

NATURE PLAN - CONSIDERATION OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK AND PLAN FOR FUTURE ADOPTION

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Responsible Officer: Director Planning & Sustainable Futures

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

The key objective of the draft Yarra Ranges Nature Plan: *Protecting our Biodiversity Assets 2024-2034* (Nature Plan) is to protect and enhance the natural environment in Yarra Ranges.

The Nature Plan was released for community consultation for an eight-week period in August 2022. A broad cross-section of the community was engaged and provided feedback including 130 unique submissions from individuals, Council Committees, Groups and Organisations. Attachment 4 contains a Consultation Report detailing the community's feedback.

The Nature Plan has been updated (Attachment 1) to reflect the feedback provided during the consultation phase. Key changes include:

- A reprioritisation of existing actions.
- New actions in key areas.
- Improved accountability through clarification of targets and reporting metrics.
- Increased financial investment to support implementation activities.

The loss of biodiversity has reached a critical point and is now being recognised as an urgent concern. Last year, at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15), a Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted. As a result, our Federal Government has formally announced its intention to set a goal of protecting 30 per cent of our land and 30 per cent of our oceans by 2030.

This 30 x 30 commitment translates to Australia needing to protect an additional 60 million hectares, roughly nine times the size of Tasmania. It is also indicative of a new era of nature reporting unfolding – similar in scope to the mandatory climate reporting that has been introduced this year.

The Nature Plan sets bold targets to reflect Council's strategic priorities of

environmental stewardship and nature protection in line with the goals outlined above. It is an ambitious Plan that will seek funding through future advocacy efforts, key partnerships, stakeholder collaboration, and budget bids.

The Plan creates framework for utilising quality scientific data to underpin evidence-based decisions for natural resource management and climate mitigation activities. The development of the Nature Plan was identified as a major initiative in the Council Plan and a key pillar of the Environment Strategy. The adoption of the Nature Plan has become even more critical with the official declaration of a El Nino weather event this year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Note the findings from community consultation and the changes shown in Attachment 4.***
- 2. Adopt the Nature Plan generally in accordance with the Attachment 1.***
- 3. Write to submitters to thank them for their engagement and advise them of the outcome of the Council Meeting.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council endorsed in the Council Plan 2021-25, a major initiative to *'prepare and implement a Biodiversity Plan to support and retain our unique flora, fauna, and ecologies alongside us in healthy landscapes'*. A Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment is also one of the five overarching objectives in the Council Plan.

The Environment Strategy 2015-25 which sets the framework for protection and enhancement of the natural environment in Yarra Ranges, provides the Tier 1 strategic framework for the development of a Biodiversity Plan.

The Council Meeting on 23 August 2022 resolved to release the draft Yarra Ranges Nature Plan: Protecting our Biodiversity Assets 2022-2032 (Nature Plan) and proceed with an eight-week community consultation period.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline key changes made to the Nature Plan which reflect feedback received during the community consultation process, Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee (SEAC) advice, and to obtain support for endorsement of the final Nature Plan.

Key changes to the Nature Plan include:

- Reprioritisation and enhancement of key actions.
- Clearer definition of targets and reporting metrics.
- Increased financial investment to support implementation of the Nature Plan.

Further details on these changes are outlined in this Report and in Attachment 2 – Summary of Changes.

Background

Biodiversity is under threat, with declines in species and abundance recorded at global, national, and local levels. This was formally acknowledged at the United Nations' Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in late 2022, where Nations, including Australia, agreed to four goals and 23 targets for biodiversity by 2030. The urgency to act swiftly is pivotal, with predictions that intervention in the current decade is the most critical for the future of our natural world.

More locally, Victoria has experienced continued biodiversity loss for two centuries. At least 25 per cent of Victoria's plants, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals, are considered threatened with extinction. Yarra Ranges includes some of the most significant environmental areas in Victoria and natural disasters including the Black Saturday bushfires and June 2021 storm event, where it is estimated more than 25,000 trees were lost, demonstrate the devastating impact these events can have on our biodiversity locally. Accordingly, Council plays a critical role in biodiversity conservation, advocacy, and partnerships. Council-managed bushland areas comprise 550ha of reserves and 403km of roadsides.

Council invests significantly in natural resource management through:

- Weed control programs.
- Incentive programs supporting positive environmental outcomes on private land.
- Undertaking statutory functions as required by the planning scheme.
- Education and partnership with community volunteers focussed on environmental protection.

Council has an important role in biodiversity conservation through several mechanisms including as a delegated responsible authority (regulatory), land manager, through construction and maintenance of community infrastructure and facilities, providing support for environmental volunteers, as well as facilitation, collaboration and advocacy for environmental programs and projects.

Consultation and Council Advisory Committee Feedback

The Nature Plan was released for community consultation during an eight-week period in August 2022. A broad cross section of the community was engaged and provided feedback including 130 unique submissions from individuals, Council Committees, Groups and Organisations.

Advice was received from the following Council appointed Advisory Committees during both the development of the Nature Plan and community consultation period:

- Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee
- Indigenous Advisory Committee
- Rural Advisory Committee
- Disability Advisory Committee
- Youth Advisory Group

The submissions provided throughout the consultation period broadly supported the direction and intent of the Nature Plan, however there was an emphasis on the need for greater investment in the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

A Consultation Report providing additional detail on the feedback received is contained in Attachment 4.

Options considered and recommendations

1. Reprioritisation

The draft Nature Plan released for community consultation emphasised 18 foundation actions out of the total 52 developed actions included for the Plan's implementation. Community feedback highlighted some key challenges and areas of focus for Council.

In response to this, consideration was given to amending the plan's vision, and re-prioritisation of actions and the addition of new actions, summarised as follows:

- The words 'thriving alongside us' were removed from the vision as it suggests that humanity is separate from nature.
- Increased focus on bushland restoration activities to improve conservation, enhance habitat corridors and support threatened species and habitats.
- Inclusion of advocacy activities relating to the transition of native timber harvesting in the municipality and opportunities for increased biodiversity protection.

- Enhanced backyard biodiversity on private land through expanding the reach of the Gardens for Wildlife program.
- Focus on landowner stewardship, education, and adherence to environmental law, supported by an Environment Officer.
- Strategic development of municipal pest action plans to fulfill our obligations under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.
- Enhanced promotion of the Yarra Ranges cat curfew.
- Implementation of sustainable bushfire reduction works which achieve net biodiversity benefit in collaboration with relevant agencies. Incorporation of cultural burning practices to support biodiversity improvements.
- Implementation of catchment-scale, targeted, cross-tenure pest plant and animal control programs at identified locations, collaborating with community and other land managers to achieve broad biodiversity benefit.

Recommendation:

Incorporate new actions and reprioritise existing actions in the Nature Plan, as summarised above, to reflect sentiment of community consultation and improved biodiversity outcomes. This has resulted in a total of 55 actions identified under the Plan, and bolstered strategic alignment with other Council strategies, including the:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Environment Strategy
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- the State Government's Biodiversity 2037 Strategy

Of the total 55 actions, 23 Foundation Actions are summarised in the Nature Plan. These are the strategic actions required to meet our targets under the Plan. The Comprehensive Action Plan (Attachment 3) outlines all strategic and operational actions included in the programs to be implemented under the Nature Plan, with some actions split out using subgroups (A, B, C etc) to provide increased clarity.

2. Improved accountability

The feedback received during the consultation noted that target metrics could be more clearly defined and that the targets could be more ambitious. The options analysed and final recommendations are detailed below. The final targets can be viewed in Attachment 1 – Nature Plan.

Target 1

Target 1: Yarra Ranges achieves an overall 'net gain' of native vegetation cover by 2033.

Ways of strengthening the aspirations of this target were considered through altering the wording from 'achieves' to 'strives for', or from 'native vegetation' to 'vegetation'.

Recommendation:

Retain wording of the original target based on consultation with State Government agencies and strong alignment with existing State Government strategies. 'Net Gain' is considered a stretch target based on current data and regional reporting (*Offsetting Native Vegetation Loss on Private Land*; Victorian Auditor General's Office May 2022). Further clarification of the definition of 'net gain' has been provided in the Nature Plan (Attachment 1) to provide context and clarity for community on this target.

Target 2

Target 2: Triple restoration and revegetation works on private and Council managed land per annum.

Consideration was given to:

- removing 'restoration' and focusing only on revegetation statistics,
- removing 'Council managed' however current budget allocations would not support this increase in output.
- responding to community feedback on increasing investment in bushland management,
- adding an action (see below) with associated budget allocation for bushland restoration.

Recommendation:

Recommend retaining the target wording based on budget constraints, and increase investment in Action 2.4 for bushland restoration, enabling delivery on the target for Council-managed land.

Target 3

Target 3: Increase the conservation value across our Bushland reserve network over the next ten years. Consideration given to addition of percentage increase inclusion in the target (i.e., 5%) or alternative metric within the target wording to make it more explicit.

Recommendation:

Recommend retaining the original target and providing clarity to community on the expectation and metrics for reporting within the body of the Nature Plan.

Target 4

Target 4: Enable at least 200 land stewards to improve the biodiversity on their land each year.

Consideration given to minor amendments to wording for clarity.

Recommendation:

Recommend wording alteration to include explicit reference to council-led programs facilitating biodiversity improvements undertaken on private land. Replace word “enable” with “engage”, to clarify target of active participants in council programs. New target recommended:

Engage at least 200 land stewards in Council-led programs each year to improve biodiversity on their land.

3. Increased financial investment

Feedback through community consultation emphasised the need for further investment for the protection and enhancement of Yarra Ranges’ unique biodiversity. Council’s investment in the Biodiversity and Bushlands portfolios has remained largely unchanged over the last decade. While feedback from the community on increased investment is noted, it is recognised that funding for key actions will need to go through future budgetary processes. Additionally, avenues such as available grant funding will be explored to facilitate the effective implementation of these initiatives, ensuring a thorough and comprehensive approach to resource allocation.

The draft Nature Plan released for community consultation outlined an investment of \$15.8 million over 10 years. Review of this investment post community consultation proposes increasing the investment for the delivery of the plan to \$19.5 million over 10 years.

Recommendation:

That Council note the investment required in the Nature Plan of \$19.5 million over a 10-year period. This investment will enable Council to meet the Nature Plan’s ambitious targets and support proactive improvement of biodiversity outcomes across Yarra Ranges. The Financial Analysis section of this report outlines further details and rationale for the increased financial investment being recommended. Unfunded key actions will undergo evaluation in future business cases, inclusion in budget bids, and exploration of available grants to secure the necessary funding for implementation.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

As detailed above, the outcomes from community consultation explored and emphasised that further investment is required for the protection and enhancement of Yarra Ranges’ unique biodiversity. Council’s investment in the Biodiversity and Bushlands portfolios has remained largely stable over the last decade.

Review of the full action plan post community consultation has identified an increased investment for delivery of the Plan at a total of \$19.5 million over 10 years. This investment requirement is above existing operational budget and is currently unfunded. A substantial portion of this investment, \$6.7 million, is anticipated to be sourced from Government or Agency grants, alongside contributions from

philanthropic organizations. The remaining \$12.8 million of the total \$19.5 million is the estimated Council investment required and is currently unfunded. As mentioned above unfunded key actions will undergo evaluation in future business cases, inclusion in budget bids, and exploration of other opportunities to secure the necessary funding for implementation.

A summary of the investment considerations and potential funding contributions is shown in Table 1 below. For the full list of activities proposed over the ten-year plan, see Attachment 3 – Comprehensive Action Plan.

Table 1: Summary of investment considerations and potential funding contributions

	Final Plan Costs				Funding Required	
	Actions	One-Off Investment	Estimated Annual Implementation Cost	Total Cost Estimate	Council Investment	Grant Investment
Theme 1: Landscapes and Ecosystems	13	\$330K	\$134K	\$1.4M	\$1.18M	\$245K
Theme 2: Land Use and Changing Climate	20	\$170K	\$1.09M	\$10.1M	\$7.73M	\$2.33M
Theme 3: Pest Plants and Animals	12	\$70K	\$600K	\$4.97M	\$1.96M	\$3.08M
Theme 4: People and Nature	10	\$40K	\$354K	\$3.01M	\$1.93M	\$1.07M
TOTAL	55	\$610K	\$2.18M	\$19.5M	\$12.8M	\$6.73M
ONLY Year 1 TOTAL	24	\$170K	\$653K	\$823K	\$760K	\$63K
ONLY Foundation Actions TOTAL	27	\$420K	\$1.9M	\$17.2M	\$11.4M	\$5.8M

The Nature Plan outlines an investment approach to include ongoing operational funding and one-off costs above existing resources. Investment sought for Plan implementation will be applied for through existing Council processes, and include business case preparation, in the respective action year. An outline of potential grant or leveraged funding opportunities (e.g., Melbourne Water) would also be included as part of this process.

Existing Council investment

Existing Council investment into the Biodiversity and Bushlands portfolios equates to approximately \$4.5M per annum, with additional contributions made through environmental volunteers equating to an estimated \$2.5 Million per annum (source: DEECA Victorian’s Volunteering Naturally reporting). Council’s investment into these business areas has remained largely unchanged over the last decade. The actions within the plan attributed to existing resources are within the current \$4.5M Biodiversity and Bushlands Teams budgets with no assumption of increase over the 10-year implementation period.

Year 1 Forecast

The forecasted budget total for Year 1 actions under the Plan is \$823,000, with \$63,500 expected from grant funding and the remainder requiring Council Investment (see Table 1 above). The specific actions for Year 1 are outlined in Attachment 5 – Year 1 Nature Plan Activities Overview.

10-year Nature Plan Forecast

Table 2 below outlines the estimated investment forecast over the 10-year Plan period. Detailed are the Foundation Actions, Total Actions and the break-down of estimated grant funding and Council investment required for the total 55 actions.

Table 2: Ten-year forecast expenditure for implementation of the Nature Plan

Table 2. 10-year Forecast	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Total
Foundation Actions	\$0.8M	\$1.5M	\$1.8M	\$1.8M	\$1.9M	\$1.9M	\$1.9M	\$1.8M	\$1.9M	\$1.9M	\$17.2M
All Actions	\$0.8M	\$1.6M	\$2.0M	\$2.0M	\$2.1M	\$2.1M	\$2.2M	\$2.2M	\$2.2M	\$2.3M	\$19.5M
Council Investment (Total Plan Actions)	\$0.76M	\$1.1M	\$1.3M	\$1.3M	\$1.3M	\$1.4M	\$1.4M	\$1.4M	\$1.4M	\$1.4M	\$12.7M
Grant Funding (Total Plan Actions)	\$63K	\$465K	\$700K	\$700K	\$768K	\$793K	\$796K	\$796K	\$796K	\$853K	\$6.7M

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

The *Council Plan 2015-25*, outlines as a major initiative for the development of a Biodiversity Plan with an objective of a Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment.

The Council Vision reflects the high value of the natural environment.

'Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we value our natural beauty, how connected our communities are, and how balanced growth makes this the best place in the world.'

The Environment Strategy 2015-2025, with a vision of,

'We are dedicated to making Yarra Ranges a place of thriving communities, at home in healthy landscapes.'

The six (6) goals of the Environment Strategy directly relate to the draft Nature Plan.

Other strategic links include:

- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025.
- Reconciliation Framework for Action 2013-2023
- Liveable Climate Plan 2020
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2021
- Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2013-2021
- Economic Development Strategy 2022 - 2032
- Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme 2023

The final Nature Plan positions Council action within a broader context, by referencing appropriate State Government Legislation and International Protocols, including:

- Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019-2030
- Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037
- Yarra Strategic Plan (Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo) 2021-31
- Port Phillip and Westernport Regional Catchment Strategy 2021-27
- Victorian Deer Control Strategy 2020
- Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-28

RELEVANT LAW

Components of the draft Yarra Ranges Nature Plan respond to Council's role as delegated authority under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Council also has responsibilities as landowner and manager of freehold land within the municipality under various acts including the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, *Environment Protection Act 2017*, *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Amendment Act 2019*. Council also has obligations related to climate action under the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Climate Change Act 2017*.

The Nature Plan and community consultation plan was reviewed by Council's gender equity team and recommendations provided valuable input into the final structure, breadth and types of consultation undertaken. Consideration of access and equity under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* has been made and will be applied in the development of programs and project delivery, including the preparation of Gender Impact Assessments.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

The biodiversity outcomes supported by this investment will also have a positive economic impact on local tourism-based economies which rely on the natural environment for their business income. The opportunity cost of not increasing investment over the Draft Plan proposition is the potential degradation of highly valued biodiversity assets, including the Dandenong Ranges, upper reach of the Birrarung (Yarra River catchment) and the peri-urban context which provide a natural 'green playground' for Melbournians who frequent the Yarra Ranges

Actions focussed on regenerative land management practices and collaborative threat management on private land support a strong agricultural sector, which benefits the productivity of the land and environmental values. The Nature Plan will support improved program delivery in the Climate and Nature Team and the ability to ensure cost effective action is prioritised. The Nature Plan will also provide a solid platform for attracting funding opportunities for investment in biodiversity protection – with a conservatively estimated 35 percent of the plan potentially eligible for external grant funding. Additionally, supporting the health of Yarra Ranges biodiversity will have a positive economic impact on local tourism-based economies which rely on the natural environment for their business income.

Social Implications

Community and social wellbeing are important contributors to the success of the Nature Plan, none more so than through the sustained and invaluable contributions of our environmental volunteers. Reporting from DEECA identified annual contribution of environmental volunteering in Yarra Ranges equates to \$2.5 Million, significant when compared to operational budget allocation for bushland management. Community consultation highlighted the value of connection to nature, which is also acknowledged in the Health and Wellbeing Plan.

A protected and enhanced natural environment provides a suite of benefits to the communities of Yarra Ranges.

Environmental Implications

Climate change has resulted in an increased rate of extinctions of flora and fauna species at global, national, and local levels. This has been acknowledged through the significant goals and targets set at the United Nations' Biodiversity Summit, COP15, identifying the significant action required to address the global biodiversity crisis. The Federal Government is overhauling environmental laws and establishing a Nature Positive market, which will further drive protection and enhancement of biodiversity, along with propelling investment in the space from the public and private sector. The natural environment has intrinsic value which warrants protection, combined with the risks to community health and wellbeing from a declining natural environment being well documented and likely to exacerbate under a changing climate.

Environmental considerations are at the forefront of the Nature Plan. The actions seek to deliver benefit to the natural environment with many actions enabling Council to build resilience for the projected changes in local climatic conditions. Actions specifically respond to urban heat island effect through increased tree planting, Traditional Owner connection to Country, equitable access to natural open space for community, education programs for capacity building and knowledge of biodiversity, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

The ability to proactively improve biodiversity outcomes is particularly important as the effects of climate change accelerate the negative impacts on global biodiversity. Investment into biodiversity will benefit the whole community and proactive action is required to make meaningful positive impact. The Final Plan investment enables Council to contribute to building resilience for the projected changes in local climatic conditions throughout the municipality. Acting early also mitigates the potential for further environmental damage and the associated costs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over the eight-week consultation period for the Nature Plan, we heard from a broad cross-section of community. Our Shaping Yarra Ranges page was visited 1,506 times and the Nature Plan was downloaded 646 times. There were 71 contributions from 54 unique contributors to the Shaping Yarra Ranges page, with an additional 76 contributors resulting from in person engagement events and submissions via direct email.

Demographic information was collected (gender, age bracket and suburb) from the submitters, where possible. Whilst data was incomplete for many submitters (i.e., gender and suburb provided but not age, or only suburb provided), analysis provided some useful feedback on diversity and reach of the consultation undertaken.

A detailed breakdown of the community consultation and resultant feedback can be found in Attachment 4 – Consultation Report. To provide further clarity to community on the key content of the Nature Plan, we have prepared a summary document to use for promotion and community education which will be published on the Shaping page of the Nature Plan (Attachment 6 – Nature Plan Summary).

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Council appointed Advisory Committees were consulted directly during the community consultation period of the Nature Plan where feedback from members was obtained and incorporated into summary feedback outlined herein. Members of these committees promoted the consultation period within their community networks to increase engagement and interaction with the consultation.

The Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee (SEAC) played a key advisory role, with a special interest Biodiversity sub-committee formed, meeting several times during the development of the Nature Plan, during and post the consultation period to discuss the content, key actions, and feedback from the broader community. The majority of feedback from this highly engaged group was incorporated into the final Nature Plan. Some limitations on incorporating all changes recommended included misalignment with established Council strategies and policy, or lack of consensus amongst committee members.

A targeted agency and natural resource management professionals feedback session was held during the consultation, with high participation and attendance representing 14 organisations. This session identified the strong links between strategic documents across these organisations and opportunities for further strengthening through implementation.

The Nature Plan contains an annual review and monitoring process, to report on progress towards the targets. A process of adaptive management is embedded into the annual review, to allow agility in our program design and delivery to maximise biodiversity benefit, leveraging of funding and progress towards the vision. A commitment to monitoring during implementation of the Nature Plan is considered a critical component to ensure activities are achieving desired outcomes.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The risks to Yarra Ranges of inaction on environmental degradation and loss are numerous and interconnected, spanning ecological, economic, social, and regulatory areas. There are also long-term implications for the wellbeing and sustainability of local communities. This Plan adopts a proactive approach to protect and restore biodiversity, not only to meet our legislated responsibilities, but crucial for the long-term resilience of the Yarra Ranges region.

Failure to respond urgently to the impending and increasing threats brought by a changing climate such as longer fire seasons, increased heat waves, heavier rainfall, and the overall intensification of extreme weather has the potential for catastrophic consequences including:

- Damage to assets, inclusive of our natural assets
- Less days for fire mitigation
- Increase in heat related mortality for people and wildlife.

The June 2021 storm, where approximately 25,000 trees fell in a single day, serves as an indication of what may unfold in the coming years. This event foreshadows a potentially dire future with severe implications for both human communities and the natural world. The Nature Plan supports mitigation in this by enhancing our natural assets through proactive activities that boost resilience, actively supporting the connection and integration of indigenous knowledge into Council land management practices and empowering the community to act as nature stewards.

Federal and State Government legislation and policy dictates and directs Council action on biodiversity conservation, with opportunity for localised action often influenced by higher order policy. The Nature Plan ensures Council's legislative obligations are met while advocating for greater resourcing for biodiversity action within the municipality by other tiers of government. This plan provides a strategic framework for alignment with the current review of Federal environmental law, the Federal Government's Nature Positive Plan, and forthcoming Nature Repair Market.

Council reputational risk is also a consideration. The community has articulated a strong vision of a protected and enhanced natural environment. Council is also afforded the unique position of highly valued biodiversity assets, with the Dandenong Ranges, Upper reach of the Birrarung (Yarra River catchment) and the peri-urban context providing a natural 'green playground' for Melbournians who frequent the Yarra Ranges.

The Nature Plan identifies a suite of actions which are currently listed as seeking investment; primarily through State Government agencies, which does not guarantee the level of investment identified. Ensuring close alignment with strategic documents will increase the likelihood of success with funding applications. Council's Advocacy Officer will also promote the key priorities identified in the Nature Plan at appropriate levels of government.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Nature Plan 2024-2034: Protecting our Biodiversity Assets
2. Summary of Changes Document
3. Comprehensive Action Plan
4. Consultation Report
5. Year 1 Nature Plan Activities Overview
6. Summary of Final Draft Nature Plan