

Ngā Awa, DOC's priority river restoration programme

Vision: Working together with our communities towards healthy, thriving rivers from source to sea

The challenge: Working at the landscape scale in complex relationships with inconsistent resources and regulations under a changing climate

Our outcome objectives

1

River ecosystems and species thrive from mountain to sea

- By 2030, collaborative management of rivers is reducing the cumulative effects of pressures on biodiversity, and measurable gains have been made towards ecologically relevant and measurable improvements to the aquatic biodiversity, ecological health and natural character of each of the Ngā Awa rivers.
- By 2050, the biodiversity, ecological health, connectivity and natural character of our rivers has been restored to a 'healthy functioning state' in a sustainable way into the future.

2

Restored rivers enrich people's lives

- By 2030, restoration outcomes are achieving measurable and sustainable cultural, social and economic benefits across the 14 Ngā Awa catchments. The outcomes are enriching the lives of those involved and helping local communities thrive.
- By 2050, restoration outcomes are achieving measurable and sustainable cultural, social and economic benefits across New Zealand's rivers and their catchments. The outcomes are enriching people's lives and helping our communities thrive.

Our process objectives

3

Collaborate with others

- By 2025, collaboration at each of the Ngā Awa catchments has resulted in a coordinated and collectively representative plan and a mechanism to carry the plan forward sustainably into the future.
- By 2030, the level of partnership, collaboration and community participation driving river restoration at the 14 Ngā Awa rivers has reached a category of 'excellence'.
- By 2050, collaboration, co-design, partnership and community participation are driving coordinated river restoration across New Zealand's rivers.

4

Co-design and co-lead with iwi/hapū/whānau

- By 2025, innovative Treaty of Waitangi partnership approaches have been developed and are leading the delivery of many Ngā Awa restoration projects.
- By 2030, manawhenua are better able to exercise rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga, including leading and partnering with the government under Te Mana o te Wai in decision-making about taonga species and the awa with which they associate (for the Ngā Awa catchments).
- By 2050, river 'management' has shifted to a functioning relationship between people and the awa, giving effect to Te Mana o te Wai, recognising each awa as a living, healthy entity for the benefit of future generations.

5

Recognise climate change

- By 2030, the coordinated plans at place for Ngā Awa rivers incorporate the latest climate change projections and Te Ao Māori, nature-based solutions to ensure our actions are sustainable into the future.
- By 2050, restoration actions provide adaptable responses to climate change pressures for sustainable river ecosystems that support thriving communities.

Our strategic approaches

First priority


Intergenerational approach for succession building and resourcing


Aspirations of manawhenua



Clear goal setting at place



Tangible restoration actions


Working collaboratively

Second priority


Effective monitoring and reporting


Information sharing and storytelling




Placed in the national picture


Internal support

Third priority


Active advocacy


Commissioning research

Objective	Strategic approach	National action	Lead	By end of
1. River ecosystems and species thrive from mountains to sea		Support targets that: are clear and measurable; reflect the values, vision and objectives; and include environmental, social and cultural outcomes.	Workstream lead	2024
		Improve the sharing of resources and learnings from this programme and other catchment programmes.	Science advisor	2022
		Continue building the baseline information gathering, the monitoring programme and reporting through report cards.	Monitoring TAG	Ongoing
		Improve communications support across the programme by recruiting for a communications role, developing a prospectus for future funding and improving annual reporting.	Workstream manager	2023
		Explore innovative technologies and tools for monitoring.	Science advisor	2023
		In each catchment support action on opportunities and issues raised by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and the Resource Management Act.	Workstream lead	2023
2. Restored rivers enrich people's lives		Continue to develop innovative ways of enriching people's lives as part of river restoration, eg, via Jobs for Nature – Mahi mō te Taiao.	Engagement advisor	Ongoing
		Seek to deliver socio-economic, cultural and conservation behaviour research needs through other large research programmes.	Science advisor	Ongoing
		Explore opportunities for developing support tools to help landowners with decisions on diversifying land use.	Science advisor	2024
3. Collaborate with others		Explore recruiting a youth coordinator to facilitate increased youth participation across the programme.	Workstream manager	2023
		Develop an online national community platform and knowledge hub for sharing catchment restoration information across the Ngā Awa river restoration programme that includes a whanaungatanga portal, or online virtual marae, for exchanging ideas and wisdom.	Programme GIS lead and engagement advisor	2023
		Identify opportunities for connecting with similar programmes by supporting national forums, developing online platforms and encouraging greater agency collaboration across the natural resource sector.	Workstream lead	2024
		Grow capability for collaboration and engagement to support the river rangers' effectiveness.	Workstream lead and engagement advisor	Ongoing
4. Co-design and co-lead with iwi/hapū/whānau		Continue to support rangers to work in shared leadership and co-design roles.	Engagement advisor	Ongoing
		Develop a relationship with the New Zealand Freshwater Sciences Society Rōpū Māori, to increase participation of Te Ao Māori subject matter experts in the programme.	Science advisor	2023
5. Recognise climate change		Explore how Ngā Awa catchment restoration actions can be delivered by incorporating national or regional climate change predictions and adaption plans.	Science advisor	2023
		Develop research partnerships to improve understanding for building climate change resilience into restoration actions.	Science advisor	2023