviour change, working with private and other landowners to assist with protecting kauri, and ensuring compliance with relevant rules and regulations,

Activity	Timeframe	Responsibility
1. **Ambassador Programme. '**Gulf ambassadors' are working at key locations (Half Moon Bay, Piers 2, 3 and 4 in the city centre, Wynyard Wharf and Devonport) over the summer period (November to March) to raise biosecurity awareness, demonstrate compliance with cleaning stations and inspect high-risk visitors (i.e. those with dirty footwear, bikes, hiking back-packs). The Ambassador programme will be enhanced through actively improving cooperation and/or integration with other ambassador or community outreach programmes operating on Waiheke.	Commencing in December 2018. Ongoing	Auckland Council Biosecurity Auckland Council Parks, Sport and Recreation (Community Services)
2. **Events support**, focusing on high-risk events where visitors are likely to transport soil from the mainland, such as the Waiheke Island Walking Festival and the Annual Round Rangihoua Mountain Bike Relay. This involves:	Commencing in December 2018. Ongoing	

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Activity	Timeframe	Responsibility
a. Establishing a calendar of events and working with Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) as part of the approved permit process. b. Working with event organisers to communicate key messages leading up to the event, assessing their kauri dieback risk management plan and providing kauri ambassadors to inspect gear and equipment on the day(s).		
3. **Provide focused and high-impact information material on kauri dieback that is Waiheke-specific** and addresses: • the importance of alternatives to planting kauri trees as these may provide a 'stepping stone' for contamination, and • support for the purchase/use of local and/or eco-sourced plants and seeds.	Commencing in December 2019 Ongoing on an as-needed basis	
4. **Working with high-risk suppliers/industry** to carry out preventative biosecurity measures, including: a. Ensuring that only permitted suppliers are able to import soil and potting mix to Waiheke (for example, Central Landscapes, who source topsoil from outside of the Auckland area to reduce the risk of transportation of *P.agathadicida*) b. Implementing the New Zealand Plant Producers Incorporated's (NZPPI) accreditation scheme to ensure that all plants offered for sale on Waiheke are kauri-safe. c. Working with Fullers and other ferry operators on an improved notification scheme for biosecurity messages, videos and signage, in conjunction with the Gulf Islands Pest Management Programme.	Ongoing	

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Activity	Timeframe	Responsibility
5. Undertake a region-wide awareness and behaviour change campaign, including improving signage, communicating with schools, using electronic platforms including Facebook and websites, and producing hard copy information such as brochures.	Ongoing	
6. Undertake behaviour change research to guide outreach to private boat owners to improve biosecurity, especially for popular destinations such as Waiheke, and improve communications.	Commencing in December 2019	
7. Develop an enhanced regulatory programme through implementation of the Regional Pest Management Plan provisions, in conjunction with the Gulf Islands Pest Management Programme.	Commencing when the Auckland Regional Pest Management Plan becomes operative Ongoing	
8. **Support landowners** to undertake kauri protection on private land, including providing information about kauri protection measures required under the proposed National (Kauri Dieback) Pest Management Plan, the restrictions applicable when opening up kauri lands for commercial use, and through providing resources such as phytosanitary supplies, tree felling, fencing.	Commencing in April 2019. Ongoing	
9. **Improve, provide training and monitor industry phytosanitary best practice** through a nursery accreditation scheme and Standard Operating Procedures for council staff, contractors and volunteers.	Commencing in late 2019. Ongoing	
10. **Request that Waiheke is recognised as a Kauri Forest Protection Area** under Section 21 – Rule 12 of the proposed National (Kauri Dieback) Pest Management Plan.	Following the enactment of the National (Kauri Dieback) Pest Management Plan.	

WORKSTREAM 5: Kauri dieback treatment and research (region-wide)

Scientific research is a vital part of the response to kauri dieback, and a key component of the National Kauri Dieback Programme Auckland Council Biosecurity is a member of and contributor to this programme.

Activity	Timeframe	Responsibility
1. **Undertake operational research relevant to the Auckland region**, as appropriate, including social science, Mātauranga Māori, epidemiology and control tools projects.	Ongoing	Auckland Council Biosecurity
2. **Work with universities and Crown Research Institutes and continue to participate in the National Kauri Dieback Programme**.	Ongoing	

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