



## **Project Forever Waiheke (PFW) feedback on the Draft Waiheke Local Board Plan 2023**

Kia ora Local Board members

We thank you for the work that has gone into this thoughtful and comprehensive draft Plan. In providing our feedback, PFW acknowledges that the Local Board has taken into account and attempted to balance the needs, wishes and hopes of diverse resident interests, and also that the Board is constrained in the scope of what it can do by the reality of the current Council fiscal context.

### **Suggested changes and additions**

PFW would appreciate that the suggested revisions and additions, set out in *Table 1* (p 3), be included in the final version of the Local Board Plan 2023. In our perception, the Board's Draft focuses on good intentions, but in many aspects needs to have a stronger component of clear actions by the Local Board.

*Our requested revisions are all related to issues for Waiheke's development that residents have attributed, in PFW's research projects, to overtourism impacts on Waiheke social and natural environments.*

Each of our suggested amendments is intended, and phrased, to supplement the existing phrasing in the Draft Local Board Plan. Where relevant, we have included recommendations from the Draft Waiheke Destination Management Plan (as included in the May 2023 Local Board meeting agenda).

For convenience and simplicity, we've provided suggested changes to the actual text of the Draft Plan, to reflect what we view as important omissions in the Draft. We believe that the suggested amendments are self-explanatory in most cases, but we've included explanatory notes for some points before the summary of requested changes. We're also very happy to provide clarification if the Board wishes.

*Please note* our specific request, that the phrasing relating to the feasibility study on priority domestic water supply (#10) be changed to accurately reflect what was agreed at the May 2023 Local Board Business Meeting.

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the value of the Waiheke Local Board Plan 2023.

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Project Forever Waiheke Working Group  
9 August 2023

## Explanatory notes

- ## General comments re all suggested amendments in Table 1
- The Draft Plan has a strong focus in ‘supporting’ and ‘advocating’ for both improvements to, and mitigation of damage to, Waiheke, but it doesn’t sufficiently describe how the Board will *instigate and implement* actions for actual change, albeit in collaboration with community groups.
  - References in the current Draft Plan to ‘protection’, ‘restoration’ and ‘regeneration’ commonly refer only to the natural environment, and ignore the critical needs of the community and social environment. We have extended those references, where relevant, to include social/community environments, in recognition that *residents are the kaitiaki* essential to Waiheke’s natural environments, and as such equally need protection.
  - The Draft Plan doesn’t sufficiently reflect the damage that overtourism and related impacts have *already* caused to the Waiheke community and to the sustainability of the spirit of the community, which have been eroded by the loss of many of the island’s most valuable kaitiaki, due variously to the housing crisis, ferry access, costs and unreliability, road congestion, and overwhelming tourist numbers negatively impacting residents’ access to our recreational spaces.
- ## 1-2, & 15-18 The Draft Plan uses the term ‘regenerative tourism’, but currently none of the intended *actions* outlined in the Plan support regeneration, and few support even the sustainability of the present damage from tourism to the Waiheke community and natural environments.
- ## 9-12, & 16 Residents’ access to services that needs protecting does not reflect a ‘lifestyle’ choice; it reflects a basic need for, and right to, equitable priority access (by virtue of being residents) to essential services which are disrupted by overtourism, denying residents timely essential services.
- ## 14 ‘Compatible’ needs to be defined.  
‘Tourism’ type needs to be clarified; Waiheke already suffers from an excess of ‘small to medium’ Airbnb operators, contributing to the now both chronic and critical rental housing crisis.
- ## 15, 20-21, & 23 Note that the draft Destination Management Plan (May 2023 LB Meeting Agenda) recommends both a visitor levy, and unspecified ‘other measures’, specifically in order to limit visitor numbers to within sustainable carrying capacity.
- ## 23 The actions in the ‘Additional point’ in #23 all reflect successfully implemented initiatives in other comparable OECD countries, as set out on pp 42-51 of [PFW’s 2021 submission to the Destination Management Plan](#), and in more recent actions in NZ and Australia to increase Council rates on short-stay accommodation.

<b>Table 1. Requested amendments to the Draft Waiheke Local Board Plan</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>Pg</b>	<b>Text in the current Draft Plan</b>	<b>Requested amendment or inclusion, as shown in bold blue</b>
<b>1</b>	3	This plan recognises how important it is that the essential character of Waiheke is protected, and the ways we work together, especially with tangata whenua so the indigenous ecology of land to sea can be restored.	... and the ways we work together, <b>with mana whenua, residents, community groups and all others undertaking kaitiaki roles for the protection and regeneration of the indigenous ecologies of land, sea and sky.</b>
<b>2</b>	3	... Mātiatia should be a welcoming gateway to Waiheke, , as well as being a well-organised exit point for locals	... Mātiatia should be a welcoming gateway <b>for visitors to Waiheke, as well as being a well-organised commuting and homecoming experience for locals</b>
<b>3</b>	4	Our parks, reserves and beaches are enjoyed and respected by residents and visitors.	Our parks, reserves and beaches are enjoyed, respected <b>and actively cared for</b> by residents and visitors.
<b>4</b>	4	... and our natural assets provide many economic and lifestyle opportunities	... and our natural <b>taonga are protected for sustainable lifestyles and economic activities.</b>
<b>5</b>	6	To deliver on the local board plans, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Insert additional point]</li> </ul>	To deliver on the local board plans, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Additional point] <b>Continue to consult on and advocate for residents’ needs and preferences as a priority, for community sustainability</b></li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	12	We will work with mana whenua and mātāwaka on all aspects of planning for our communities	We will <b>consult and</b> work with mana whenua, mātāwaka, <b>and residents of diverse cultures, ages and abilities</b> on all aspects of planning for our communities
<b>7</b>	12	Waiheke has a higher-than-average number of residents aged over 65 years within the Auckland region.	Waiheke has a higher-than-average <b>proportion</b> of residents aged over 65 <b>compared with the Auckland region and the general population.</b>
<b>8</b>	13	We will refresh the board’s <b>Housing Strategy</b> and advocate for projects and policies that enable worker accommodation, affordable and social housing, and provide healthy, energy efficient housing that supports the goals of the <b>Waiheke Local Climate Action Plan.</b>	We will refresh the board’s <b>Housing Strategy</b> to <b>both advocate for and implement projects and policies that (i) enable affordable and social housing for all population groups in need, (ii) prioritise housing for long-term Waiheke residents, and (iii) provide healthy, energy efficient housing that supports the goals of the Waiheke Local Climate Action Plan.</b>

<b>Table 1. Requested amendments to the Draft Waiheke Local Board Plan (cont)</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>Pg</b>	<b>Text in the current Draft Plan</b>	<b>Requested amendment or inclusion, as shown in bold blue</b>
<b>9</b>	13	<b>Challenges:</b> Access to social, health and wellbeing services	<b>Challenges:</b> <b>Lack of equitable and priority resident access</b> to social, health and wellbeing <b>and emergency</b> services
<b>10</b>	13	Complete a feasibility study into the equity of year-round access to adequate potable water supply for Waiheke Island residents	<b>Complete a feasibility study for regulated prioritisation of residential/domestic water supply from the Waiheke aquifers</b>
<b>11</b>	13	Support community access to a broad health range of services and advocate for collaboration of health resources	Support <b>reliable and priority access for residents to all basic health and emergency services</b> , and advocate for collaboration <b>across</b> health resources
<b>12</b>	14	<b>Advocacy:</b> We will advocate to the Governing Body and central Government for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• affordable ferry services and service elements such as accessibility, reliability, connectivity, and fare structures.</li> </ul>	<b>Advocacy:</b> We will advocate to the Governing Body and central Government for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• affordable ferry services and service elements <b>that prioritise the essential transportation needs of Waiheke residents</b>, such as accessibility, reliability, connectivity, and fare structures.</li> </ul>
<b>13</b>	26	This plan seeks to address both, the rebuild of the visitor economy, and further economic diversification	This plan seeks to address both the <b>reframing</b> of the visitor economy, and <b>significant</b> economic diversification
<b>14</b>	26	The board will advocate for promotion of Waiheke as a desirable relocation destination for compatible small to medium tourism operators	The board will advocate for promotion of Waiheke <b>as a suitable location</b> for small to medium <b>eco-tourism recreation operators, and support Waiheke-based owner/operators</b>
<b>15</b>	26-27	Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, in consultation with the Waiheke community and Local Board, has developed a Waiheke Destination Management Plan with a vision of Waiheke being a leader in destination sustainability. It seeks to protect and enhance our unique island environment through regenerative tourism and encourage visitors with like-minded values to support our visitor economy to the benefit of all our communities.	Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, in consultation with the Waiheke community and Local Board, <b>is in the process of developing</b> a Waiheke Destination Management Plan with a vision of Waiheke <b>developing genuinely regenerative tourism</b> . It seeks to protect and enhance our unique island environment through <b>identified</b> regenerative tourism <b>practices</b> and encourage visitors with like-minded values <b>that protect Waiheke’s environment and communities</b> .

<b>Table 1. Requested amendments to the Draft Waiheke Local Board Plan (cont)</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>Pg</b>	<b>Text in the current Draft Plan</b>	<b>Requested amendment or inclusion, as shown in bold blue</b>
16	27	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Insert additional point]</li> </ul>	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Additional point] <b>The uncontrolled visitor numbers experienced both per- and post-COVID are unsustainable and seriously impair residents' access to essential services</b></li> </ul>
17	27	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Waiheke is heavily reliant on its visitor economy, which is seasonal and at its peak, places great demands on the island's resources</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Waiheke <b>has been over-reliant on</b> its visitor economy, which is seasonal and at its peak places <b>unsustainable and damaging demands</b> on the island's resources <b>and environments</b></p>
18	27	<p><b>Challenges:</b> At peak times the island's infrastructure and environment come under pressure, balancing the impact of economic growth with the environmental impact is important to maintaining the lifestyle of residents</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> At peak <b>visitor</b> times the island's infrastructure, <b>community and natural environments</b> come under <b>damaging</b> pressure; balancing the impact of economic growth with the <b>social, community and environmental impacts</b> is important to maintaining the <b>wellbeing</b> of residents</p>
19	27	<p><b>Opportunities:</b> Diversification of our economy into higher fiscal return industries</p>	<p><b>Opportunities:</b> Diversification of our economy into <b>both</b> higher fiscal return industries, <b>and industries and employments that have low carbon impacts and support employment and business options for youth and long-term residents</b></p>
20	27	<p><b>Our Plan:</b> Finalise the Waiheke Destination Management Plan and progress the resulting actions</p>	<p><b>Opportunities:</b> Finalise the Waiheke Destination Management Plan <b>to align with declared residents' and community preferences</b>, and progress the resulting actions</p>
21	27	<p>Our visitor industry is managed sustainably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Insert additional point]</li> </ul>	<p>Our visitor industry is managed sustainably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Additional point] <b>Determine the island's human and transportation carrying capacity, and advocate for regulations to support limits on population and visitor use within that capacity</b></li> </ul>

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<b>#</b>	<b>Pg</b>	<b>Text in the current Draft Plan</b>	<b>Requested amendment or inclusion, as shown in bold blue</b>
22	28	Support the development of an education strategy to ensure visitors understand how to care for and respect the island's delicate environment	<b>Instigate</b> the development of an education strategy to ensure visitors understand how to care for and respect the island's <b>vulnerable natural and community environments</b>
23	28	<p><b>Advocacy:</b> We will advocate to the Governing Body for: ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Insert additional point]</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determination and implementation of initiatives in line with the consulted outcomes of the finalised Waiheke Destination Management Plan</li> <li>• funds for visitor infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advocacy:</b> We will advocate to the Governing Body for: ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Additional point] <b>Implementation of Council regulations to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>limit visitor numbers to Waiheke's carrying capacity</b></li> <li>○ <b>limit Airbnb licences to reflect Waiheke's identified carrying capacity</b></li> <li>○ <b>levy higher Council rates on whole homes rented for short-stay only</b></li> <li>○ <b>a levy on ferry fares for vehicles travelling to Waiheke for primarily recreational purposes</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• determination and implementation of <b>other</b> initiatives in line with the consulted outcomes of the finalised Waiheke Destination Management Plan</li> <li>• <b>implementation of a Waiheke visitor levy by Auckland Transport, to directly fund infrastructure that benefits both residents and visitors</b></li> </ul>