

Shared Vision for Land Use in Wairau Marlborough

Many of the Aotearoa New Zealand's dominant agricultural systems are reaching a range of environmental, social, and economic limits.

Recognition of the contribution of the agricultural sector to climate change, declining water quality and declining biodiversity, is resulting in growing regulation and social pressure. This is leading to an increasing interest in alternative types of agricultural systems, requiring a shift from systems that are driven by specialisation to those that are more diverse and dynamic, focused on environmental and social impact as well as economic.

This is a summary of:

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How to Develop Pathways to Transition to Diversified Shared Landscapes

This research project aimed to explore the potential for the development of diverse agricultural systems and places to achieve greater social licence among the communities that inhabit them, and address regional social, environmental, and economic challenges. This was explored through two sets of semi-structured interviews, with local Māori and the wider community. This approach was adopted to create an appropriate space for Māori place-based perspectives to be acknowledged and shared inside a wider community project. Questions had the following aims:

- 1) develop an understanding of the community's vision of land use in the Marlborough region, and
- 2) identify and understand the partnerships and relationships necessary to develop a pathway to achieving a shared vision for land use in the region.

Vision for Land Use and Diversification

The interviews revealed that participants' visions for land use were driven from their connections to Wairau Marlborough and what was important to them about the place.

Māori interviewees' vision for land use focuses on acknowledging and protecting indigenous knowledge, conserving, and increasing diversity, and limiting adverse effects of current agricultural practices. The wider community's vision centres around diversification of agricultural production systems, regeneration and conservation of natural habitat, and better planning of housing in the region.

Both visions emphasise the importance of maintaining or increasing access to nature and wilderness areas and integrating native biodiversity and habitat provision into current production systems. Additionally, there is a desire for greater regulation and consideration of conservation natural habitat and productive land when considering where to develop houses in the region.

Identify Pathway to Transition

The shared enablers of partnership identified included future thinking around collaborative solutions, shared values, communication, representation, a voice at all levels of partnership, real and consistent consultation, education about te Tiriti, and recognition of all organisation and iwi Māori capacity and capabilities. Māori interviewees wanted to build relationships based on balance, equity, trust, and collaboration.

Barriers identified were individual, institutional, organisational, and social. Individual barriers included a lack of understanding or apathy about issues. Others included a lack of time, prejudice and ego. Institutional barriers included Iore V. law, short election cycles, which influences prioritisation and action around these issues including a lack of future planning. Organisational barriers related to the internal factors that prevent organisations from partnering, centring around capability and capacity, and external factors such as trustworthiness, integrity, and competition for funding.

Mana and acceptance of each other's cultures were identified as integral social elements to partnership. The Te Hoiere Catchment Restoration Project (Te Hoiere) was identified as an example of place-based land use change and diversification enabled by partnership.

Te Hoiere as a Model for Change

Regional efforts toward land-use change and diversification need to be facilitated to overcome barriers and leverage enablers. Te Hoiere Catchment Restoration Project is a living example of a facilitated place-based approach to land use change and diversification, enabled by partnership. The values, principles and governance structures that guide projects such as Te Hoiere should be examined and exemplified in their capability to create pathways towards a shared vision, i.e. how to bring the vision to life. The different elements (e.g. government backing, policy, legislation and regulation, leadership, funding, collaboration, knowledge sharing and collective buy in) that converge to enable projects like Te Hoiere need to be identified and enacted.

Local Opinion

"As a mum of young children, I know that we speak the loudest with our actions because the next generation is not only watching us but also asking endless questions about *why*. From buying locally grown food to restoring biodiversity—whatever our shared vision is, it will have to be intergenerational to foster a more resilient landscape. We have yet to see a single study about how monocultures give effect to intergenerational equity. This study's conclusions provide direction on where communities can start the conversation because the solutions to diverse and resilient landscapes are not technical, but rather societal."

Stephanie Flores, local resident and environmental communications specialist, Wairau Marlborough

Figure

Fig.1 | Changes in Land Use in Marlborough, New Zealand, based on Land Cover Database V5 (Landcare Research, 2021). The horizontal axis represents time in years, and the vertical axis shows the area of land cover for each category. Vertical lines indicate the points at which the assessment of land use was completed in the LCDB. The graph highlights the increase in production forestry and horticulture, as well as the decrease in pasture over the period covered. © 2023

Behind the Paper

The research was carried out through a series of semi-structured interviews. Two sets of interviews were conducted as part of this research. The Te Ao Māori interviews were carried out by local Māori researchers, Meihana Consulting, and the community interviews were conducted by Bragato Research Institute. This approach was adopted to create an appropriate space for Māori place-based perspectives to be acknowledged and shared inside a wider community project. A total of 12 interviewees participated in the Te Ao Māori interviews. The community interviews targeted individuals who worked directly in the dominant primary industries in the region (viticulture, forestry, sheep and beef farming, and aquaculture), regional government officials and employees who worked in environmental management, residents involved in environmental interest and advocacy groups. A total of 14 interviewees participated in the community interviews.

M.B.

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