



# Department of Conservation

STATEMENT OF INTENT 2016–2020



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



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*Te Papa Atawhai*

Statement of Intent 2016–2020

Presented to the House of Representatives pursuant  
to section 39 of the Public Finance Act 1989.

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# Statements of responsibility

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## Chief Executive Statement of Responsibility

In signing this information, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information on strategic intentions for the Department of Conservation. The information has been prepared in accordance with section 38 and section 40 of the Public Finance Act 1989.



**Lou Sanson**  
Chief Executive/Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
27 May 2016

## Responsible Minister Statement

I am satisfied that the information on strategic intentions prepared by the Department of Conservation is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the Government.



**Honourable Maggie Barry ONZM**  
Minister of Conservation  
27 May 2016

# Introduction

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## Director-General

Our nature has shaped who we are. It is intrinsic to our Kiwi way of life and our national identity, and it underpins our economy.

Conservation is what makes New Zealand special and many New Zealanders are actively engaged in it. Conservation is the ‘engine room’ of New Zealand’s tourism industry and drives our global reputation. Our environmental credentials differentiate New Zealand’s primary produce exports in a very competitive world. We also rely on many of the essential natural services our environment provides, from the fresh air we breathe and the food we eat to the natural processes that provide clean water for people and businesses and prevent flooding and erosion.

Healthy nature is necessary for healthy people and a healthy economy and is a key underpinning to New Zealanders’ wellbeing. Our vision for New Zealand – ‘the greatest living space on Earth’ reflects an overall desire for social and economic wellbeing, environmental health, wealth and personal wellbeing. This vision is larger than the Department of Conservation (DOC) and larger than just conservation. It recognises that conservation has more than intrinsic value, and it forms the foundation of DOC’s strategy – that conservation benefits all New Zealanders and is therefore everyone’s responsibility.

To meet the challenge and make progress in the medium term, DOC intends to:

- Work with whānau, hapū, iwi and communities to protect, restore and manage our natural places and native species
- Grow conservation by working in partnership with others
- Ensure that caring for nature is seen by New Zealanders as everyone’s responsibility
- Continue to embed the new structure and strategy, and focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of core work programmes.

Additionally, in order to focus our efforts even more strongly, we have developed a set of stretch goals for the next 10 years.

- 90% of New Zealanders’ lives are enriched through connection to our nature.
- Whānau, hapū and iwi are able to practise their responsibilities as kaitiaki of natural and cultural resources on public conservation lands and waters.
- 50% of New Zealand’s natural ecosystems are benefiting from pest management.
- 50 freshwater ecosystems are restored from ‘mountains to the sea’.
- A nationwide network of marine protected areas is in place, representing New Zealand’s marine ecosystems.
- The stories of 50 historic Icon Sites are told and protected.
- 50% of international holiday visitors come to New Zealand to connect with our natural places.

# Vision, purpose and outcomes

The Department of Conservation is responsible for protecting native wildlife, and overseeing the management of about a third of New Zealand's land area and the natural and historical resources it contains. This work sits at the very heart of New Zealand's nationhood – what it is to be Kiwi. We manage natural and historical resources for their intrinsic values, for the services that ecosystems provide us with today, to safeguard options for future generations and for recreational use and enjoyment by the public.

Maintaining the persistence of native species, and the health of New Zealand's public conservation lands and waters is core work for the Department. This work

is increasingly seen within a broader economic and environmental context. With an extensive visitor asset infrastructure, the Department is well placed to support local businesses that underpin the New Zealand tourism industry, worth \$24 billion in 2014.

The Department has four intermediate outcomes around which its work is organised. These are shown in the outcomes model diagram below. The stretch goals provide a 10-year focus for the organisation within this context.

DOC's vision and outcome statement reflects the importance of working in partnership with others.

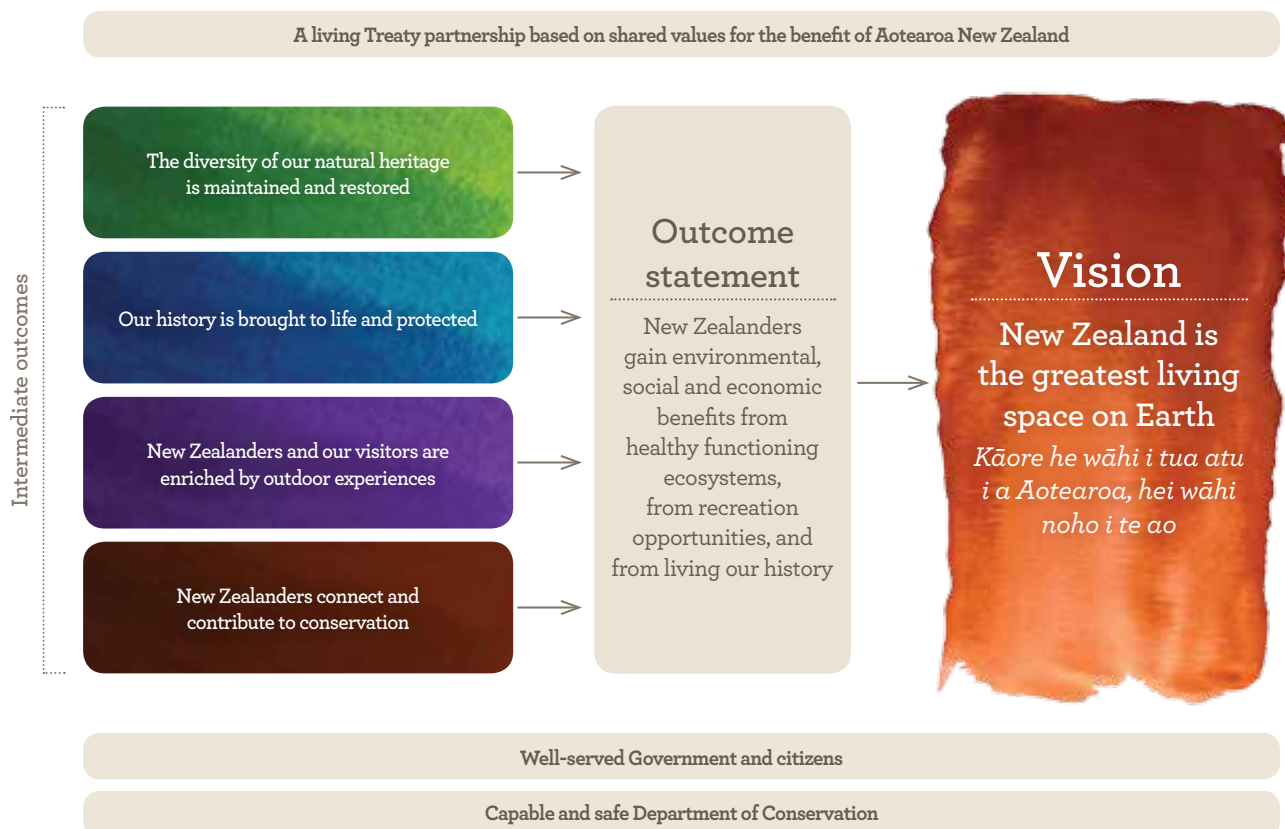


Figure 1: Conservation outcomes model.



DOC's overarching purpose statement is 'Conservation leadership for our nature'. This recognises the role that we all play as guardians of 'our nature'.

DOC has a legislative mandate to protect and care for New Zealand's natural environment and historic/cultural heritage. Individuals, community groups, businesses and other agencies also lead conservation through volunteering, sponsorship and partnerships for conservation. 'Our nature' also recognises the value of the natural environment to New Zealanders. It underpins our natural identity, economy and lifestyles.

The Department's main functions are:

- Managing land, fresh and coastal waters that have been protected for conservation purposes – about 8.6 million hectares of land, 44 marine reserves (covering a total of 1.74 million hectares), and 8 marine mammal sanctuaries (covering approximately 2.8 million hectares).

DOC's work is heavily focused on pest management on areas of land or water where natural heritage values are high, and on support of visitor experiences where historic and recreation/tourism values are high. Community engagement underpins these management programmes.

- Encouraging recreation on public conservation lands and waters by providing visitor facilities, including tracks for walking, biking and four-wheel driving, as well as huts, campsites, visitor centres and access to historic sites.
- Authorising tourism operations and other third parties to use sites on public conservation lands and waters for a variety of activities, such as grazing, electricity generation and transmission, mining, and telecommunication purposes.
- Protecting marine mammals, preserving native freshwater fisheries, protecting recreational freshwater fisheries and freshwater fish habitats, and conserving protected native wildlife.

- Protecting 13,000 historic sites, and bringing the history of New Zealand to life through the active management of 650 sites accessible to the public.
- Providing booking services, information services and safety services, such as weather and avalanche forecasting.
- Advocating generally for the conservation of natural and historic resources, providing conservation information, and supporting international agreements designed to improve environmental management in New Zealand and internationally.
- Supporting the Minister of Conservation in exercising responsibilities under other legislation, for example, under the Resource Management Act 1991 for the coastal and marine environment, including in relation to councils' policies and plans, and consent applications regarding these environments.
- Providing scientific, policy and legal advice to the Minister of Conservation, contributing to whole-of-government policy processes, and servicing ministerial advisory committees, the New Zealand Conservation Authority and conservation boards.

We are also contributing to the Better Public Service results areas by:

- Working with businesses to achieve conservation gains in ways that deliver environmental, social and economic benefits to New Zealanders
- Making changes to where the Department works and what it focuses on, to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of its work programmes
- Emphasising partnerships, building relationships, sharing skills and knowledge, and involving others, including other public service agencies
- Working with all NRS agencies on the core focus areas and cross-cutting themes agreed by Government for the sector, as set out in the Business Growth Agenda and reported through the Building Natural Resources progress reports.

# Stretch goals and priorities

**New Zealand is the greatest living space on Earth**  
*Kāore he wāhi i tua atu i a Aotearoa, hei wahi noho i te ao*

**Vision:**  
 50+ years

**A living treaty partnership based on shared values for the benefit of Aotearoa New Zealand**

<b>The diversity of our natural heritage is maintained and restored</b>	<b>Our history is brought to life and protected</b>	<b>New Zealanders and our visitors are enriched by outdoor experiences</b>	<b>New Zealanders connect and contribute to conservation</b>	<b>Intermediate outcomes by year 50</b>
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- |  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecosystem representation</li> <li>• Species persistence</li> <li>• Iconic features and species</li> <li>• Locally treasured partnerships</li> <li>• Lands, waters and species held</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NZers engage in/value historic heritage</li> <li>• Historic heritage protected/conserved</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iconic destinations</li> <li>• Gateway destinations</li> <li>• Locally Treasured destinations</li> <li>• Backcountry destinations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation and identity</li> <li>• More conservation achieved by others</li> <li>• NZers wellbeing and conservation</li> <li>• Maximising conservation through business</li> <li>• Capable and motivated businesses</li> <li>• DOC products and services</li> </ul> | <b>Intermediate outcomes objectives by year 25</b> |
|--|--|---|--|--|

50% of New Zealand's natural ecosystems are benefiting from pest management.  50 freshwater ecosystems are restored from 'mountains to the sea'.  A nationwide network of marine protected areas is in place, representing New Zealand's marine ecosystems.	The stories of 50 Historic Icon sites are told and protected.	50% of international holiday visitors come to New Zealand to connect with our natural places.	90% of New Zealanders' lives are enriched through connection to our nature.	<b>Stretch goals by year 10</b>
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**Whānau, hapū and iwi are able to practise their responsibilities as kaitiaki of natural and cultural resources on public conservation lands and waters.**

War on Weeds Battle for our Birds Save our Kiwi Kauri dieback MPA legislation Island predator programme	Heritage landmarks and icons	Long-term upgrades of 4 Iconic destinations Kiwi Guardians roll-out Pike River experience	Healthy Nature/ Healthy People Conservation/ Environmental Education Strategy Our Nature	<b>Priorities (for years 1-4 see key milestones table)</b>
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Pest management Species management Restoration Legal protection	Historic management	Recreation opportunities management Asset management Concession management	Participation Education and communication	<b>Annual outputs</b>
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**Capable and safe Department of Conservation**

• Core management disciplines	• Working with Māori	• Partnering and collaborating	• Safety and wellbeing	• Leadership
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**Capability: safety and leadership**

# Stretch goal milestones and priorities

The stretch goal milestones outlined below drive performance and are reported through the Department of Conservation National Performance Indicators table.

**Table 1: Year 2: 2016/17 and out-year priorities**

Intermediate outcome		Year
<i>The diversity of our natural heritage is maintained and restored</i>		By year 50
Intermediate outcome objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A full range of New Zealand's ecosystems is conserved to a healthy functioning state</li> <li>• Nationally threatened species are conserved to ensure persistence</li> <li>• Nationally iconic natural features and species are maintained or restored</li> <li>• Locally treasured natural heritage is maintained or restored in partnerships</li> <li>• Public conservation lands, waters and species are held for now and future generations</li> </ul>		By year 25
Stretch goals		By year 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of New Zealand's natural ecosystems are benefiting from pest management</li> <li>• Whānau, hapū, and iwi are able to practise their responsibilities as kaitiaki of natural and cultural resources on public conservation lands and waters</li> </ul>	Priorities	Years 1–4
	<p><b>War on Weeds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased wilding pine control and profile for the 'Dirty Dozen' weeds</li> <li>• National Dune Management Plan</li> <li>• Revitalisation of the Weedbusters programme</li> </ul> <p><b>Battle for our Birds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramp up aerial pest treatment by 50,000 ha/year</li> <li>• Respond to significant beech/podocarp mast events to prevent local extinction of iconic species populations</li> <li>• Continued support for Project Janszoon/Cape to City</li> </ul> <p><b>Support the landscape-scale restoration project: Taranaki Mounga</b></p> <p><b>Island Predator Programmes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antipodes Islands mouse eradication programme</li> <li>• Resolution/Secretary Island stoats</li> </ul> <p><b>Save our Kiwi</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Island community focus with Kiwis for kiwi</li> <li>• Increase South Island linkage to Battle for our Birds</li> </ul> <p><b>Kauri dieback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the plan with focus on facility development</li> </ul>	

*Continued overleaf*

Stretch goals		By year 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of New Zealand's natural ecosystems are benefiting from pest management</li> <li>• Whānau, hapū, and iwi are able to practise their responsibilities as kaitiaki of natural and cultural resources on public conservation lands and waters</li> </ul>	<p><b>Priorities</b></p> <p><b>Ecosystem management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Consolidate EMUs</b> – consolidate the top 500 terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystem management units and focus on the priority pests when implementing to standard</li> <li>• <b>Species integration</b> – integrate species into ecosystem management units to ensure persistence of more than 300 threatened species</li> <li>• <b>Rare ecosystems</b> – support others to focus on rare ecosystems outside public conservation land</li> <li>• <b>Priority pests</b> – focus on the priority pests that make the greatest contribution to the stretch goals across all management units</li> <li>• <b>50 Local Treasure partnerships</b> – create a baseline of up to 50 Local Treasure natural heritage partnerships, support, up-skill partners to work independently</li> <li>• <b>ZIP/Bioheritage National Science Challenge</b> – expand ZIP to include Callaghan Institute</li> <li>• <b>Wasps</b> – confirm and begin implementing National Plan</li> <li>• <b>McKenzie Agreement</b> – implementation and fundraising plan</li> </ul>	<p>Years 1–4</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 freshwater ecosystems are restored from 'mountains to the sea'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>'Living Water' and 'Arawai Kākāriki'</b> – implement plans for 'Living Water' and 'Arawai Kākāriki'</li> <li>• <b>Significant freshwater ecosystems</b> – work with others to identify and restore additional significant freshwater ecosystems</li> <li>• <b>Freshwater water reform</b> – strategic involvement in RMA and support for the water reform work programme</li> <li>• <b>Tier 1 monitoring for freshwater</b> – implement as part of a collective action programme with other agencies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A nationwide network of marine protected areas is in place, representing New Zealand's marine ecosystems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Marine</b> – develop a multi-year programme to implement Marine Protected Area policy</li> <li>• <b>Citizen science</b> – enable a citizen science approach where practicable to marine protected area monitoring</li> <li>• <b>Marine forums</b> – identify future marine forums, continue to progress South East Marine Protection Forum and support Hauraki Gulf Forum</li> <li>• <b>Marine legislation</b> – work with MfE on legislation for Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary and a new Marine Protected Area Act</li> </ul>	<p>Years 1–4</p>

Intermediate outcome		Year
<b><i>Our history is brought to life and protected</i></b>		By year 50
Intermediate outcome objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More New Zealanders engage in their heritage and value the benefits of interacting with it</li> <li>• Historic heritage is protected and conserved for future generations</li> </ul>		By year 25
Stretch goal milestones		By year 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The stories of 50 Historic Icon sites are told and protected</li> <li>• Whānau, hapū, and iwi are able to practise their responsibilities as kaitiaki of natural and cultural resources on public conservation lands and waters</li> </ul>	<b>Priorities</b>	
	<b>Historic Icon sites</b> – develop and tell stories at 2 icon sites each year	Years 1–4
	<b>Bringing history to life</b> – develop and implement an action plan to bring history to life in collaboration with other agencies/partners including the Landmarks programme	Years 2–4
	<b>Engaging others in historic heritage</b> – Work with whānau, hapū and iwi and communities to engage them in bringing history to life and in historic heritage asset management	Years 1–4

Intermediate outcome		Year
<b><i>New Zealanders and our visitors are enriched by outdoor experiences</i></b>		By year 50
Intermediate outcome objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Icon destinations support the growth of tourism and generate economic benefit</li> <li>• More New Zealanders enjoy Gateway destinations</li> <li>• More people enjoy Locally Treasured destinations</li> <li>• More people enjoy the backcountry</li> </ul>		By year 25
Stretch goal Milestones		By year 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of international holiday visitors come to New Zealand to connect with our natural places</li> </ul>	<b>Priorities</b>	
	<b>Icon destinations</b> – implement long-term upgrades of four iconic destinations <b>Tourism industry relationships</b> – form relationships with the tourism industry so that increasing tourism numbers can be managed effectively <b>Pike29 – Great Walk</b> – construction phase	Years 1–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of New Zealanders' lives are enriched through connection to our nature</li> <li>• Whānau, hapū, and iwi are able to practise their responsibilities as kaitiaki of natural and cultural resources on public conservation lands and waters</li> </ul>	<b>Gateway destinations</b> – prioritise improvements to Gateway destinations near to or easily accessible from main population centres <b>Kiwi Guardians</b> – national roll-out <b>Removing barriers</b> – work with others to reduce barriers, making it easier for school groups and families to visit Gateway destinations	Years 1–4
	<b>Engaging others in Locally Treasured destinations</b> – engage with communities to jointly decide how they can be involved in managing Locally Treasured destinations	Years 3–4
	<b>Engaging others in the backcountry network</b> – Work with partners and other stakeholders to enable and grow their involvement in and contribution to the backcountry network <b>Backcountry service delivery standards</b> – implement a programme to match service delivery standards in the backcountry network to changing market demand	Years 1–2

Intermediate outcome		Year
<b>New Zealanders connect and contribute to conservation</b>		By year 50
Intermediate outcome objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation is core to New Zealanders' identity, values and thinking</li> <li>• More conservation is achieved by others</li> <li>• Conservation is seen as an essential investment in New Zealand's wellbeing and brand</li> <li>• Conservation outcomes are maximised from business partnerships</li> <li>• Businesses are more capable and motivated to undertake conservation independently of DOC</li> <li>• DOC's own products, services and brand maximise conservation and business outcomes</li> </ul>		By year 25
Stretch goal Milestones		By year 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of New Zealanders' lives are enriched through connection to our nature</li> <li>• Whānau, hapū, and iwi are able to practise their responsibilities as kaitiaki of natural and cultural resources on public conservation lands and waters</li> </ul>	Priorities	
	<b>Healthy Nature/Healthy People</b>	Years 1- 3
	<b>Conservation/Environmental Education</b> – implement strategy	Year 1
	<b>Conservation and Environmental Science Roadmap</b> – complete first draft with MfE/DOC/MBIE	Year 2
	<b>Whānau, hapū and iwi partnerships</b> – build healthy partnerships by working alongside whānau, hapū and iwi	Years 1–3
	<b>Transforming outcomes through partnerships</b> – harness partnership opportunities with potential to transform outcomes – natural heritage, historic heritage and recreation	Years 1–3
	<b>DOC Community Fund</b> – target support for community conservation through the DOC Community Fund and other funds	Years 1–3
<b>Reporting partnership contributions</b> – develop tools for reporting partners' contribution to conservation	Year 2	
<b>National business partnerships</b> – develop additional set of six national business partnerships	Years 1–4	
<b>Regional business partnerships</b> – develop larger set of more than 50 regional partnerships	Years 1–4	

Capable and safe Department of Conservation		
Objective	Milestones	
People – building the capabilities needed to deliver our Stretch Goals	<p><b>Safety and wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue culture change</li> </ul> <p><b>Core management disciplines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remuneration system</li> <li>• Performance management system</li> <li>• Grow managers' capability</li> <li>• Project management capability</li> <li>• Risk management system</li> <li>• Relationship management focus</li> <li>• Data and analytics</li> </ul> <p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a plan for a 'Sustainable DOC'</li> <li>• Enhance DOC's potential to drive sustainability with partners</li> </ul>	Years 1–4
ICT – enhancing our capability and that of our partners	<p><b>Productivity</b> – implement Identity and Access Management system</p> <p><b>Asset management system</b> – extend Department's Asset Management System to biodiversity planning</p> <p><b>Relationship Management system</b> – build a business case for an Enterprise Relationship Management System (ERMS) for stakeholder and volunteer management</p> <p>Migrate business-critical <b>Permissions and Visitor Booking</b> functions to the ERMS as a first priority</p> <p><b>Mobility</b> – deploy Enterprise Mobile Management Support as a managed service</p>	Years 2–4
Infrastructure – DOC has the effective and efficient infrastructure needed to deliver its operating model and outcomes framework	<b>Infrastructure</b> – DOC's asset-related decisions support future service delivery.	Years 1–4

# The context we operate in

Context	Response
Meeting the conservation challenge	Collaboration to grow conservation
Contributing to New Zealand tourism, business, and national identity	Focus on how we engage with our customers
Working with whānau, hapū and iwi in a post-Treaty settlement context	Working with Māori, for Māori
Shifting populations	Agile learning organisation
Building a high performing, engaged organisation	Creating a culture for success

## Meeting the conservation challenge

There are many challenges in conservation that this organisation is not able to solve alone. For example, the biodiversity challenge is great. New Zealand has one of the highest proportions of threatened species and one of the highest extinction rates in the world, despite a third of the country being public conservation land. This is due to the recent impacts of fragmentation of ecosystems through human settlement and establishing agriculture, and introduced species. Our native biodiversity is also vulnerable to the increasing impacts of human-induced climate change, including more frequent and severe storms and a likely increase in predators and weeds. While biodiversity protection and recovery is being achieved in areas under intensive management, the

overall trend outside these areas is that biodiversity is declining and ecosystem services are being reduced.

There is an increasing amount of crucial conservation work undertaken by iwi, business, universities, research-based science organisations, volunteers, philanthropists, state-owned enterprises, other government agencies, Natural Resources Sector, local authorities, community groups, and other social sector groups. Working with these groups to grow conservation means DOC needs to support the work that is already being done by our partners, and involve them in the ongoing conversation about how to get the best value for New Zealand.

In parallel with this we have engaged with stakeholders to look at the value obtained from existing programmes, and to prioritise our activities on a value for money basis.



Seaview Vineyard, Marlborough. Photo: © Yealands Estate – Seaview Vineyard, Marlborough



## Contributing to New Zealand tourism, business, and national identity

DOC sits at the heart of New Zealand's recreation and tourism industry, with 35 percent of international visitors coming primarily to experience our natural landscapes. New Zealand has a strong, well recognised and trusted brand with travellers. Conservation plays a critical role in supporting this – the market advantage on which our tourism industry relies. Ensuring that we maintain the integrity of our brand is critical. The Department manages most of New Zealand's major natural tourism attractions and provides extensive opportunities for recreation on conservation land and waterways, including for businesses that support tourism.

The businesses that support or complement recreation and tourism are major contributors to our national, regional and local economies. Additionally, conservation protects our natural capital and delivers the infrastructure on which many of our key industries depend. Sound management of the natural environment delivers ecosystem services such as quality fresh water and fertile soil which underpin the success of many of our primary industries.

New Zealand's natural heritage shapes our cultural identity, and the quality of our natural environment contributes directly to our health and our standard of living. For many, recreation in the outdoors helps to improve health and wellbeing and contributes to a sense of personal achievement. Investing in conserving and protecting our natural resources and heritage is an investment in New Zealand's long-term wellbeing and prosperity, as well as protecting its natural heritage for future generations.

## Working with whānau, hapū and iwi in a post-Treaty settlement context

Treaty settlements offer opportunities for confirming ongoing partnerships and strengthening relationships between the Department and whānau, hapū and iwi as Treaty partners. As settlements are implemented, iwi have a greater role and influence in the governance of public conservation lands and waters. DOC has ongoing commitments to 50 settlements, and the fast pace of

future settlements presents challenges to both DOC and Treaty partners' capability and capacity. DOC is ahead of many other departments in this regard, largely due to the obligations we have under section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987. However, it is important to shift the conversation away from these obligations towards a more integrated approach where all staff share the responsibility for understanding and maintaining the ongoing relationships we have with our Treaty partners.

## Shifting populations

Our future operating environment will be characterised by ongoing demographic, social, technological, and political change. More people are living in the top half of the North Island and we have an increasingly urbanised and multicultural society. The environmental challenges we are facing are likely to continue for the foreseeable future and decisions and actions made now will have a significant impact on future generations. The location of the Department's networks of tracks, huts, campsites and other visitor facilities will need to change to meet the needs of New Zealanders today and in the future. Technological change is rapid and can provide innovative solutions as well as new issues, for example drone use on popular tracks.

## Building a high-performing, engaged organisation

Organisations are only as strong as the people who make them. As our people change and grow we need to ensure the organisation is working just as hard to be fit for purpose, and a great place to work. We are emerging from a period of considerable restructuring and are now working in new model. We are in the third phase of this transformation plan which requires us to embed the new way of working in our systems, processes and culture.

- Phase one: enabling others to contribute – gearing ourselves up for engaging/collaborating with others to achieve results
- Phase two: realigning the organisation to the strategic direction
- Phase three: embedding the new model and building strong productive external relationships that achieve the desired goals.

# Our strategic response

## Collaboration to grow conservation

The Department recognises its stewardship role in conservation is greater than the cost and resources it could realistically expect from the public purse. The conservation work being done by others extends our reach and in many places is leading the way. Supporting and leveraging the work our partners are already doing and working alongside them will greatly improve the conservation gains we can make. DOC is increasingly engaging in strategic partnerships across local, regional and national government as well as non-government sectors to gain efficiencies and make a stronger collective impact. It is essential that we engage openly

and willingly with these organisations, help them contribute to the overall wellbeing of our environment, and share our expertise and knowledge. To achieve this, we will need to continue the shift towards an increasingly collaborative way of working that asks “How can we work together to achieve the best outcomes for this place and these species?” rather than stating “I’m the expert, follow me!” Self-awareness and an appreciation and understanding of others’ perspectives is key to developing this strength.

Within government, the Department works within the Natural Resources Sector (NRS), a grouping of central government agencies responsible for the management and stewardship of New Zealand’s natural resources.<sup>1</sup>

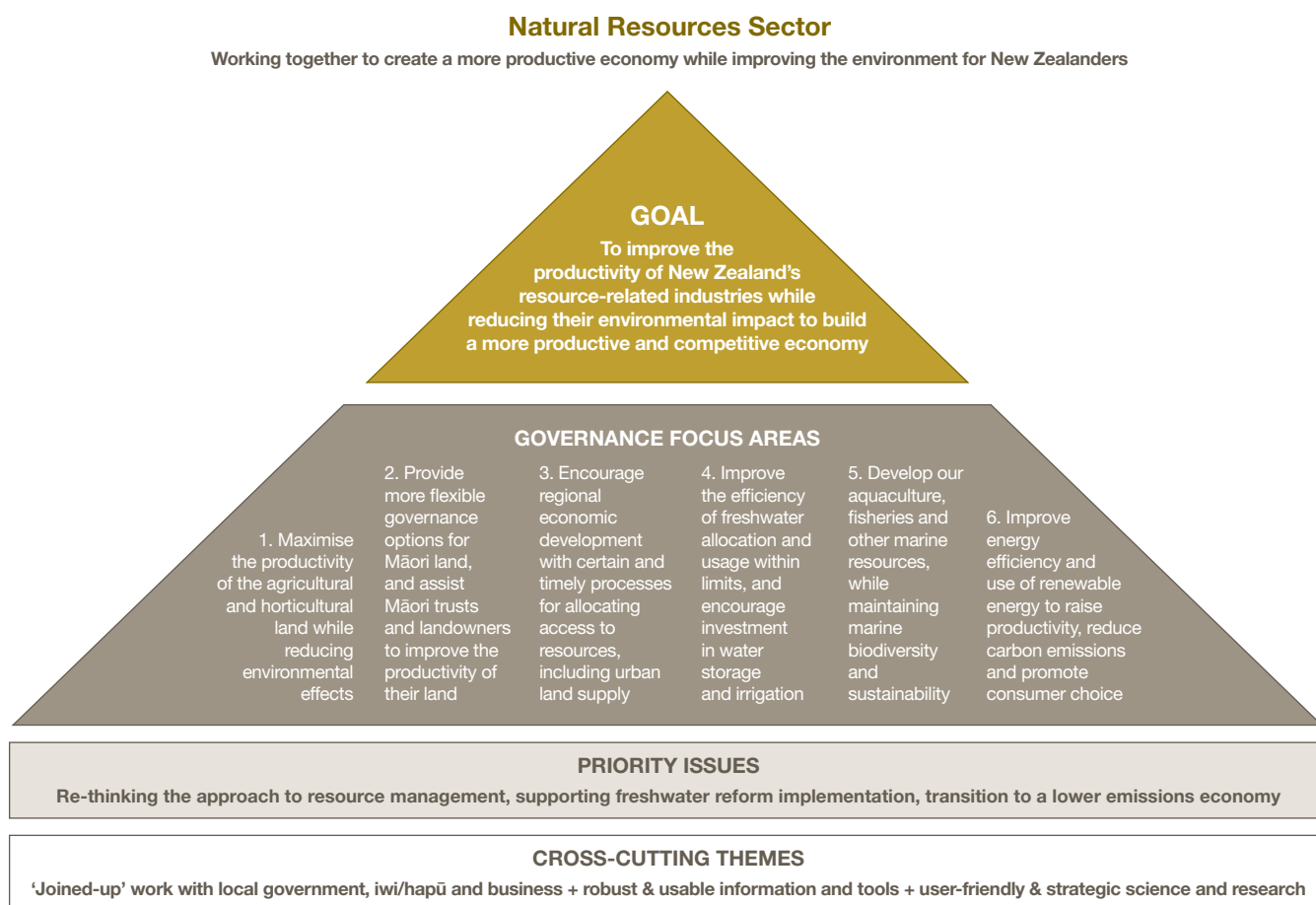


Figure 2: Natural Resources Sector focus areas.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to DOC, the agencies of the NRS are: the Ministry for the Environment; the Ministry for Primary Industries; the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment; Land Information New Zealand; Te Puni Kōkiri; and the Department of Internal Affairs. For background and details of the NRS work programme, visit <http://nrs.mfe.govt.nz>.

Collaboration with the NRS agencies will continue to be a key focus. DOC provides policy advice and practical and scientific expertise to policy processes led by NRS agencies.

Many of the Department's work programmes align to important sector themes such as freshwater improvements, marine protection and climate change adaptation. Significant joint initiatives include the Battle for our Birds predator control programme, kauri dieback response, great white butterfly eradication, freshwater reform and management, Marine Protected Area policy changes, and growing the network of Marine Protected Areas.

Outside the NRS, the Department is also involved in partnerships with local councils, such as Nature Central in the lower North Island which is building on common areas of focus to deliver better services more efficiently. Other important relationships include those with the education sector, the tourism and recreation sector, the Sustainable Business Council, heritage agencies such as Heritage NZ and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, and the new Game Animal Council.

## Focus on how we engage with our customers

It is important that we take a customer-focused approach when working alongside our partners. This means telling the conservation story with them in mind, putting them at the centre of what we do, and ensuring our engagement with them is high quality. This includes the organisations we work with as well as the thousands of New Zealanders and international tourists who walk on tracks, sleep in huts, listen to stories about their history, watch birds, take part in education programmes, are involved in consultation processes, seek advice, operate tourism businesses, hunt for deer, apply for permits, buy visitor centre products or support community conservation projects.

Understanding the drivers, motivations and barriers to New Zealanders contributing to conservation will be a priority for DOC over the next 4 years. This is especially important for our work with iwi and private sector organisations where we need to be able to clearly articulate the value for our partners in conserving our

nature. Many people work in conservation because of their passion for the work and because they feel a connection to the land and New Zealand species. This can be a huge source of strength, and also a 'blind spot' when we assume everyone is motivated in the same way we are. The challenge for DOC is how to communicate the story of our nature to stakeholders so that they understand it, and can see themselves in it.

We are good at problem solving, however we need to balance this strength with a focus on identifying opportunities for our customers. This comes from thinking more about what New Zealanders need and how we can deliver value to them in new and innovative ways. DOC is committed to designing products, services and systems that place customers' needs at the centre, working with customers to identify the issues and barriers to them working effectively with us, and understanding their drivers and needs.

Two current initiatives to achieve this are: improving processes for permit applications and streamlining recreation asset co-management agreements. The Department approaches customers in different ways across the scope of its work. For example, in natural heritage, DOC responds to the desires of communities to conserve their special local places and species by supporting them with training, technical advice and materials. In the historic heritage area, DOC designs experiences that connect people with their history and seeks opportunities for them to share in the development and telling of these stories.

We are also working to improve the ease with which people access products and services through digital channels, either online via our website, through third parties, or through mobile applications. Currently, about 26% of hut and track bookings are completed online.

Additionally, as we increasingly work alongside our stakeholders, there is a need to increase our focus on the quality of these interactions. Those who interact with these partners become the 'face' of conservation to New Zealanders and the rest of the world. The Department uses a range of methods for evaluating customer response. These include the DOC *Survey of New Zealanders*, stakeholder surveys, and visitor satisfaction surveys (for post-visit feedback). DOC

seeks feedback from people attending education initiatives and the results are set out in the Annual Report. To improve visibility of customers and our interactions with them, a priority is to develop a customer relationship management system that will record relationship information and activity. DOC is also developing 'Conservation Insight', an online one-stop-shop for information such as customer surveys, output performance, and research results.

### Working with Māori, for Māori

All of DOC's work needs to recognise our ongoing Treaty partnership obligations. These partnerships are a crucial component to achieving more conservation outcomes. We need to continue to develop the capabilities needed to work even more effectively with whānau, hapū, and iwi; learning to listen more effectively, understand alternative perspectives, explore joint solutions, and be willing to work in new ways in order to achieve the greatest conservation gains for the country. Te Pukenga Atawhai Programme is helping grow staff capability in this area but more capability building will be required to meet

future needs, particularly when it comes to implementing settlement arrangements and understanding how to reflect iwi aspirations.

It is important that we pursue an organisation-wide approach to the way we engage with and value Māori contributions and perspectives in the work we do. This is reflected in all the elements of organisational culture including the symbols, signs, and the language we use. We are moving towards an approach that embeds the importance of working with Māori in all the work DOC does, and interventions that change perspectives as opposed to just transferring knowledge. The main shift required involves working with Māori for the benefit of Māori, and working with Māori in the design phase of our work, as opposed to consulting on solutions. This includes identifying opportunities where we can improve the way we work or get even better outcomes.

### Agile learning organisation

Amidst the demographic, social, technological, and political changes we are likely to face, it is essential that our workforce has the expertise to continue to grow



conservation activity in New Zealand and to work with others to achieve common goals. We need to develop greater organisational agility in our systems and processes, embrace innovative approaches to solving challenges, and improve our ability to look ahead to ensure we are prepared for the future. Learning agility, being open to experimentation, learning from our experiences, refining and adapting becomes critical to our future success. We will develop a core competence in reviewing and being adaptable, and for this to be ingrained in how we work.

### Creating a culture for success

The Department is emerging from a period of considerable structural reform to improve organisational effectiveness and efficiency, and to orientate its structure towards a new future focused on working with others to achieve more conservation for New Zealand. The changes included a shift to a shared services model for support and service functions, and changes in conservation operational delivery to a regional model to create efficiencies. We are also trying to change behaviours in order to lift the speed and quality of decision-making, drive accountability and consistency,

and ensure we are all working in the same direction. To achieve this, we need all staff to understand the dynamics of the social and team process, and what good team leader and team member behaviours look like. Our success will depend on a clear vision and strategy outlining how our work hangs together at a local, national, international level, and in an economic and social context. In this way, all our people will be able to use their judgement to make good local decisions within an organisation-wide framework.

Internally, we are continually working to shape and grow an organisation that our people are proud to work for. We have an increased focus on staff engagement, safety and wellbeing, and are looking at how we can make meaningful and sustainable improvements to ensure DOC is a great place to work. This transformation is perhaps the most significant change in the Department's history, requiring a shift in culture and the way managers and staff work. The heart of the work over the next 4 years is to embed the new model internally and build strong, productive internal and external relationships that achieve the benefits described above.

The table below sets out the cultural and operational transformation required.

**Table 2: Transformation in culture and operation.**

From	→	To
DOC knows best	→	We trust others
Governing for citizens	→	Governing with citizens
DOC as service provider	→	DOC as service facilitator, collaborator, enabler and partner
Internally focused	→	Outwardly focused
DOC-only inputs and processes	→	DOC and citizens' own outcomes
Rigid process	→	Agility
Risk averse	→	Managed risk
Organisational silos	→	Organisational networks

We will embed the new model by:

- Further articulating the operating model to align strategy, structure and staff.
- Putting in place the systems, processes and culture needed to improve the efficiency of operational delivery. This will enable the Department to:
  - Set clear business planning targets and output key performance indicators
  - Implement the workflow processes in the integrated planning system
  - Use organisational data (HR, finance, business planning etc) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of resource deployment by linking budgets with activity/methods and capability needs, and ensuring work is matched appropriately with staff, tasks and locations
  - Use work order management and monthly operating reviews (MORs) to ensure individuals and teams are working to role and are delivering to standard.
- Analysing available data to identify opportunities to reduce costs, for example by adapting visitor asset maintenance regimes in ways that reduce costs but do not impact on visitor experience or safety (refining service delivery standards).
- Continuing to build the capability of others to contribute to the achievement of intermediate outcomes and stretch goals.
- Embedding the State Services leadership success profile to articulate the behaviours and attributes expected of our staff.

- Completing development of a simple, compelling narrative to build staff and stakeholder understanding of the social, economic and environmental benefits that conservation provides to all New Zealanders, and DOC's role in supporting these.

### A focus on improving our systems and processes

- The Department regularly reviews its regulatory processes to make them more efficient and easier for business and the public to engage with. The reviews frequently recommend changes to legislation administered by the Department, which are progressed, where possible, through policy initiatives raised by the Department. Other changes are made by amending internal policies and procedures.

### Operating model

In early 2014/15 the Department conducted a 12-month post-implementation review of the organisational structure implemented in September 2013. After assimilating the review recommendations, the Department intends to complete the operating model to ensure it provides a full, coherent representation of how the organisation operates and goes about its work.

Components will need to be prioritised and sequenced. For the 2016-2020 period the focus will be on ensuring that DOC has the capacity and capability required to deliver on stretch goals, and the leadership and core management disciplines this requires. While this is the major focus, work is also underway to grow step-change partnerships, and drive further productivity from the planning and budgeting operating model segments.

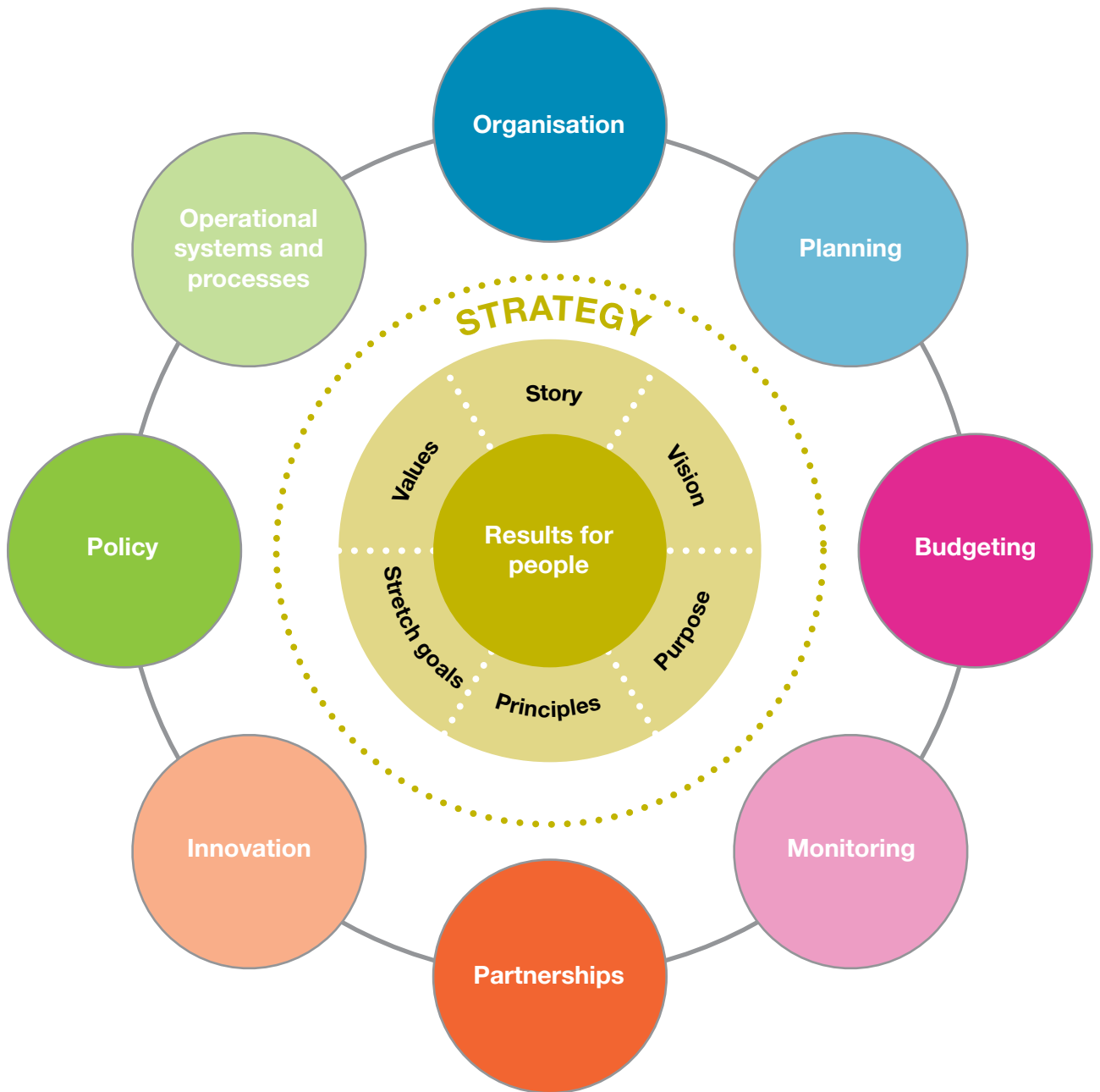


Figure 3: Elements of DOC's operating model.

# Critical risks and mitigation strategies

## Sustainability and delivery

DOC's leadership and governance philosophy increasingly reflects the principles of systems leadership applied in a complex organisation. The approach focuses on effective decision-making in uncertainty. It assumes that an adaptive learning approach to problem-solving is needed in a complex, uncertain world where difficult problems are common.

Risk management is part of this systems-thinking approach. The tools and techniques supporting the risk framework provide leaders with ways to explore complex risk environments and to identify practical, optimised responses to risk without being overwhelmed by detail.

Using this approach the Department has identified the four most powerful sources of strategic risk for the organisation. They are:

- Transformation overload (complexity, workload, change fatigue, confusion)
- Leadership complexity and overload
- Internal blockers of internal communication
- Ineffective setting of a shared context for DOC's work

If these four sources of risk are well managed (or their impacts are reduced), there will be a strong reduction in risk as a whole. The focus is therefore on implementing strong, long-term, whole-of-business response plans to these strategic risks.

Systems leadership practices and the use of leadership models such as team process, task assignment and operating reviews (OR) enhance DOC's ability to manage risks to achieve results. More specifically, there is a focus on enabling and requiring leaders to take uncertainty into account when applying judgement and making decisions.

The approach DOC is taking to risk management includes:

Items
• Providing a strong, clear, internal risk management policy direction.
• Establishing an expectation across DOC of enhanced results through agility and through taking managed risks.
• Holding leaders accountable for the quality of the work they do to ensure uncertainty is understood and taken into account.
• Adapting DOC's core business systems and processes to be effective in uncertainty.
• Providing education, training and tools to enrich leaders' ability to work in uncertainty.
• Risk management capability and performance monitoring and feedback.
• Ongoing systems diagnostic review.

## Operational risk

The Department is familiar with a wide range of operational risks that it manages in its annual work programme. However, some risks do not conform to annual cycles; the Department manages these specifically as events unfold. These include:

- Flooding, fire and other extreme weather events. The Department relies on prioritisation approaches to manage responses to these environmental impacts.



- Other events that rely on the Department's ability to move resources around to manage risks. For example, the Department is planning an urgent response to its second major beech masting event in 2 years. This type of event results in large-scale predator irruptions that severely impact on fledglings from species such as mohua and kea. While the management response is to shift Departmental resources around, and time operations and funding required to best effect, a second major mast event following on from the 2014/15 event will likely require more resources than the Department can release through re-prioritisation.

This approach often means that resources need to be prioritised and then reserved until field conditions allow DOC to make the greatest impact on these predator populations. This management strategy will be further advanced as communities' skills in pest control techniques are improved, and communities engage in priority work at the right time to maximise their impact, based on monitoring programme predictions.

## Financial sustainability and managing cost pressures

The Department uses three main interconnected strategic levers to achieve results while maintaining financial sustainability and managing cost pressures over the next 4 years and beyond. These are:

1. Partnership step-change strategy - increasing engagement with others. The aim is to grow conservation through working with and enabling others.
2. Prioritisation tools - natural heritage, historic and recreation prescriptions, working on priorities to achieve the greatest contributions to outcomes.
3. Operating discipline - with major structural change complete, DOC's focus is to embed leadership behaviours and core management disciplines in order to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

The Department's financial management practice is to maintain a monthly four-year financial forecast, which enables timely action to manage cost pressures. Future initiatives will build on the success achieved with a range of current savings initiatives, including the Support

Services Review and the Delivery Project. To date, these initiatives have saved the Department over \$11m per annum.

## Capability pressures

Our stretch goals are ambitious. In order to reach them, DOC needs to bring in and grow internal capability in several areas. These areas are identified below along with our key initiatives in this space, the relevant time frames, and how we will measure our impact.

## Leadership and core management disciplines

Strong leadership is critical for all our staff in order to drive the behaviour change needed to deliver on our stretch goals. We need to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of what they are accountable for, and that there is a common understanding of expected behaviours. The leadership success profile (LSP) describes these behaviours for the whole public service and we are well placed to start embedding this within our systems and processes.

In order to progress, measure and deliver on the stretch goals, we need managers within DOC to have a firm grasp of the fundamentals: managing people, finance, risk, projects, relationships, and governance. We are upskilling many of our managers and are considering how we provide ongoing support to these areas. This investment includes ensuring greater role clarity around what being a manager involves, and lifting some of our managers out of the technical detail they are familiar with. We are also redesigning our people management processes to ensure they are simple, integrated, and fit for purpose. Most of DOC's managers and directors have participated in 360° surveys which provided us with detailed information about the themed strengths and development areas across the organisation. From an LSP perspective, these development areas sit largely in the leadership character and talent management sections.

As well as the initiatives below, we also plan to use the information from State Services' Leadership Insight (<https://www.ssc.govt.nz/leadershipandtalent-tools>) and from talent mapping as it is rolled out to drive more targeted development interventions.

Key initiatives	Time frame	Measures
Work with SSC to design an LSP roll-out plan starting with recruitment processes (underway)	2015–2017	Plan designed by end of 2015. LSP embedded in systems and processes by mid 2017
‘Embedding key leadership models in DOC’ workshops – 3-day workshops for all managers and supporting resources to ensure a common understanding of the way we work, and developing solid operating models. This includes coaching training for managers using the GROW coaching and mentoring model	2015–2016	Evaluation survey for all staff and positive change to 360° results and engagement survey results
Organisation-wide peer coaching programme based on strengths and development needs outlined in 360°s	Ongoing	2016/17 360° results show an improvement in self-awareness (leadership character) as well as talent management competencies
Develop the maturity of our talent management systems (in line with SSC guidelines) to improve visibility of the ‘leadership growth model’ and become more targeted around our development offerings	Ongoing	By 2019, we will have embedded all the ‘integrating’ phases as laid out by the SSC maturity model
10 participants per year sent on the Natural Resources Sector Aspiring Leaders Programme to build our succession of leaders	Annual	90% of participants step into formal leadership roles in the year following their participation on the programme
People management system workshops and resources	2016	Tested through DOC pilot roll-out, will be reviewed, revised and then rolled out wider with evaluation in place (to be designed after pilot)
Needs assessment and design of modular-based learning modules for managers	2016	Numbers of workshops and attendance
<p>Overall measure: engagement questions relating to confidence in DOC leadership, clarity of vision, and effective communication</p> <p>360° feedback changes, decrease in the use of HR assistance, decrease in personal grievances, business plans that show a clear link to stretch goals</p>		

### Partnering and collaborating in multi-stakeholder settings

Achieving our stretch goals relies on an organisation-wide ability to work with others, and involve them in all phases of conservation work. We are recognised across the public service for the work we do partnering with others. For example our Living Water partnership with Fonterra aims to improve biodiversity and water quality across New Zealand. Another example is our work with Corrections which contributes towards their reducing

reoffending goal while DOC benefits from the increased labour to enable conservation work. We need to look for more opportunities to model a collaborative approach internally within DOC, and build our effectiveness in the way we work with our external partners. As well as sharing expertise across the organisation, we will build on this strength by continuing to invest in our understanding of conservation psychology. This research has the potential to significantly influence the way we tell the conservation story, and bring others on the journey with us.

Key initiatives	Time frame	Measures
Cross-function coaching and mentoring programme	2016– ongoing	Annual review and revisions
Internal social scientists investing in greater understanding of conservation psychology and behaviour change, and looking at how to share and embed this across DOC	2016–2020	To be developed alongside research.
Identifying success stories and profiling these across the organisation	Ongoing	Increase in number of successful partnerships, stakeholder survey results, intranet hits
Transparently publishing stakeholder survey results, with all teams committing to actions	Annual	Stakeholder survey – measuring change in results
Training in partnership skills for Partnerships staff, as well as transferring facilitation skills to deliver more broadly internally	2016–ongoing	Manager feedback, stakeholder survey results

### Working with Māori

In order to embody a living Treaty partnership we need to improve the capability of all our staff to work alongside Māori from design to delivery in order to achieve outcomes that benefit both parties. As more iwi settle, they are reconnecting with their land and it is through this common connection that we must work together as partners. Increasingly we need to support iwi in their ability and desire to grow conservation as we enter a

post-settlement phase. We need to shift the conversation away from section 4 and our obligations, and more towards what a genuine Treaty partnership would look like. This involves embedding a cultural perspective in all our people processes, to ensure a consistency of understanding at all levels about our Treaty partnership that fosters inclusivity and a joint sense of responsibility to maintain relationships.

Key initiatives	Time frame	Measures
Socialise intervention logic document with directors (t3) to ensure they can all articulate what section 4 looks like in their work, and how they are embedding a living Treaty partnership	2016	Integration of Treaty partnerships in the Department's results framework
Use LSP roll-out to embed a cultural component in all phases of the people management cycle (e.g. recruitment, selection, development, performance plans)	2016–2017	Our Treaty partnership is emphasised in all people management processes
Continue to upskill staff through existing programmes such as Te Pukenga Atawhai	2016–ongoing	30% of staff through the programme by the end of 2018
Continue to bring young Māori into the Department through cadetships and trainee ranger programmes	2016–ongoing	Retention within DOC and iwi partners. Feedback from iwi partners
Kahui Kaupapa Atawhai participation in Operations talent management.	2016–ongoing	Recognition of cultural values in leaders across the organisation

## Safety and wellbeing

DOC continues to have an unacceptable level of injuries. At an organisational level we need to ensure our systems and processes are all well positioned, and our people are well informed and equipped to take a proactive approach to managing safety and wellbeing, in order to deliver on our goals.

The only acceptable target for DOC to have is an injury free workplace, and a culture of wellbeing where every

employee is aware of what they need to do to be well, and accept accountability for this. 'Injury free' represents an environment where injuries are not an acceptable part of working for DOC, and where we do everything possible to prevent them. Our newly appointed Safety and Wellbeing director will refresh our system and lead the work highlighted below, including the review, update and implementation of our Safety and Wellbeing plan, to ensure behaviour change is owned and modelled at all levels.

Key initiatives	Time frame	Measures
Redesign and refresh the DOC Safety Management System (SMS)	2016/17	All existing and new SMS components are redesigned and fit-for-purpose
Targeted support to DOC teams using detailed data analysis	2016/17 and ongoing	Reduction in injury rates
Fatal risk action plans	2016/17 and ongoing	Reduction in incidents relating to identified fatal risk areas
Wellbeing investigation and action plan development	2016/17 and ongoing	A wellbeing plan is deployed

