



# **Kotahitanga mō te Taiao**

## Strategy Implementation Pathway Plan





The Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance works across 3.4 million hectares of land and sea in the top of the South Island, championing a collaborative approach to caring for our natural environment.

## Our Vision

Our extraordinary natural heritage is flourishing, having been restored over large areas, including where people live. People live in, care for and benefit from the environment in ways that bolster natural ecology and the communities that live within them.

## Our Mission

To create a connected and aligned region that understands, protects, enhances and future proofs the values of nature critical to the Te Taihu/top of the South and Buller/Kawatiri and this flourishing nature in turn enriches its communities.

## Our Pathway Plan

This Strategy Implementation Pathway Plan defines the pathway we will take to achieve our Mission and Vision, and has four main work themes:

**Helping our native species thrive**

**Restoring lowlands and connecting ecosystems**

**Restoring marine ecosystems**

**Te Kāhui Tangaroa - iwi-led projects**



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## Front cover photo credits, L-R

Blue Lake/Lake Rotomairewhenua - Nelson Tasman Tourism

Kākā - Ruth Bollongino, Fern Photos

Stephens Bay - Nelson Tasman Tourism



### Helping our native species thrive

Tackle predators and problem ungulates in Northwest Nelson  
 Integrate ungulate control across the region  
 Maintain and expand wilding conifer control  
 Create a Predator Free KMTT



### Restoring lowlands and connecting ecosystems

Increase healthy native vegetation cover to 15%

- Connect remnants via biodiversity corridors
- Restore riparian and coastal margins
- Improve climate resilience
- Control problem pests and weeds



Te Kāhui Tangaroa  
 Iwi-led projects across  
 Te Taihū and Kawatiri



### Restoring marine ecosystems

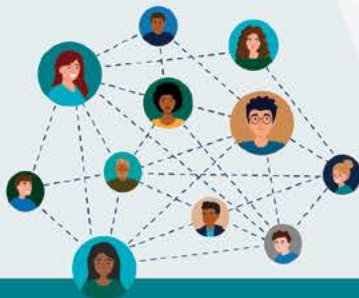
Restore healthy shellfish populations  
 Reduce sediment  
 Create blue economy opportunities:

- Blue carbon
- Sustainable fisheries
- Regenerative aquaculture



## Tiaki me te Whakahaumanu

Ki uta ki tai  
 Protecting and restoring



### Kotahitanga - Working together

- » Build strong, diverse restoration communities
- » Connect people and nature
- » Amplify existing projects
- » Grow impact investment
- » Work across sectors



## Whakahau

Empowering action



People in  
 Te Taiao  
 Engagement  
 Framework



Financing  
 & resourcing  
 strategy



Build iwi  
 capacity &  
 capability



Collaboration  
 & training



Community  
 hubs



Research  
 hubs



Tell our  
 stories



## Tūāpapa

Getting the system right



Governance  
 & operations

Iwi leadership

Strategy integration

Climate resilience

Sustainable finance

# Kotahitanga mō te Taiao

## Strategy Implementation Pathway Plan

# Foreword – Co-Chairs

Kua rīwaru te waka, ka rata ngā tāngata o runga

When conditions are right, anything is possible

(Whakataukī nō Ngāti Rārua)

*"When the Tainui waka was first launched it was off balance. Hoturoa and his people then hauled the waka ashore, and the correct adjustments were made to ensure that it would float properly. When it was launched for a second time, the people celebrated. This whakataukī is best used in situations where people must ensure that everything is balanced before the kaupapa may proceed." (Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rārua (2023), Kia Pai te Reo Pukapuka Tautoko).*

When we think about the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao kaupapa at hand across Te Taihū and Kawatiri and the responsibility we have as kaitiaki and rangatira, we liken our challenge to that of Hoturoa and his people. The conditions must be right to balance the waka, Te Waka Kotahi, to achieve our aspirations.

We are proud to present this transformative plan for our region, Te Taihū/top of the South Island, and Kawatiri/Buller. It reflects the work of many people to improve the health of our incredible biodiversity and rich environment, empowering and connecting communities to be a part of this important mission.

This plan has been developed to realise the vision and outcomes of the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance (KMTT) Strategy, building on work already underway to maintain the gains for the long term. It identifies and sets a pathway for the key transformative actions needed to reverse our region's decline and set us on a path of landscape-scale restoration.

Despite funding and management challenges, our partners and communities have worked in this space for years. We will use this plan to focus and connect this work; to amplify current efforts by addressing the key challenges at scale and unlock sustainable funding mechanisms for conservation across the region.

By connecting and collaborating to address the threats facing climate and biodiversity, KMTT aims to create a liveable future for nature and people. Through this plan, informed by Western science and mātauranga Māori, we show how informed investment can transform the future of our region.

As a ground-breaking collaboration, KMTT can enable landscape-scale restoration in our region. Working with our community, we will collaborate to secure and direct resources to achieve the most meaningful impact across the landscape. The backing of the KMTT partners enables a coherent approach to the vision for this region.

In practical terms, this plan focuses on the four areas where we can collaborate to make the greatest difference:



Helping our native species thrive



Restoring lowlands and connecting ecosystems



Te Kāhui Tangaroa



Restoring marine ecosystems

KMTT's partners – iwi, local and central government - are confident this is the path to follow, and that our funders, supporters, volunteers, projects, and communities can achieve what is necessary for us to be good ancestors for our people and our natural world.

Co-Chairs

Martin Rodd and Hemi Sundgren





## Our Values

### **Manaakitanga**

To care for each other, to be respectful, and an act of reciprocity of natural resources to be shared with others.

### **Kaitiakitanga**

Provision of active utilisation, preservation, conservation, maintenance, and management of the environs (including flora, fauna, aquatic and marine).

### **Mātauranga Māori**

Acceptance and acknowledgment of Māori epistemologies within the construction of key concepts and projects.

### **Kotahitanga**

Unity of purpose and collective agreement for achievement of outcomes and goals.

### **Rangatiratanga**

The chiefly right to determine use and management of the natural environment.

### **Mauri**

The principal life force of our environs is protected including their tapu and wairua.

### **Arohatia**

Duty of care and responsibility to this kaupapa, each other and iwi.



# Our Partners

The Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance (KMTT) is a collaboration of 17 iwi, council and government partners, supported by The Nature Conservancy Aotearoa New Zealand (TNC NZ) to recover and whakamana (empower) the mauri (life force) of the land, waters and people across 3.4 million hectares of land and sea in Te Taihū/Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough, and Kawatiri/Buller.

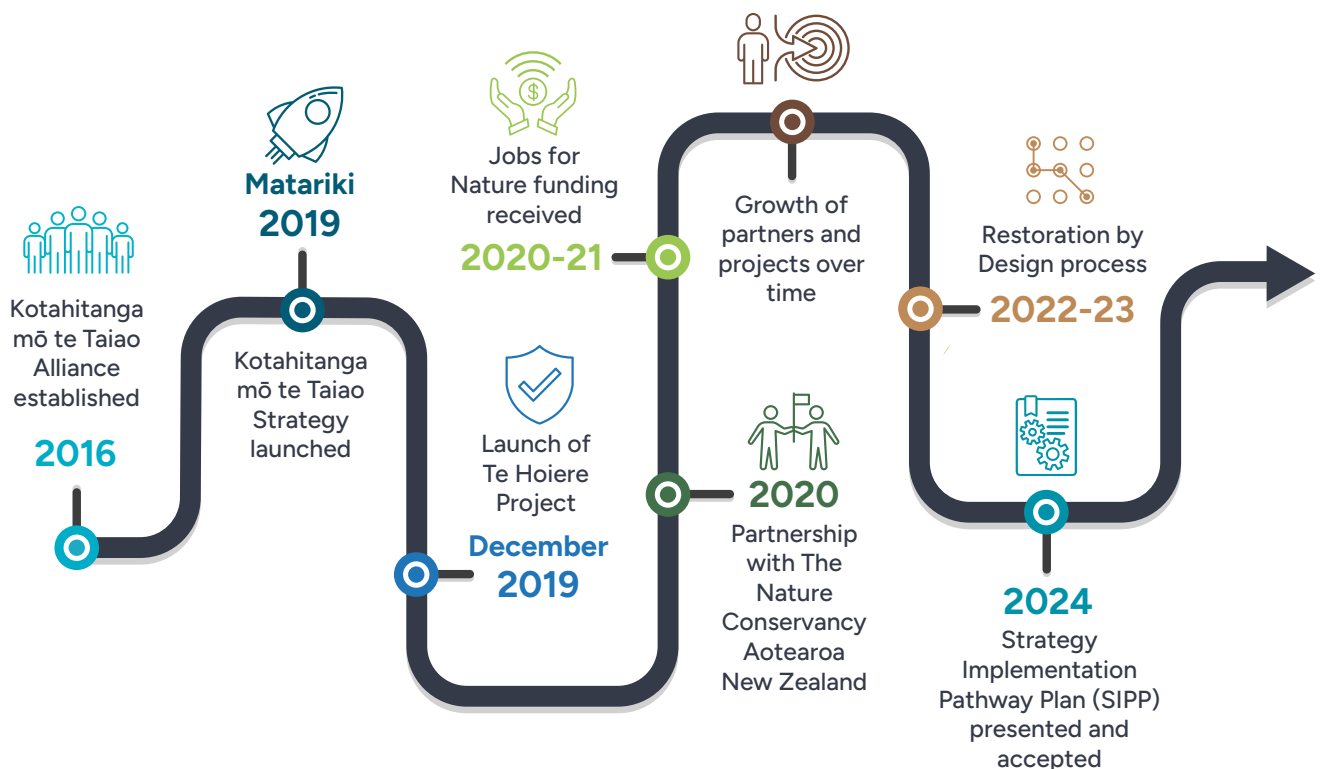
In 2019, KMTT delivered the KMTT Strategy – a vision for the region’s response to the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate breakdown. KMTT recognises the many conservation and restoration projects in this region that are aligned to this strategy, and which will be amplified by this plan.



In collaboration with  
The Nature Conservancy Aotearoa New Zealand



## Timeline





# A Pathway Forward

## Delivering the KMTT Strategy

The KMTT Strategy articulates KMTT's vision, mission, and values for environmental restoration across the top of the South Island: Te Taihū and Kawatiri/Buller.

This Strategy Implementation Pathway Plan (SIPP) outlines how we will collaborate and prioritise our work to achieve the outcomes and place-specific goals identified in the Strategy:

- » **Native species, including those found nowhere else, are thriving.**
- » **Naturally functioning ecosystems are protected, restored, and enhanced.**
- » **Wilderness is sustained.**
- » **People flourish in harmony with nature.**
- » **Ecological connection and resilience are protected, restored, and enhanced.**

<sup>1</sup>Drawing from the KMTT Strategy, existing projects, and expertise from across the region, the SIPP has identified the key actions to be taken that are region-wide and would be both transformative and long-lasting. It aims to amplify and support existing efforts, mobilise the resources and community needed to achieve the desired outcomes, and looks to foundational ways of working to help initiate, implement and sustain the outcomes we need.

The SIPP will allow us to build on the gains made so far and create new projects to accelerate us towards our shared vision.

<sup>1</sup> Between August 2022 and February 2024, the KMTT partners, facilitated by The Nature Conservancy, led an internationally-endorsed "Restoration by Design" process resulting in the KMTT Strategy Implementation Pathway Plan. The methodology used can be found here: [www.conservationbydesign.org](http://www.conservationbydesign.org)



# The Plan

## Identifying the Challenges and Finding Solutions

The SIPP outlines how we will meet the challenges of invasive species, fragmented landscapes and marine ecosystem loss facing people and nature across our region.

We will need a solid foundation of communities empowered to act, sustainable resourcing, and strong, well-positioned governance integrating iwi leadership.

These three pou or pillars are critical to the success of the plan and reflect Te Mana o te Taiao – The Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.



### Tiaki me te Whakahaumanu - Ki uta ki tai Protecting and restoring

Reducing the impact of invasive species, restoring and connecting fragmented landscapes, restoring our marine ecosystems and supporting iwi-led projects so that we can thrive in harmony with nature.



### Whakahau - Empowering action

Empowering our communities – from volunteers to businesses, landowners to schools – and our KMTT partners, to be active in the restoration and care of our lands and seas. By increasing access to training, research, resourcing, and building iwi capacity and capability to lead projects, we will ensure we are ready and able to meet the challenges.



### Tūāpapa - Getting the system right

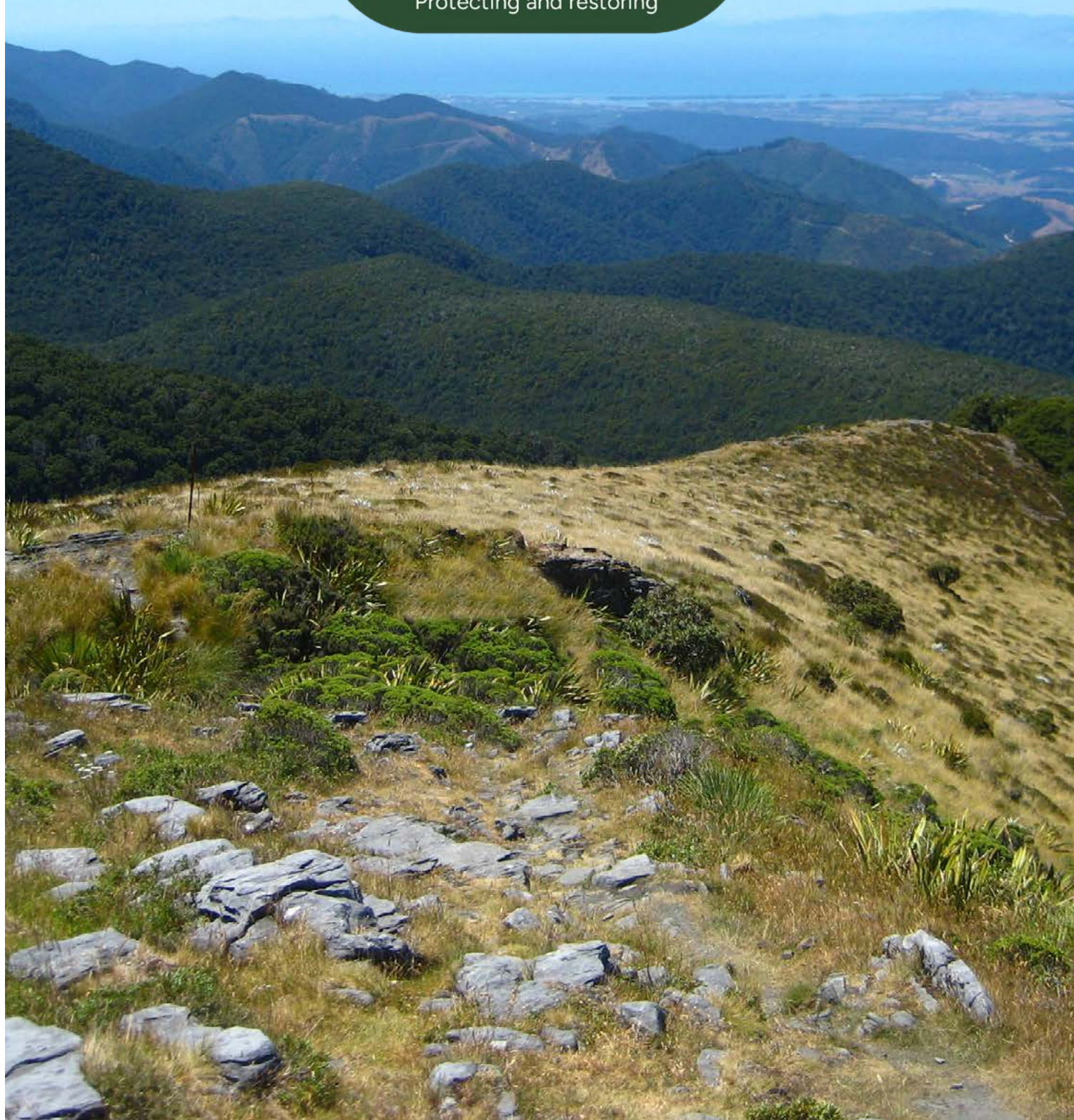
Ensuring that governance, operational and organisational structure, iwi leadership, collaboration, overarching strategy, project outcomes, and sustainable financing mechanisms all support and enable the goals of the KMTT strategy.





# Tiaki me te Whakahaumanu

Ki uta ki tai  
Protecting and restoring





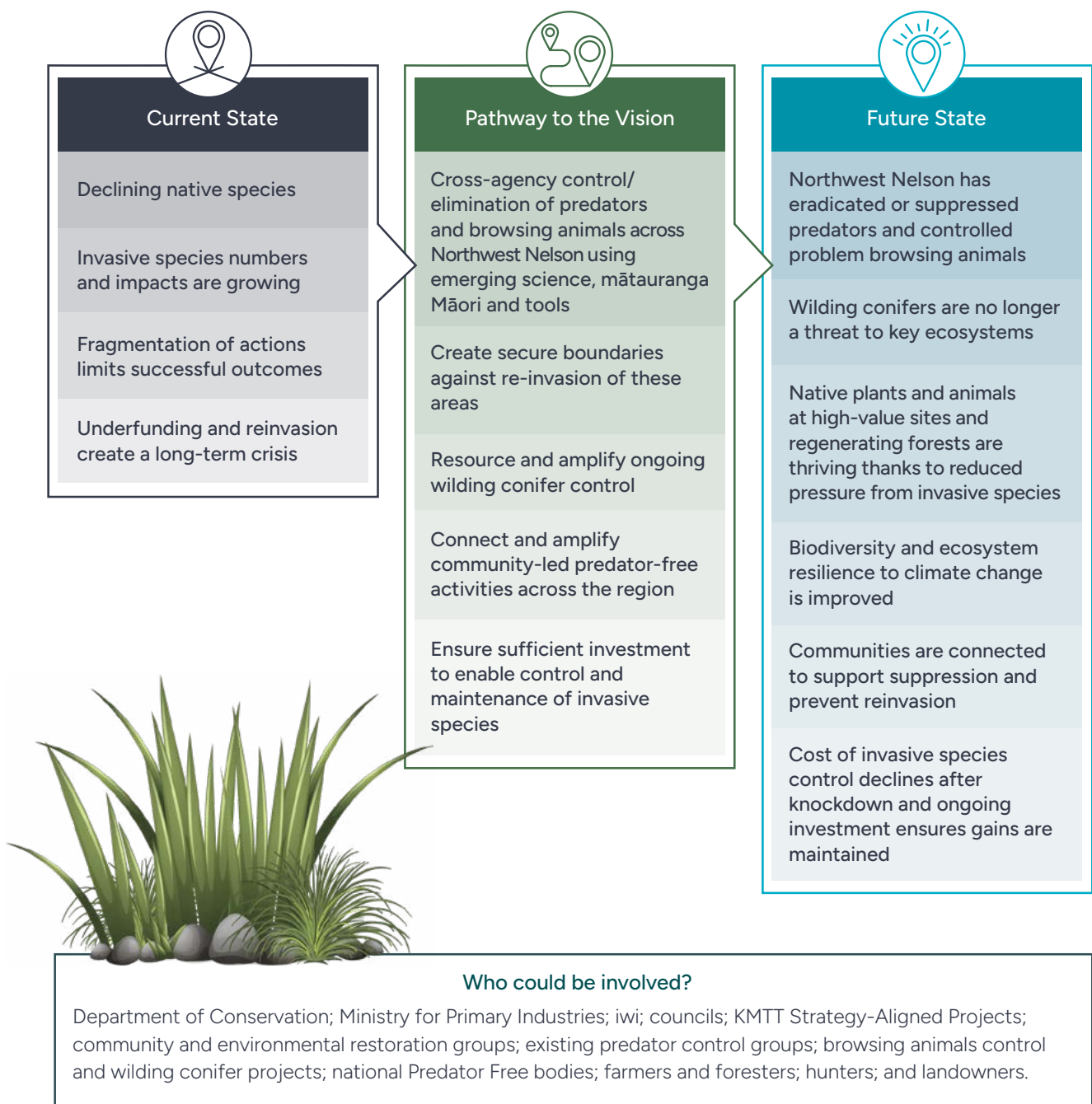
# Tiaki me te Whakahaumanu

## Ki Uta Ki Tai – Protecting and Restoring

With sound governance and an empowered community, we can tackle predators and invasive species, reduce biosecurity threats, plant native forests, connect and restore ecosystems, and bring life back to our seas. Its four workstreams are: Helping our native species thrive; Restoring lowlands and connecting ecosystems; Restoring marine ecosystems and Te Kāhui Tangaroa (iwi-led projects).

### Helping Our Native Species Thrive

Reducing the pressure of introduced species (wilding conifers, browsing animals, invasive wasps, and predatory mammals like rats and stoats) on our rich and biodiverse region so that birds, lizards, insects, bats and their native habitats and ecosystems are thriving.





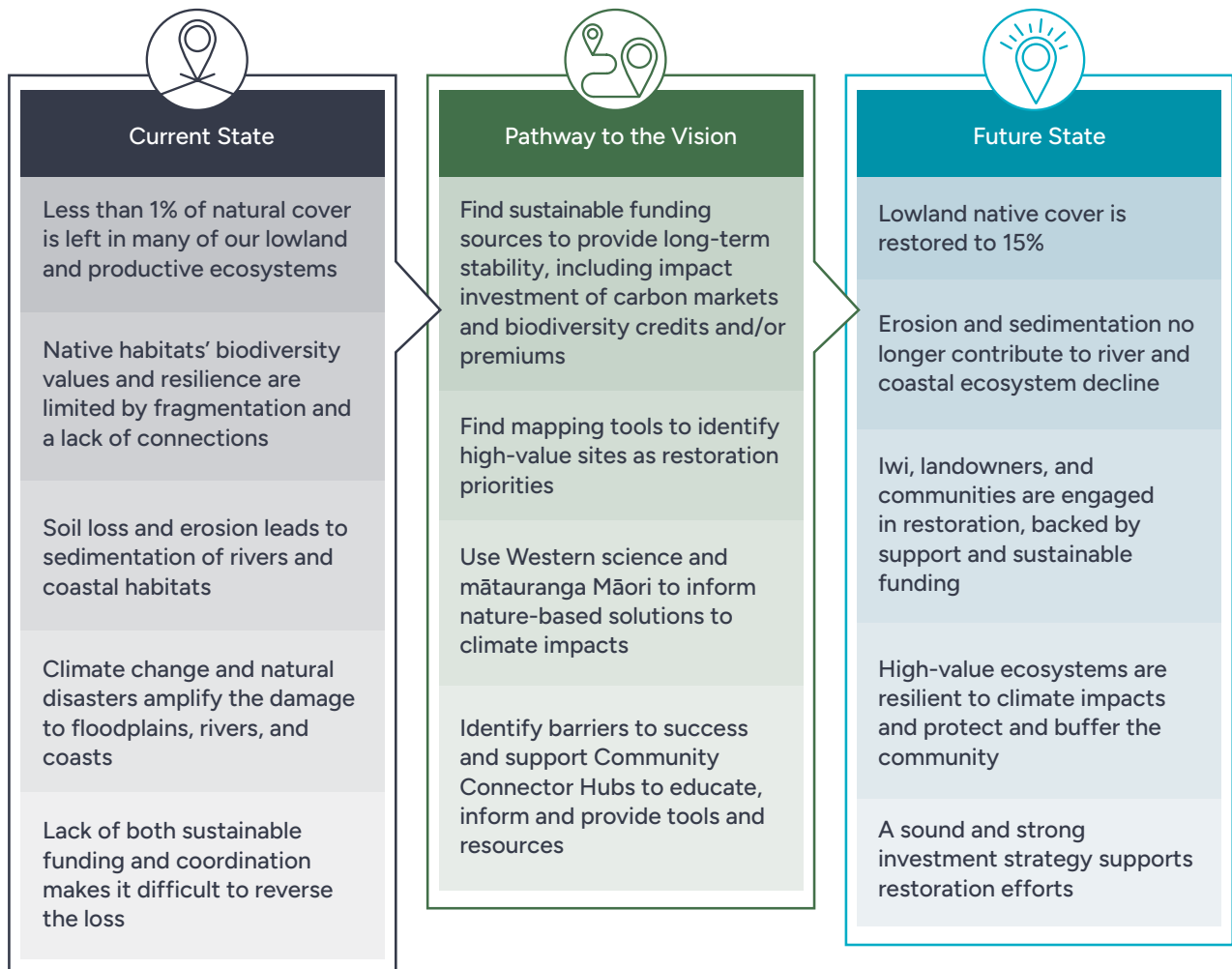


Native South Island Robin - Ruth Bollongino/Fern Photos



## Restoring Lowlands and Connecting Ecosystems

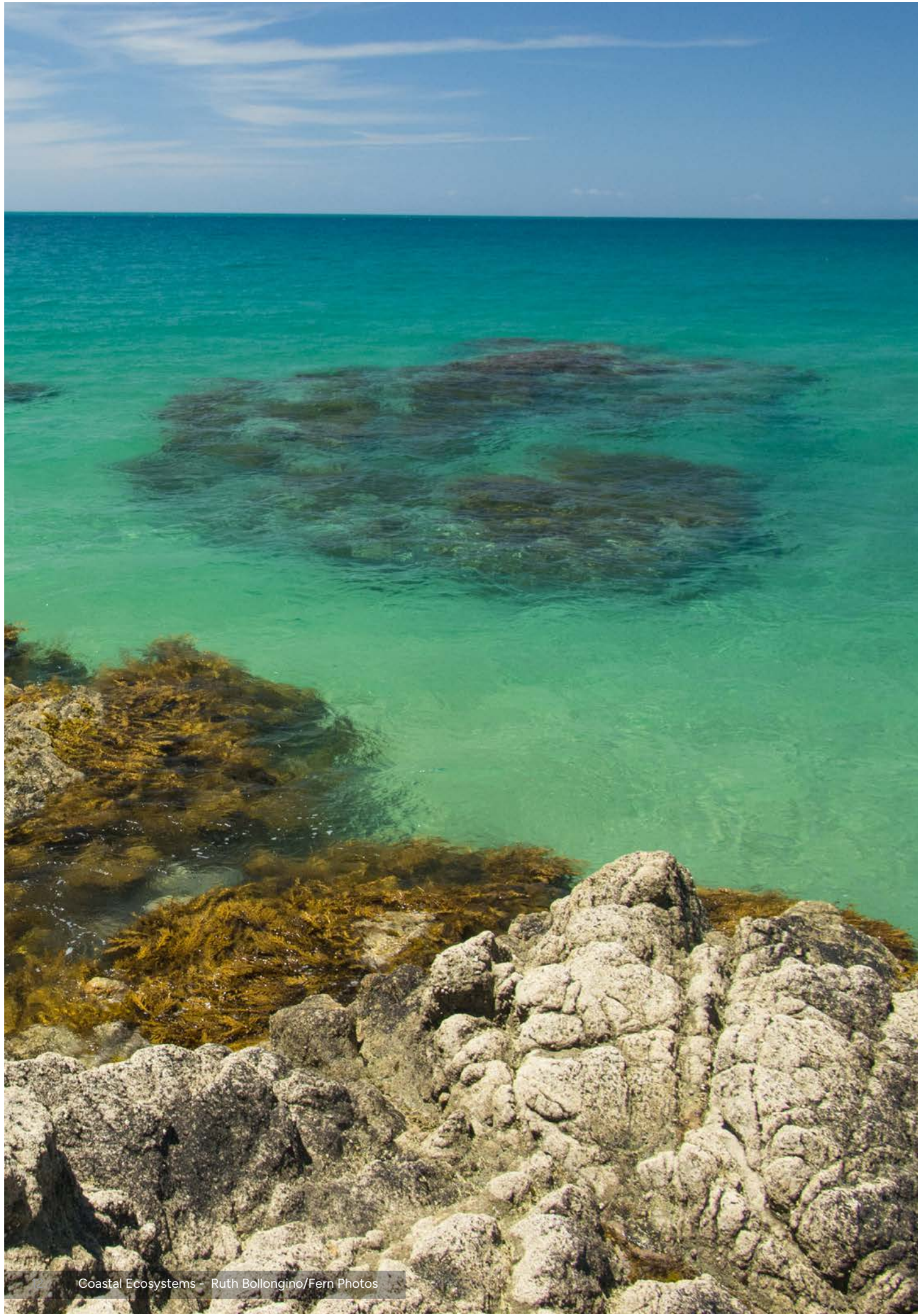
Restoring natural vegetation cover across 15% (10–13,000 hectares) of our most threatened landscapes in the lowlands. By working with the support of communities, councils, government, landowners, and primary industries we will restore the well-being of the lands.



### Who could be involved?

TNC NZ; Tasman Environmental Trust (TET); Kawatiri Nature Environment and Communities Trust; KMTT Strategy-Aligned Projects; Community trusts and conservation groups across the region; catchment groups; councils; iwi; Ministry for the Environment; Department of Conservation; Ministry for Primary Industries; QEII Trust; forestry companies; farming industry and leaders; public and private landowners.

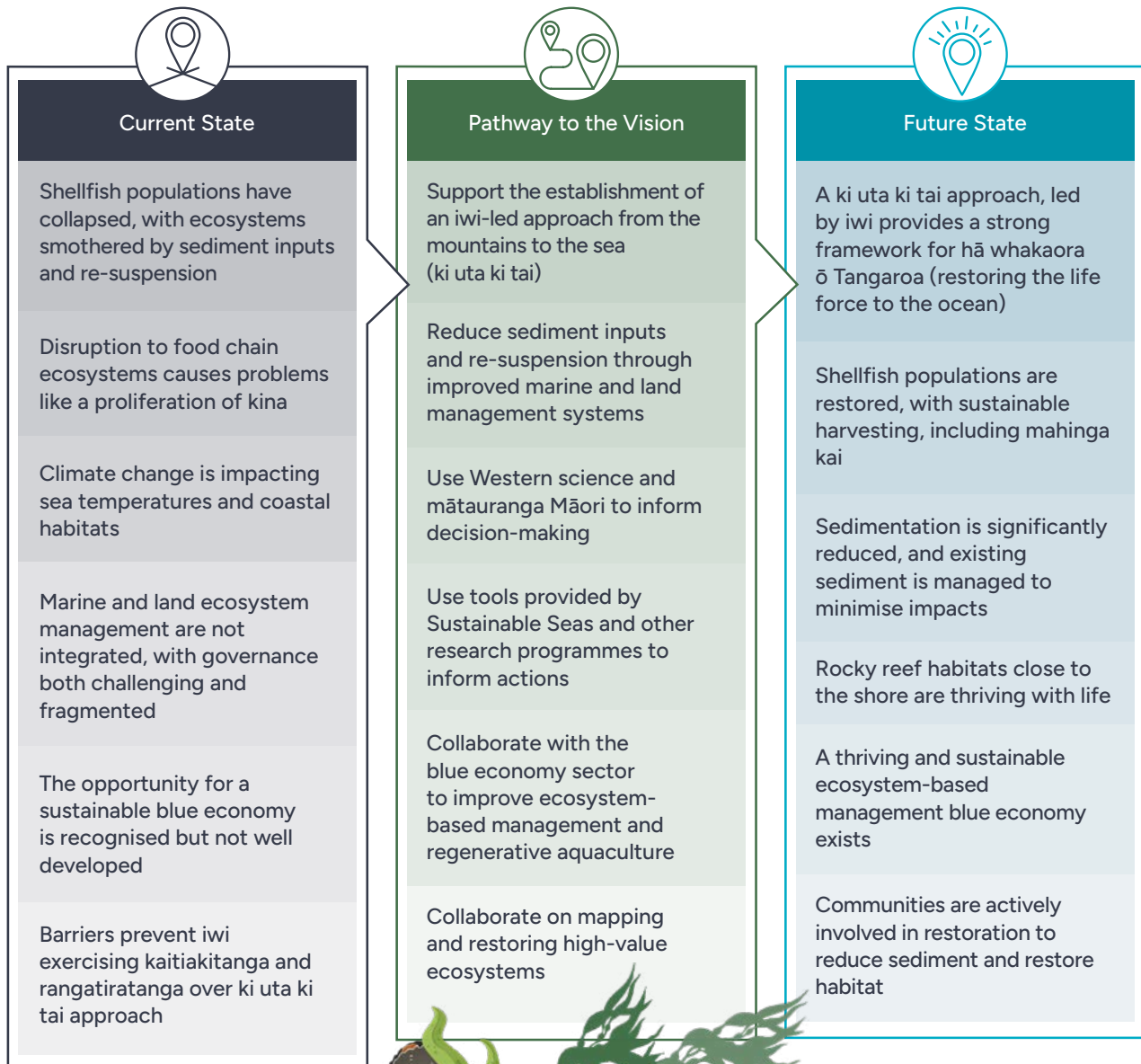






## Restoring Marine Ecosystems

Facilitating better management of river catchments and coastal bodies of water to reduce sedimentation, restore shellfish populations, and develop an environmentally aware and sustainable blue economy that encourages restorative aquaculture opportunities and improved marine harvesting methods.



### Who could be involved?

Iwi; councils; TNC NZ; Fisheries NZ; Department of Conservation; Ministry for the Environment; fishing and seafood interests, organisations and collectives; existing shellfish restoration projects; universities and research agencies; forestry managers/owners; the farming industry and landowners; cultural kai moana interests.





Ruihana Smith from Ngāti Kuia speaking to Te Hoiere Project field day participants - Melissa Banks



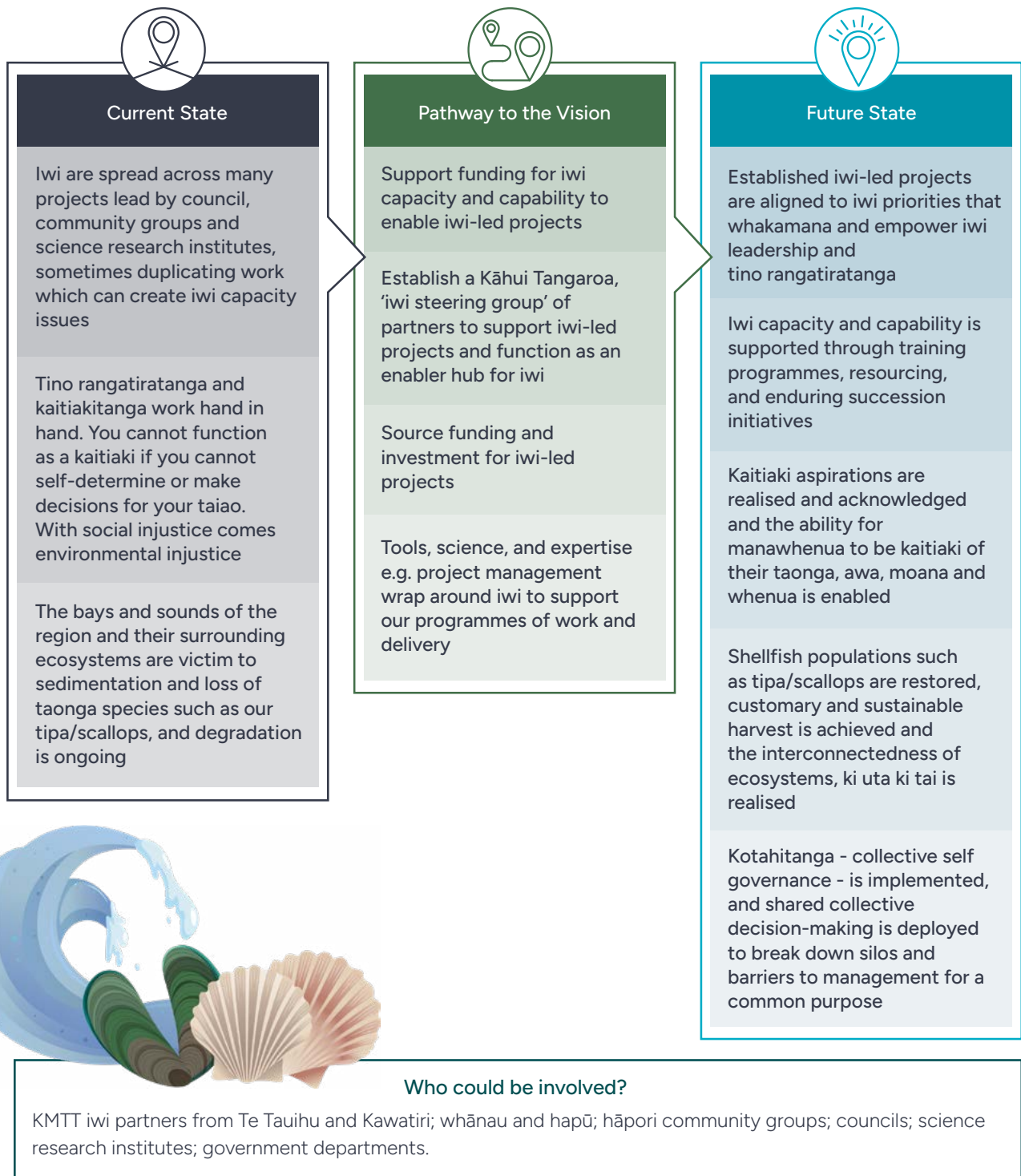
Dayveen Stephens and Te Puoho Stephens (Wakapuaka Whānau) Jo Martin (MfE), Harry Allard (NCC), Vikki Ambrose (FNZ) on a field trip to view seafloor mapping sites in the Wakapuaka and Horoirangi area - Stew Robertson/DOC



## Te Kāhui Tangaroa

### Iwi-led projects across Te Taihu and Kawatiri.

Te Kāhui Tangaroa is a space that enables a tino rangatiratanga approach to implement restoration projects for KMTT iwi partners. It is important to note that iwi are involved at many levels within KMTT from governance to supporting existing projects. This kaupapa is an opportunity for iwi to lead our own projects based on our priorities “Ki uta ki tai.” The marine space is the end of the line, and our whakapapa means that we have intrinsic relationships with our taonga and ecosystems holistically from the mountains to the sea, ki uta ki tai. The Kāhui will be a group that makes decisions on behalf of KMTT iwi partners to support this approach and implementation.







Harakeke geotextile bags performing as planned at Mangatāwhai Black Valley wetland - Tasman District Council

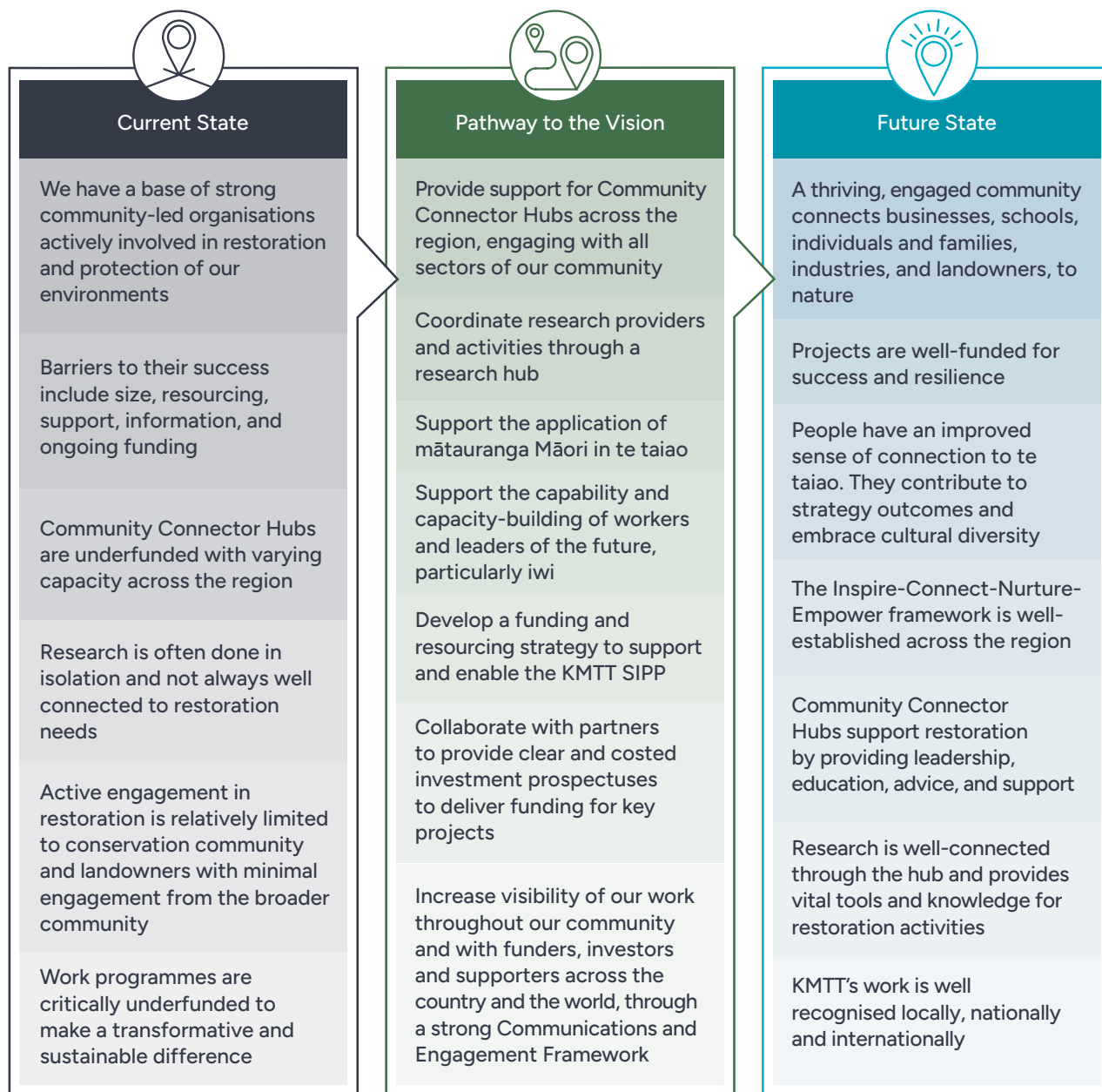


# Whakahau

## Empowering Action

This external-facing Pou draws on the Strategy Vision – “people live, care for and benefit from the environment in ways that bolster natural ecology and the communities that live within them,” and supports the work of Tiaki me te Whakahaumanu – Protecting and Restoring – Ki uta ki tai.

Its key actions include the development of a People in Te Taiao Engagement Framework that supports Community Connector Hubs and empowers all sectors across our communities with the capability and resources we need to achieve transformative outcomes, whilst enabling people’s closer connection to the natural world.



### Who could be involved?

Department of Conservation; Ministry for the Environment; Fisheries NZ, Councils; iwi; Tasman Environmental Trust (TET); Kawatiri Nature Environment and Communities Trust (KNECT); businesses; educators; landowners; leadership trainers; community trusts and conservation groups across the region; Forest & Bird; Nelson Marlborough District Health Board; and the broader health and social development sectors.





# Tūāpapa

Getting the system right



# Tūāpapa

## Getting the System Right

This internal-facing Pou is a critical foundation of the plan. Its key actions are to ensure that the governance, operational, and funding structures are fit for purpose. It will provide a point of focus to measure outcomes and ensure climate resilience is embedded in our work. It will support and uphold actions to improve iwi leadership across te taiao.







Kārearea, New Zealand Falcon



# Acknowledgements

Development of the Strategy Implementation Pathway Plan was made possible through the generous support of the following:

Principal Supporter:

Rata Foundation



Key Supporters:

Commonland



The Nature Conservancy



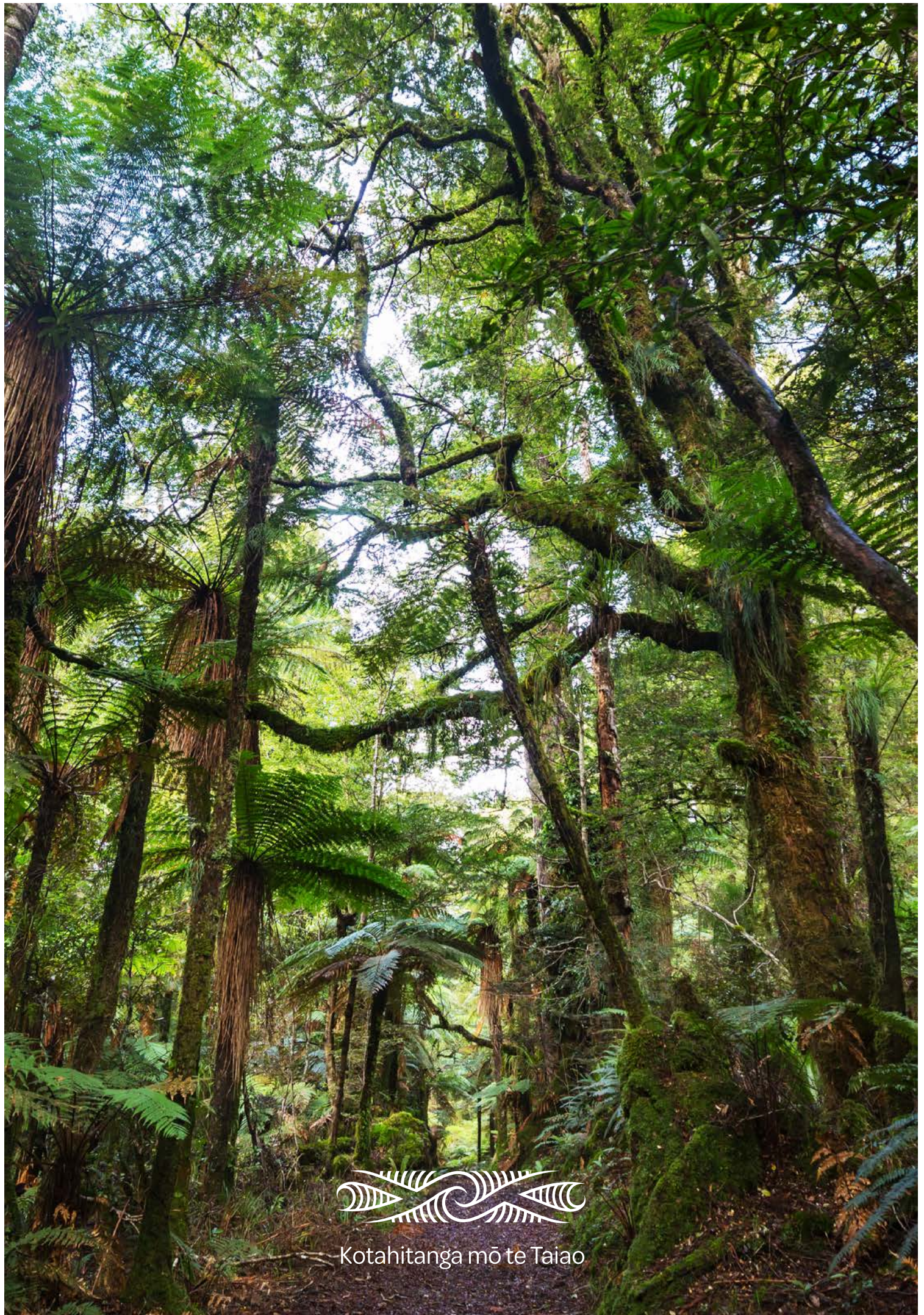
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Kua rīwaru te waka,  
ka rata ngā tāngata o runga

When conditions are right,  
anything is possible

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Kotahitanga mō te Taiao