

6.4.7 Policies: Evaluation of natural heritage

The following policies and methods give effect to Objective 6.3-1.

1. *The significance of natural heritage resources in the Region, and the identification of the qualities and values which give rise to their significance, shall be determined using criteria including the following:*
 - (i) *the extent to which an area is representative or characteristic of the natural diversity in an ecological district or contains outstanding or rare indigenous community types;*
 - (ii) *the presence of a threatened species or uncommon, special or distinctive features;*
 - (iii) *the extent to which a natural area can maintain its ecological viability over time;*
 - (iv) *the extent to which an area is of sufficient size and shape to maintain its intrinsic values;*
 - (v) *the relationship a natural feature has with its surrounding landscape, including its role as an ecological corridor or riparian margin, and the extent of buffering or protection from external adverse effects;*
 - (vi) *the natural diversity of species of flora and fauna, biological communities and ecosystems, geological or edaphic features such as landforms and land processes, parent material, and records of past processes;*
 - (vii) *the diversity of ecological pattern, such as the change in species composition or communities along environmental gradients;*
 - (viii) *the extent to which an area is still reflective of its original natural character and quality;*
 - (ix) *the extent to which an area provides an important habitat for species at different stages of their life cycle, e.g., breeding, spawning, roosting, feeding, and haul-out areas for the New Zealand fur seal;*
 - (x) *the importance of an area to Tangata Whenua.*
(Refer also to Chapter 3 – Matters of Significance to Iwi)
2. *In assessing natural heritage resources, their contribution to the viability of the Region's ecosystems will be considered significant if they exhibit the following characteristics:*
 - (i) *the area provides a characteristic example of the ecology of the local area; and*
 - (ii) *the area is of good quality (e.g., for natural areas it has an intact understorey and is characterised by a low level of invasion from pest species); and*
 - (iii) *the area contributes to the ecological viability of surrounding areas and biological communities; or*
 - (iv) *the area contains a Regionally threatened species or a unique or special feature; or*
 - (v) *the area contains an unprotected ecosystem type, or an ecosystem type under-represented within the protected area network of an ecological district; or*
 - (vi) *the area is a component of, adjoins or provides a buffer to, a significant natural resource, or a watercourse or coastal margin; or*
 - (vii) *the area has habitat values, or provides or contributes to a habitat corridor or connection facilitating the movement of fish or wildlife species in the local area; or*
 - (viii) *the area is in a landscape which is depleted of indigenous vegetation; or*
 - (ix) *the protection of the area adds significantly to the spatial characteristics of the protected area network (e.g., by improving connectivity or reducing distance to the next protected area); or*
 - (x) *the area is significant to Tangata Whenua; or*
(Refer also to Chapter 3 – Matters of Significance to Iwi)
 - (xi) *there is a community association with, or public appreciation of, the aesthetic values of the landform or feature.*
3. *The heritage value of freshwater ecosystems shall be progressively identified and protected from the adverse effects of use and development.*

6.4.8 Methods

1. *The ARC in consultation with TAs will develop and maintain comprehensive and accessible natural heritage databases.*

2. *The ARC in consultation with other relevant agencies will develop a Regional evaluation methodology for freshwater ecosystems.*

The implementation of Policy 6.4.7 will also rely on Methods 6.4.2 - 1 to 10.

6.4.9 Reasons

Regionally significant natural heritage resources include those evaluated at regional, national and international levels (see Appendix B). Resources of district significance include those valued at the district and local levels. In general, the ARC will identify significant natural heritage resources at the regional level and TAs will be responsible for identification at the district level. Natural heritage resources of significance to Iwi may be at either regional, district or local levels.

Joint work between DoC and the ARC has resulted in the identification of “Sites of Natural Significance” where the values of those sites are considered to meet the requirements of section 6 (a), (b) and (c) of the RM Act. These sites have been published in the Draft Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for Auckland 1993 – 2003, Volume II, and will be considered along with other sites for inclusion in a variation to the RPS. Notes on the values of each place or feature and an assessment of their vulnerability to adverse effects will be contained in a variation to the RPS.

The CMS maps of significant natural heritage resources have been created from the results of national and regional inventories for natural and physical resources. These include the Auckland Regional Planning Scheme, Protected Natural Area Programme, Sites of Special Wildlife Interest, Wetlands of Ecological and Representative Importance, and Geopreservation Inventories. These inventories use evaluation criteria such as representativeness, rarity, size and shape, naturalness and quality, life cycle requirements, diversity and pattern, long-term ecological viability, buffering and surrounding landscape. While these national evaluation systems have been useful at identifying sites of regional and, to a lesser extent, district significance, they require extensions of methodology to adequately determine values at the local level. Regional plan policy or technical guidelines will be prepared which contain evaluation methods which are useful and consistent at this level.

The criteria for determining local significance are based in part on the evaluation criteria discussed above, but also include the maintenance of threshold levels of indigenous vegetation. Due to the extent of natural area loss and degradation in the Auckland Region, local areas which do not in themselves trigger the criteria in Policy 6.4.7.1 may still be considered of regional significance in their role in maintaining the health and long term survival of ecosystems and their constituent parts in the Region. Policy 6.4.7.2 defines criteria by which the values and quality of such sites should be measured.

Some aspects and localities of natural heritage resources have not been comprehensively described and evaluated. For example, the habitat values of fresh-water and coastal areas for aquatic species, and remnant vegetation in Awhitu and south Kaipara peninsulas, southern Manukau and parts of the isthmus have not been evaluated in comparative terms. Further evaluation exercises and priorities for evaluation will be developed in consultation with relevant agencies and will be facilitated through regional plan provisions or changes to the RPS.

6.4.10 Policies: Restoration of natural heritage

The following policies and methods give effect to Objective 6.3-5.

1. *Significant ecosystems that have been damaged or depleted should be protected and restored to the stage where their continued viability is no longer under threat.*

See Policies 14.4.1 (1) in Chapter 14; and Method 8.4.5-3, Policies 8.4.21, and Methods 8.4.22 (2) and (3) in Chapter 8.

2. *In the restoration and rehabilitation of heritage resources, opportunities should be taken which ensure that, where appropriate,:*

- (i) *resources are brought closer to their original state;***
- (ii) *resources or ecosystems are replaced by those of a similar type and size ('no net loss' approach);***
- (iii) *factors which reduce long- term viability are controlled (e.g., pests, fragmentation of habitats);***
- (iv) *public access, recognition and interpretation of the values of that resource are provided;***

- (v) *practical expression of kaitiakitanga is provided;*
(Refer also to Chapter 3 – Matters of Significance to Iwi)
 - (vi) *physical (e.g., fencing) and or legal protection is provided;*
 - (vii) *in revegetation work, use of indigenous species naturally occurring in the general vicinity and use of local genetic stock is considered;*
 - (viii) *barriers to the reintroduction of indigenous species are removed.*
3. *Restoration of natural areas or ecosystems or landscaping with indigenous plants, particularly for sites which abut existing protected natural areas or significant heritage resources, should maximise the opportunity of using indigenous plants from the local gene stock.*

6.4.11 Methods

1. *The ARC and TAs will consider the provision of incentives and information to promote the protection or restoration of ecosystems and heritage resources including, where appropriate, the use of locally sourced indigenous plants.*
2. *When using indigenous plant species in mass plantings or restoration work, reserve management agencies should, where practicable, use locally sourced plants appropriate to local conditions.*
3. *The ARC and TAs should consider the use of indigenous plants, including those which improve habitat quality, when assessing landscaping work required by resource consents.*

6.4.12 Reasons

As a consequence of the level of depletion of heritage resources in the Region, restoration, as well as the identification and protection of those heritage resources that remain, is essential. This is particularly the case for indigenous ecosystems to ensure the continued survival of biological communities within the Region.

Restoration can include a number of concepts such as, carrying out management activities which return a place or feature closer to its original state, the re-introduction

of a feature that once existed in that place, and the creation of a heritage feature which attempts to replicate the original.

Natural Heritage Restoration

There are already in this Region many restoration projects which are focused on the re-creation of indigenous ecosystems by revegetation, the re-introduction of species of flora and fauna, and rehabilitation work by pest control. Restoration work is being carried out by both resource and reserve management authorities, and by the initiatives of independent agencies. Notable in this regard is the work by DoC on Tiritiri Matangi and Motutapu islands; Project Crimson which is focused on the restoration and rehabilitation of pohutukawa forests; and the Trees for Survival Trust Project planting indigenous species for erosion control. The ARC is carrying out programmes to investigate techniques to restore streams which include riparian planting and improvement of the habitat quality for indigenous fish, birds and insects. TAs can provide for revegetation programmes through: financial contributions on subdivision; as conditions on resource consents; in their own reserve management activities; as well as in the composition of street plantings. Private landowners have an important role to play in restoration initiatives by carrying out restoration programmes on their land with help from various sources of funding or agencies which can provide assistance such as the provision of plants, labour, information and advice.

An important concept in revegetation work includes planting appropriate indigenous species. Appropriate species include those that occur within their natural geographic range, e.g., plants that would naturally occur in Auckland; planting species in habitats in which they would normally be found, e.g., pohutukawa along the coastline; and planting species which are from local plant material.

The consequences of inappropriate planting range from interference with distribution and trends in the evolution of indigenous plants to the failure of plantings. The primary concern in relation to the effects of not using locally sourced material is that many plants exhibit a wide variation of characteristics throughout New Zealand. The best documented species which exhibits such wide variation in plant characteristics is kowhai. Flower and seed colour, leaflet size, and even shape (weeping, prostrate, or erect forms) can vary from place to place.

It is recommended that in revegetation work indigenous plant species are used which are:

- i) normally found in the surrounding district;
- ii) planted in ecologically appropriate places;
- iii) grown from seed or plant stock obtained from either the same patch of vegetation or the same catchment as the planting site.

If plant sources from outside the district are used, it is useful to record the nature of the revegetation work. Details that could be recorded include the species and number planted, the source of planting (nursery or locality), and success of the planting (survival rate and naturalisation).

Another important concept in restoration is the consideration of an overall 'no net loss' approach to ecosystems that have been reduced to very low levels in the Region. One ecosystem component that appears to most need such an approach in this Region is freshwater wetlands, which as Table 6.1 indicates, are at very low levels in the Auckland Region. The concept of 'no net loss' includes avoidance, where possible, of the destruction of existing wetlands. If this is not possible, then a preferred mitigating action is the creation of a wetland or, failing that, the protection of an existing unprotected wetland. The concept of 'no net loss' could also be extended to other ecosystem components in areas where there is very little indigenous vegetation cover remaining (refer to Table 6.1).

6.4.13 Policies: Evaluation of geological heritage

The following policies and methods give effect to Objective 6.3-1

1. ***The significance of geological heritage resources in the Region, and identification of the qualities which give rise to their significance, will be determined using criteria which include the following:***
 - (i) ***the extent to which an area or feature reflects important or representative aspects of Auckland or New Zealand's geological history;***
 - (ii) ***the extent to which an area or feature is representative or characteristic of the natural diversity of the Region;***
 - (iii) ***the potential of the feature or site to provide knowledge of Auckland or New Zealand's geological history;***

- (iv) ***the potential of the feature or site for public education;***
- (v) ***the community association with, or public appreciation of, the aesthetic values of the landform or feature;***
- (vi) ***the state of preservation of the feature or site;***
- (vii) ***the rarity or unusual nature of the feature or site type;***
- (viii) ***the importance of the feature or site to Tangata Whenua.***

(Refer also to Chapter 3 – Matters of Significance to Iwi)

2. ***Auckland's volcanic cones shall be managed in an integrated manner by the responsible resource management and reserve management authority.***

6.4.14 Methods

The implementation of Policy 6.4.13-1 and -2 will rely on Methods 6.4.2-1 to -10 and the following:

1. ***Resource management agencies will consult with the holders of mining permits (and existing use rights) to encourage and facilitate the voluntary protection of volcanic heritage resources.***
2. ***Resource management and reserve management authorities are encouraged to consider a range of options to achieve the integrated management of Auckland's volcanic cones. Possible methods include joint management plans, the creation of a network of volcanic cone parks, and co-ordination of interpretive material on Auckland's volcanic cones. Continuing co-operation between all responsible agencies is considered essential for the integrated management of Auckland's volcanic cones.***

6.4.15 Reasons

The preservation or protection and survival of the best representative examples of earth science sites and features that document Auckland's geological history, is important for education, research, aesthetic appreciation and recreation. These values are reflected in the criteria in Policy 6.4.13-1 and underscore the identification of sites in the New Zealand Geopreservation Inventory. This inventory has been prepared by the Joint Earth Sciences Working Group and published by the Geological Society of New Zealand.

6.4.16 Policy: Evaluation of cultural heritage

The following policy and method gives effect to Objective 6.3-1

The significance of cultural heritage resources in the Region, and the identification of the qualities and values which give rise to their significance, shall be determined using criteria which include the following:

- (i) the extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects (i) of Auckland's or New Zealand's history;***
- (ii) the association of the place with the events, persons, or ideas of importance in Auckland's or New Zealand's history;***
- (iii) the potential of the place to provide knowledge of Auckland's or New Zealand's history;***
- (iv) the importance of the place to Tangata Whenua; (Refer also to Chapter 3 – Matters of Significance to Iwi)***
- (v) the community association with, or public esteem for, the place;***
- (vi) the potential of the place for public education;***
- (vii) the technical accomplishment or value, or design of the place;***
- (viii) the symbolic or commemorative value of the place;***
- (ix) the importance of historic places which date from periods of early settlement in Auckland;***
- (x) rare types of historic place;***
- (xi) the extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural complex or historical and cultural landscape;***
- (xii) the integrity and state of preservation.***

6.4.17 Method

The ARC in conjunction with TAs will maintain and develop the Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI) as a system and resource for promoting the sustainable management of the cultural heritage resources of the Region.

Implementation of Policy 6.4.16 will also rely on Methods 6.4.2-1 to 10.

6.4.18 Reasons

In identifying significant cultural heritage resources, the ARC and TAs will take guidance from section 23 of the Historic Places Act 1993 (HP Act) and the New Zealand

Historic Places Trust (NZHPT). The HP Act lists values and criteria which assist with the identification of significant cultural heritage resources and sets a minimum standard (see criteria in Policy 6.4.16). The NZHPT has a statutory obligation under section 22 of the HP Act to establish and maintain a register of historic places, historic areas, waahi tapu and waahi tapu areas. Under sections 22 and 23 of the Act the NZHPT may assign Category I or Category II status to any historic place. Category I status applies to “Places of special or outstanding historical or cultural heritage significance or value”. Category II status applies to “Places of historical or cultural heritage significance or value”.

Criteria for determining the significance of historic buildings or structures are also outlined in Appendix B2 of the NZHPT Cultural Heritage Planning Manual (Dec 1992). Cultural heritage guidelines and criteria for research and evaluation are given by the World Archaeological Congress First Code of Ethics (Members Obligations to Indigenous People [Dec 1990]), the ICOMOS NZ Charter and the NZHPT Cultural Heritage Planning Manual (Dec 1992).

Cultural heritage resources to be listed in regional plans and district plans will include: archaeological sites, buildings and structures, Maori buildings and marae, historic areas, historic places, trees and other natural objects of historical and cultural significance, waahi tapu and waahi tapu areas and other cultural heritage of significance to Iwi where appropriate. (See section 2 of the HP Act for definitions of terms.) All archaeological sites are accorded protection under sections 9 and 10 of the HP Act 1993 whether or not they are registered.

Under section 34 of the HP Act, the Trust is required to maintain and supply to every TA a record of registered historic places, historic areas, waahi tapu and waahi tapu areas that are located within that TA's district and heritage covenants which have effect in that area.

It is recognised that cultural heritage of significance to Tangata Whenua will be determined by Tangata Whenua. It is also recognised that TAs may develop their own criteria to determine cultural heritage of local and district significance within the framework given by section 23(2) of the HP Act.

Cultural heritage of significance to Tangata Whenua will be identified in a way that is appropriate to each Iwi. Some places and areas are already recognised within the NZ

Archaeological Association (NZAA) Auckland Region Archaeological Site Record File. Many significant places, however, are not generally well-known and information concerning them is often of a sensitive nature. It is envisaged that most information relating to cultural heritage places and areas of significance to Tangata Whenua will be compiled by Tangata Whenua and held in their own plans and information systems. TAs are however required to recognise and provide for such places under section 6 (e) of the RM Act. Therefore, processes to achieve this recognition and provision must be developed with Iwi. The location and nature of some sites will be sensitive and therefore protective mechanisms will need to be included in regional plans and district plans to accommodate this. Where the precise location of a place is not revealed, a locality or area can be identified. Consultative processes need to be developed with Iwi for proposals which may affect any defined locality or area. Sensitive information can be held in closed or silent files or safeguarded through the use of an order under section 42 of the RM Act. Guidance in this matter may be taken from the HP Act.

The Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI) is a database of cultural heritage information which is being developed by ARC with the support and involvement of the seven TAs in the Region. The database provides a tool to both rapidly locate known historic places and areas, and identify where further research efforts are required. The CHI also provides a basis from which to identify places and areas of significance to Iwi in the Region.

6.4.19 Policies: Landscape

The following policies and methods give effect to Objective 6.3-4.

1. ***Subdivision, use and development of land and related natural and physical resources shall be controlled so that in areas identified in Map Series 2 and 3:***
 - (i) *the quality of outstanding landscapes (landscape rating 6 and 7) is protected by avoiding adverse effects on the character, aesthetic value and integrity of the landscape unit as a whole;*
 - (ii) *outstanding landscapes with a sensitivity rating of 6 or 7 are protected by avoiding subdivision, use and development which cannot be visually accommodated within the*

landscape without adversely affecting the character, aesthetic value and integrity of the landscape unit as a whole;

- (iii) *the quality of regionally significant landscapes (landscape rating 5) is protected by avoiding adverse effects on the elements, features and patterns which contribute to the quality of the landscape unit;*
 - (iv) *regionally significant landscapes with a sensitivity rating of 5 are protected by ensuring that any subdivision, use and development can be visually accommodated within the landscape without adversely affecting the elements, features and patterns which contribute to the quality of the landscape unit.*
2. *In those rural areas not rated as being outstanding or regionally significant landscapes and in urban areas, the elements, features and patterns which contribute to the character and quality of the landscape and to its amenity value, or which help to accommodate the visual effects of subdivision, use and development, shall be protected by avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects on them.*
 3. *Subject to Policy 6.4.19-1 above, subdivision, use and development on regionally significant ridgelines shall be controlled so that there are no significant adverse effects, including cumulative effects, on the landscape quality and integrity of the ridgelines.*
 4. *The views of volcanic cones, which are indicated in Map Series 4, are to be preserved, and intrusion into the defined viewing shafts by buildings or structures shall be avoided.*
 5. *The use or development of land and related natural and physical resources is to be controlled so that the visibility of volcanic cones is maintained or enhanced.*

6.4.20 Methods

1. *Provision is to be made in district plans and relevant regional plans to give effect to Policies 6.4.19-1, 2 and 3.*

2. *Provision is to be made in district plans and relevant regional plans to control the location, size and height of buildings and structures in the height sensitive areas and in the viewing shafts indicated in Map Series 4, so as to give effect to Policies 6.4.19-4 and 5.*
3. *The ARC will, after consultation with interested persons and organisations, prepare and publish guidelines on a standard methodology for the assessment and evaluation of landscape within the Region.*

6.4.21 Reasons

Outstanding landscapes are those which are identified as being major visual elements in the Auckland Region, such as the Waitakere Ranges, or which are unique and/or extremely attractive, such as those with landscape quality values of 6 and 7 in Map Series 2. Regionally significant landscapes are representative of the special landscape qualities of the part of the Region in which they are located and are those areas with a landscape quality value of 5 in Map Series 2.

The intention of the policies is to protect the aesthetic and visual quality, character and value of the major and unique landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Policy 6.4.19.1 does this by requiring the avoidance of adverse effects on the whole landscape unit in outstanding landscape areas. This recognises that the landscape value of these units is derived from a combination of qualities and values which together give them an outstanding rating. These qualities and values usually mean that the units are also extremely sensitive to the visual effects of use and development. In Regionally Significant Landscapes, the emphasis is on the protection of the elements, features and patterns which contribute to the quality of the landscape unit (Policy 6.4.19-1 (iii) and (iv)).

In other parts of the Region, including urban areas which are not presently covered by a comprehensive regional landscape assessment, there are elements, features and patterns which contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of the visual quality of these areas. Policy 2.6.1.2 requires that urban containment and consolidation within existing urban areas be undertaken in a way which maintains or enhances amenity values. Appropriate protection of urban landscape elements,

features and patterns is important in achieving high urban amenity standards. Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating adverse effects on the elements, features and patterns which contribute to landscape quality in all landscapes also maintains the overall quality and diversity of character of Auckland's landscapes which is sought in Objective 6.3(4).

The individual factors which contribute to the quality and sensitivity of both outstanding and regionally significant landscape vary throughout the Region, depending on the particular landscape. These factors include the presence of prominent ridgelines and slopes, the pattern of vegetation, particularly indigenous vegetation and the presence of bodies of water. Further information on this is contained in Appendix F – Landscape Evaluation Methodology.

The outstanding and regionally significant landscapes identified in Map Series 2 are derived from the report An Assessment of the Auckland Region's Landscape (Planning Department, ARC, 1984) and were subject to public preference tests. Appendix F provides an explanation of the methodology used in this landscape assessment work.

The ARC proposes to progressively update the 1984 assessment of the rural areas of the Region and to expand the regional landscape assessment process to urban areas and other parts of the Region not presently covered. The first step is the publication of guidelines for a standard methodology for landscape assessment and evaluation. This is to encourage the adoption of compatible and integrative assessment methods by all agencies in the Region undertaking landscape assessment work. As part of the preparation and publication of the landscape assessment methodology guidelines, the ARC will provide opportunities for public input, consultation and contestability.

The Auckland Regional Planning Scheme, 1988 provided visual protection of a number of Auckland's volcanic cones. These policies are carried forward into the RPS. The listed cones are Takarunga (Mt Victoria), Maungawhau (Mt Eden), Te Kopuke (Mt St Johns), Owairaka (Mt Albert), Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill), Otahuhu (Mt Richmond), Maungauika (North Head), Remuwera (Mt Hobson), Maungarei (Mt Wellington), Koheraunui (Big King of the Three Kings), Puketapapa (Mt Roskill), and Mangere Mountain.

It is intended to review the details of the sight-lines protection through regional plan provisions or a plan change to the RPS. This review will be carried out in association with the TAs.

6.5 Environmental Results Anticipated

It is anticipated that these policies and methods will result in the following outcomes:

- (a) significant natural and cultural heritage resources will be preserved or protected;
- (b) loss and degradation of heritage resources will significantly diminish;
- (c) significant views of volcanic cones and landscapes will be protected;
- (d) public access to heritage resources will be maintained where this does not create unacceptable adverse effects;
- (e) the relationship of Tangata Whenua with their ancestral taonga will be recognised and provided for;
- (f) some heritage resources will be enhanced and restored;
- (g) public awareness of the issues and values associated with heritage resources will increase.

6.6 Monitoring

The ARC in conjunction with TAs will develop and maintain monitoring systems and databases to monitor cultural heritage, natural areas and their ecological processes by:

- (i) recording and collating the loss of heritage resources as a result of approved activities from the regional and district consent processes;
- (ii) monitoring the effectiveness of policies designed to preserve or protect heritage resources areas in district and regional plans;
- (iii) keeping regional totals, by heritage type, of the additions to the protected estate in order to assess whether a diverse and representative range of heritage resources is being preserved or protected;
- (iv) establishing, in conjunction with relevant agencies, a base line of the natural area coverage in the Region by the use of regular aerial photography;
- (v) monitoring trend and status conditions of key ecological processes and ecosystems;
- (vi) establishing relevant monitoring systems with Tangata Whenua;
- (vii) the state of outstanding and regionally significant landscapes will be surveyed and reported on in the State of the Environment report, at intervals of not less than 15 years;
- (viii) the visibility of, and views to, the volcanic cones identified in Map Series 4 will be monitored and reported on at intervals of not less than six years.