

Auckland Council pest plant control

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International

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



Border



Within
Auckland



Auckland Council's role in NZ's biosecurity system

- Regional leadership and coordination
- To achieve benefits for us, altogether, as a region, beyond what individuals could achieve alone





The Biosecurity Act gives us powers

For example, we can:

- enter private property to search for or manage a pest plant
- confiscate plants being sold illegally
- inspect risk goods
- make people manage pests on their property
- prosecute people for non-compliance.



The Biosecurity Act has strict controls on how we can access these powers

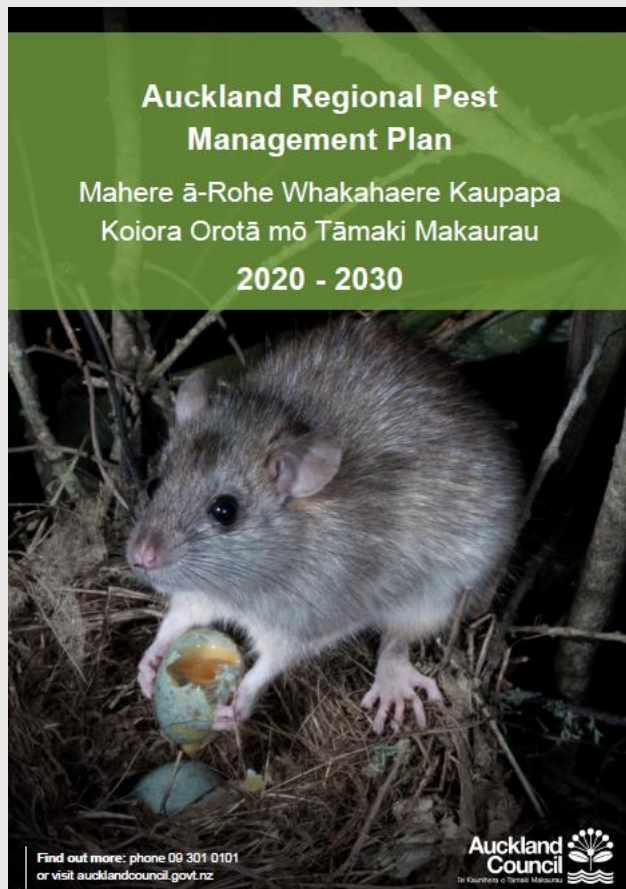


For example:

- Do the benefits outweigh the costs?
- Is it fair and reasonable who will incur costs?
- Must consult with affected parties.
- Must be able to show funding is available for implementation.
- Training, police checks etc required before individuals can be warranted to use powers.
- Must still comply with other laws, eg Privacy Act, Search and Surveillance Act.



Regional Pest Management Plans (RPMPs)



We can access Biosecurity Act powers in several ways, but our RPMP is the main one.



Creating the Regional Pest Management Plan 2030-2040

Staff

Project planning, technical research

councillors

Councillor workshop, June 2024

Local boards

Local board chairs briefed, July 2024

councillors

Councillors approve early public consultation materials, Sept 2024

Public

Early public consultation, Oct-Dec 2024

councillors

Summary of public feedback presented to councillors, mid-2025

Local boards

Local boards given summary of public feedback, to inform their feedback, mid-2025

councillors

Councillor workshop on content to inform plan drafting, April 2026

Public

Deliberative Democracy on widespread weeds, July-Aug 2026

councillors

Councillors approve proposed plan, late 2026

Local boards

Local boards briefed, late 2026

Public

Public consultation on proposed plan, March 2027

Local boards

Local board workshops, reports, feedback, early 2028

councillors

Councillors workshop submissions, resultant changes, 2028

councillors

Councillors adopt new plan, public notification, late 2028

Staff

Environment Court appeals period, 2029

Staff

Plan made operative, 2030



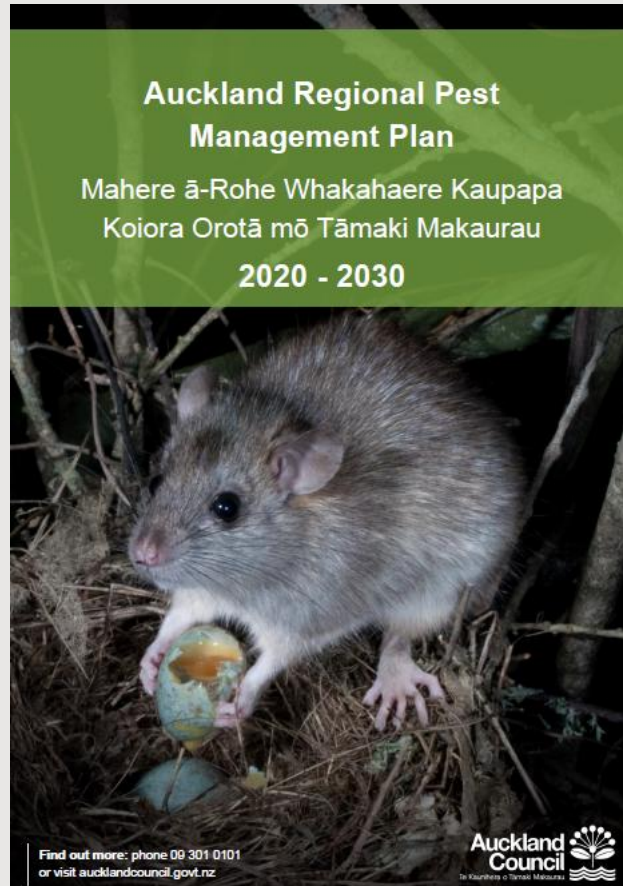
Stakeholder engagement

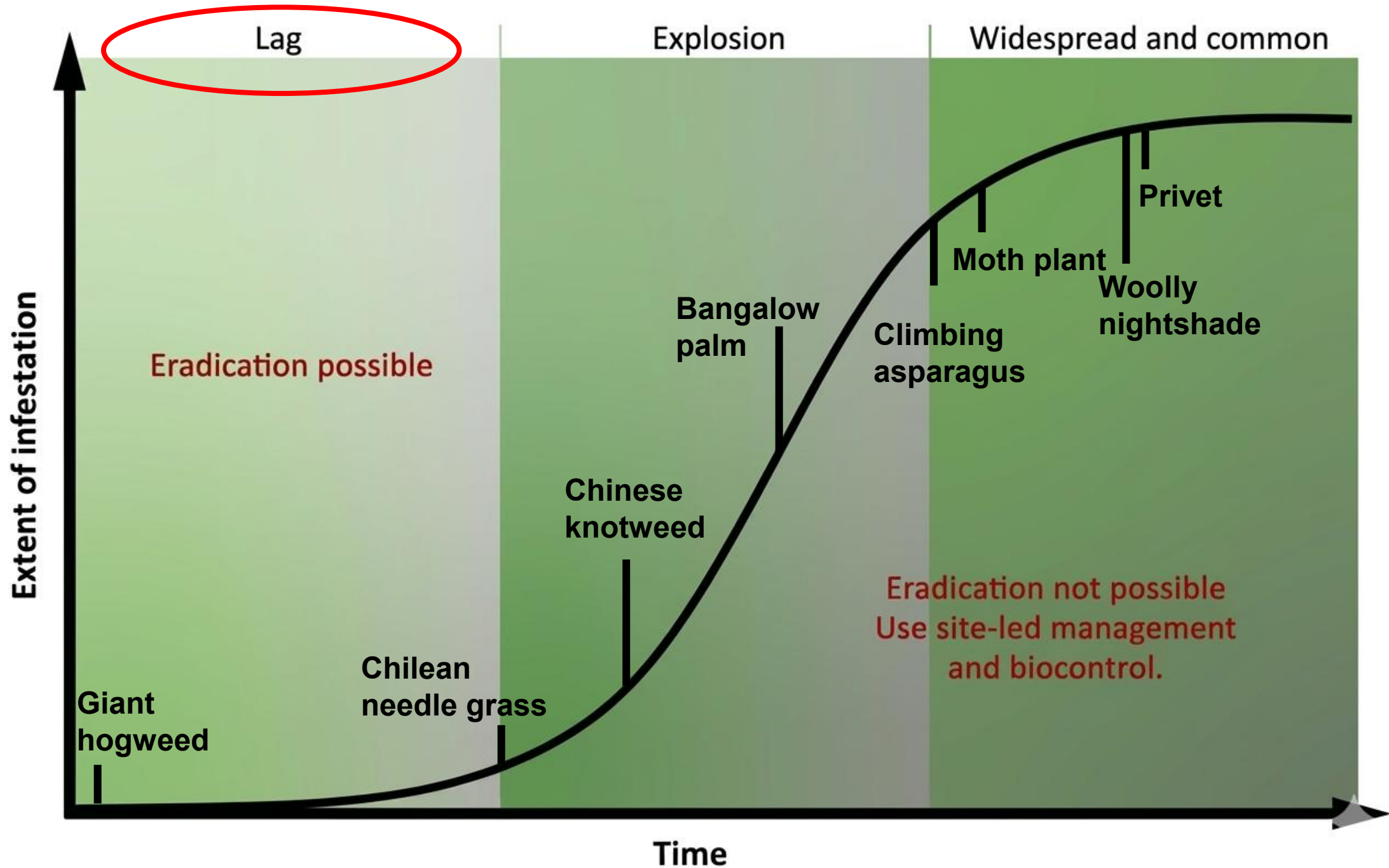


Collaboration with mana whenua

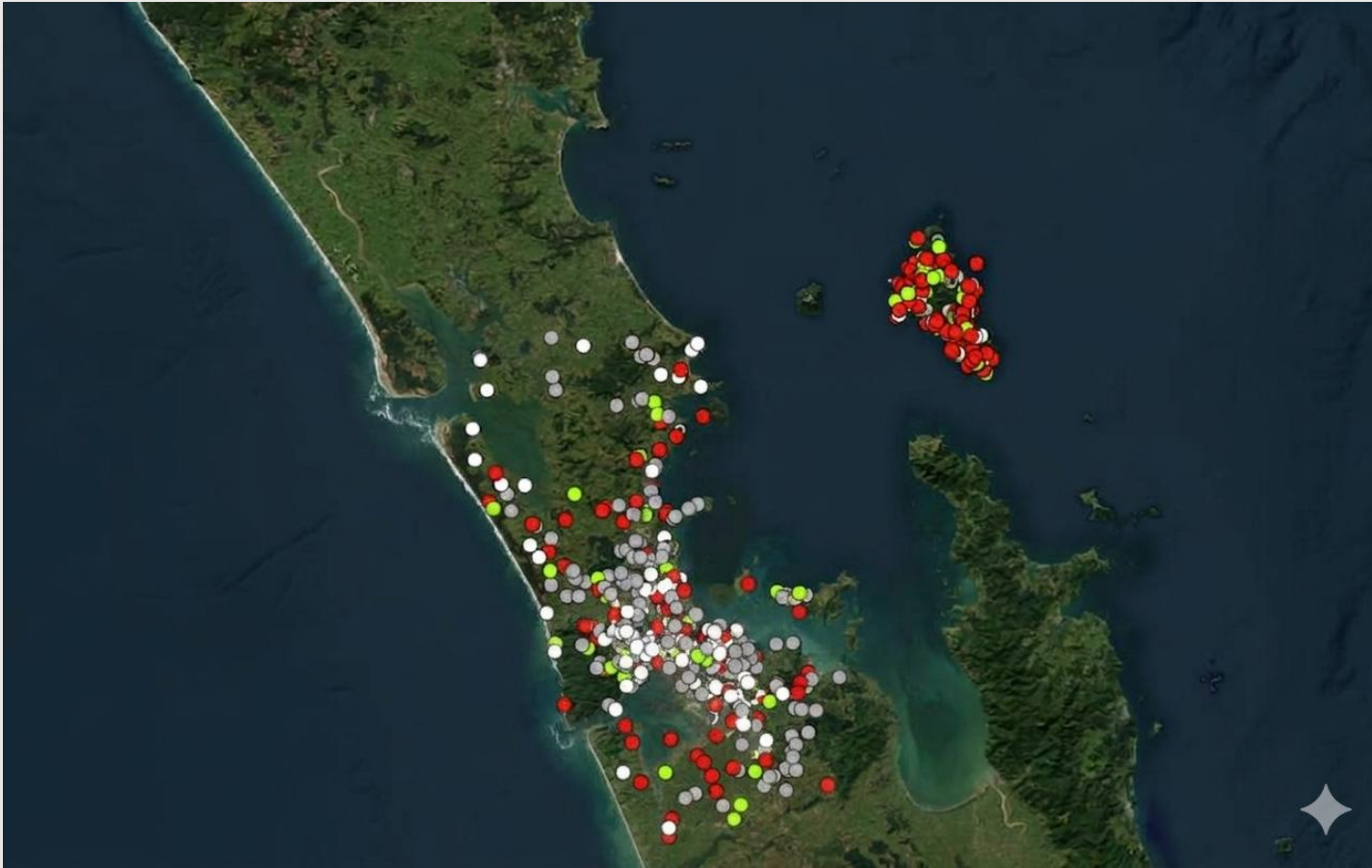


Let's take a look at some of what's in our current Regional Pest Management Plan...





RPMP: regional coordination to prevent future problems



- 31 lag phase pest plants being prevented or slowed from establishing in the region
- ~30 more species being prevented or slowed from establishing on Aotearoa Great Barrier Island



Protecting Aucklanders from giant hogweed



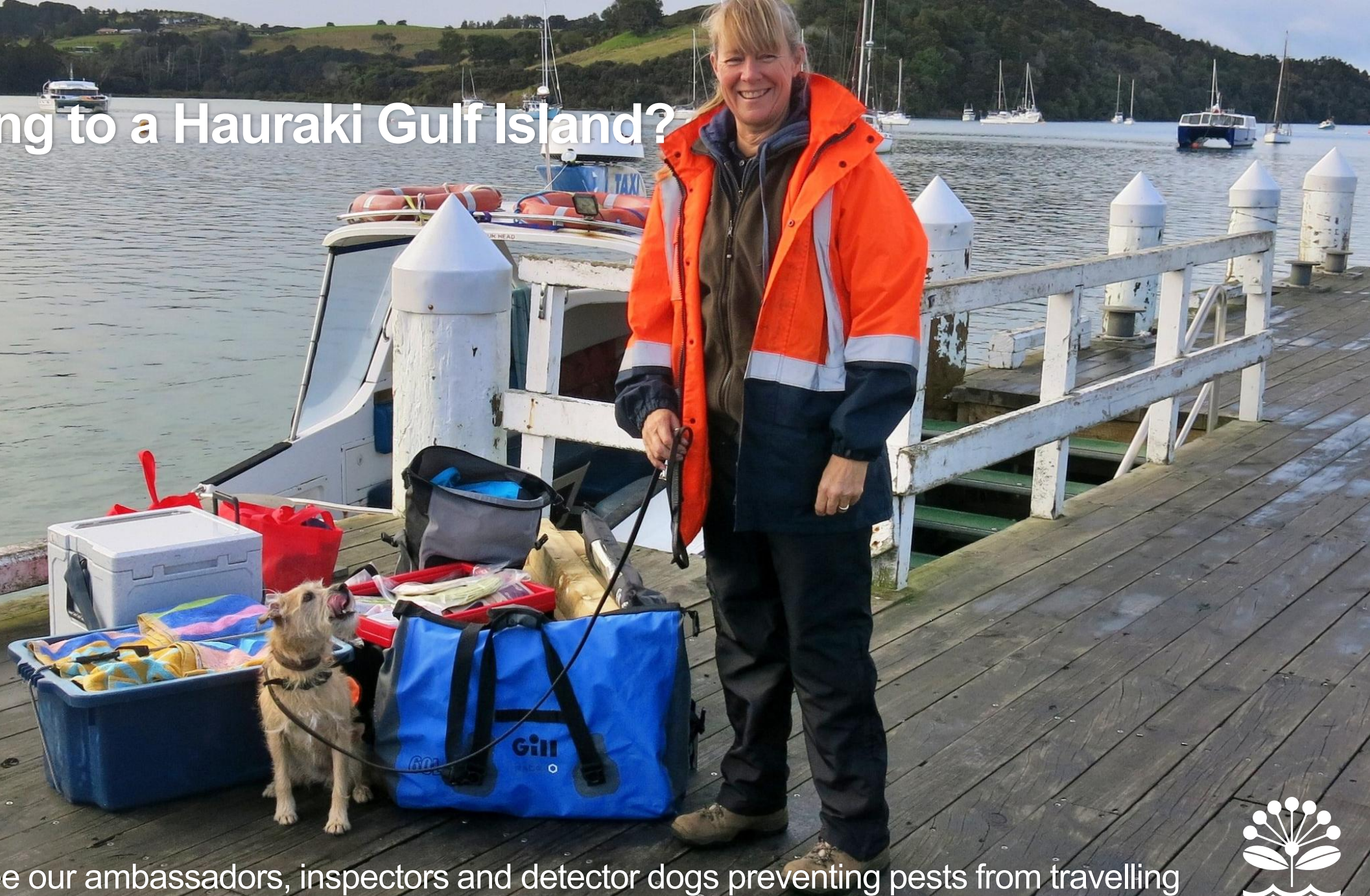
Protecting Auckland farms from Chilean needle grass



Protecting Auckland's harbours from spartina



Travelling to a Hauraki Gulf Island?

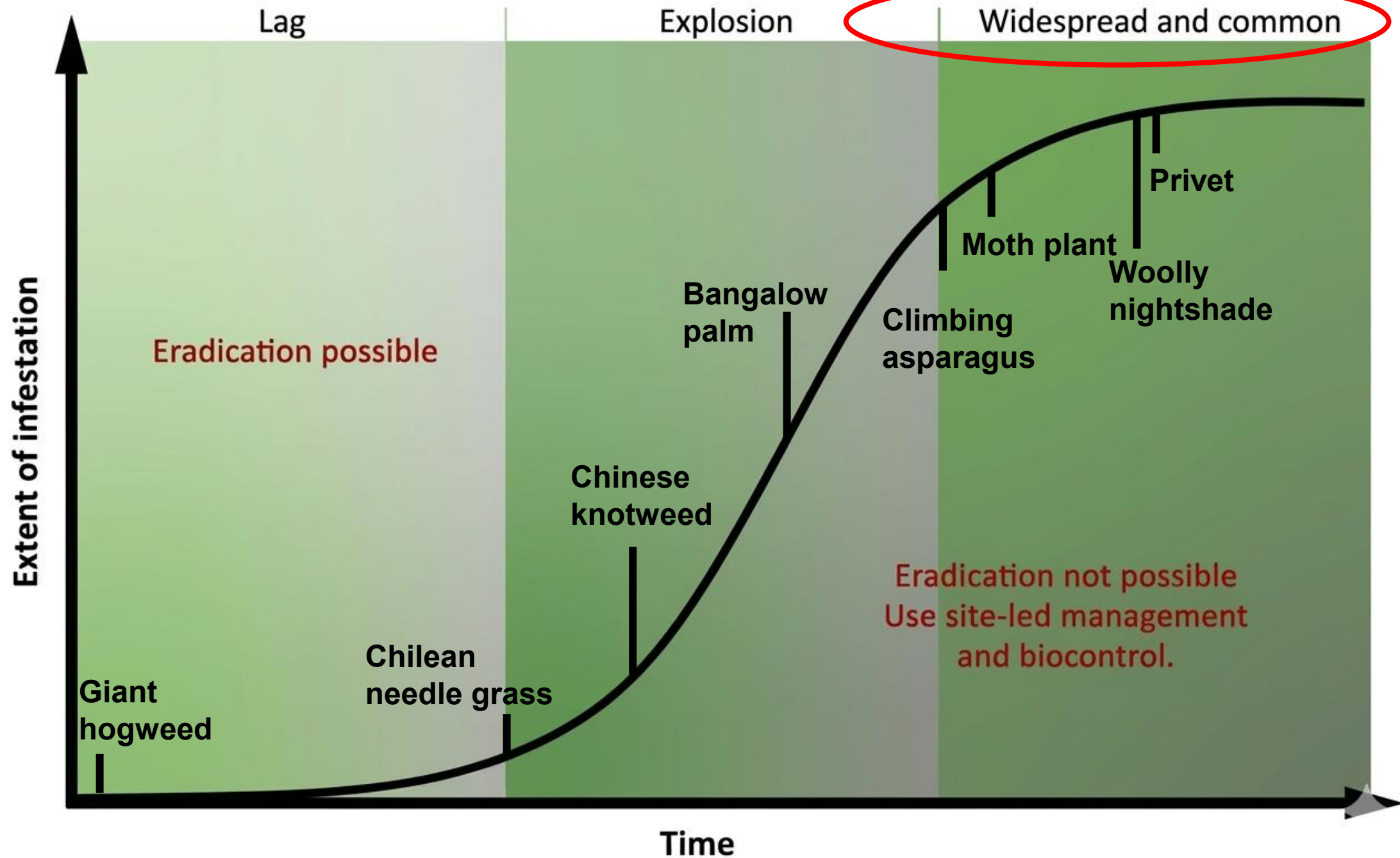


You might see our ambassadors, inspectors and detector dogs preventing pests from travelling



We also inspect nurseries, garden centres, markets, Trademe





What to do about widespread weeds? Since we can't get rid of them everywhere, what are the values we, as a regional community, most want to protect from their impacts?



Climbing asparagus



Moth plant



Woolley nightshade /
tobacco weed
and lots more...

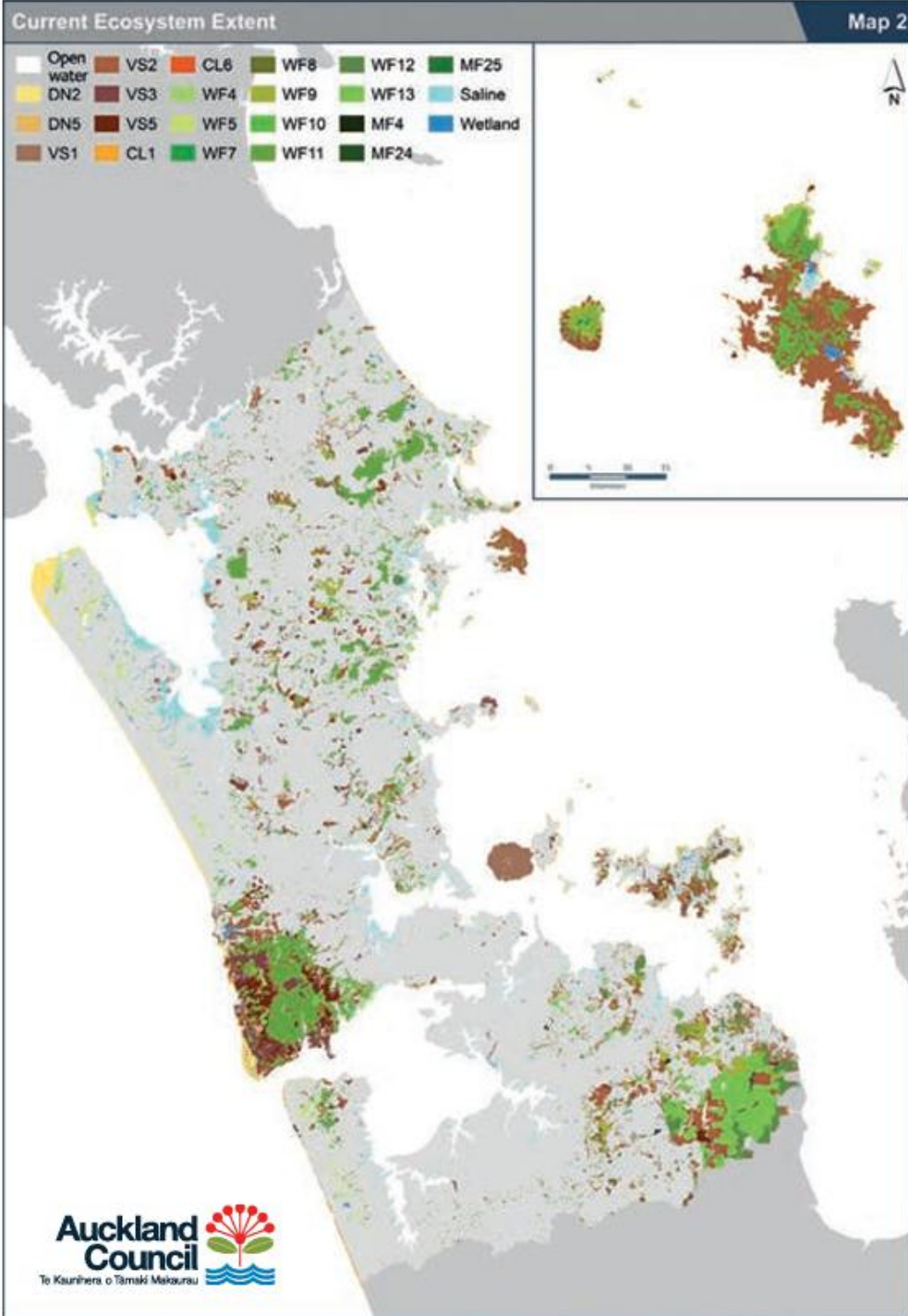


Auckland Council also has obligations to protect indigenous biodiversity



Photo credit: Bruce Jesson





This is what's left of our region's indigenous ecosystems, and many are at risk of extinction!

Different ecosystem types are shown as different colours on the map.

Threat classification:

- 1 ecosystem type is “collapsed”
- 14 are “critically endangered”
- 12 are “endangered”
- 2 are “vulnerable”
- 5 are “least concern”



Threatened species



Of the plants, birds, reptiles, bats and freshwater fish native to Auckland:

- 66 species **already extinct in the region**
- 420 species **threatened or at risk of extinction**
- 374 species **not threatened**

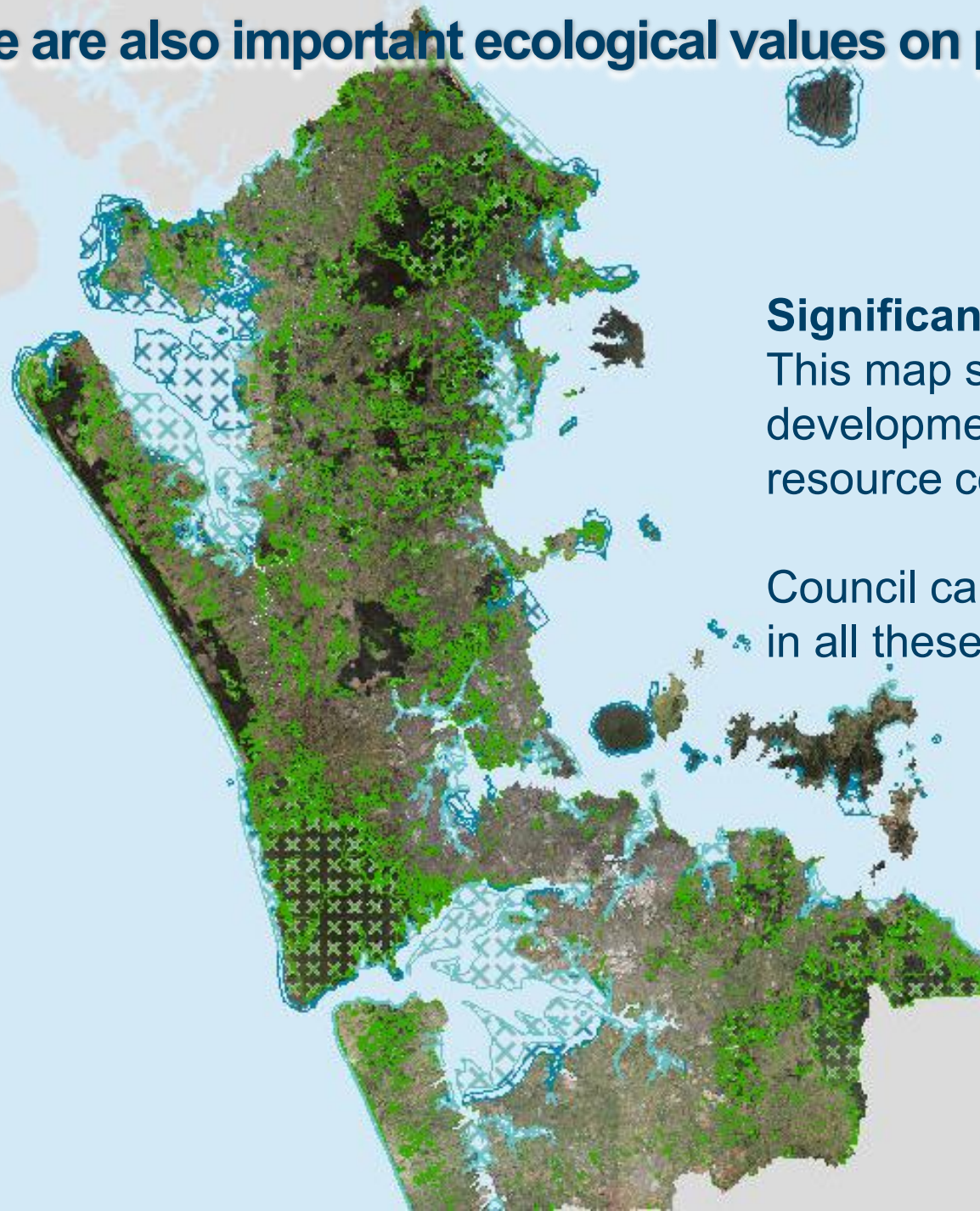


We also have a role as land manager

- Auckland Council manages an extensive park network on behalf of Aucklanders
- 29 regional parks (over 40,000 hectares)
- Over 4,500 local parks



There are also important ecological values on private land



Significant Ecological Areas

This map shows areas that are protected from development – vegetation can't be cleared without a resource consent (currently).

Council can't afford to do pest control or enforcement in all these places within current budgets



Biodiversity Focus Areas = Noah's Ark

Prioritised to be a minimum set of places that need active management to prevent species or ecosystem types from going extinct

Site-led weed control we support

- Contractors deliver control across 'biodiversity focus areas' on regional and local parks, and on offshore islands
- Support to private land owners who have biodiversity focus areas on their land
- Support to community-led conservation.
- Enforcement of land occupier requirements under the RPMP.

We also collaborate with other regions to fund biocontrol agents for widespread weeds.





Wattles

Woolly nightshade

Jasmine

Moth plant

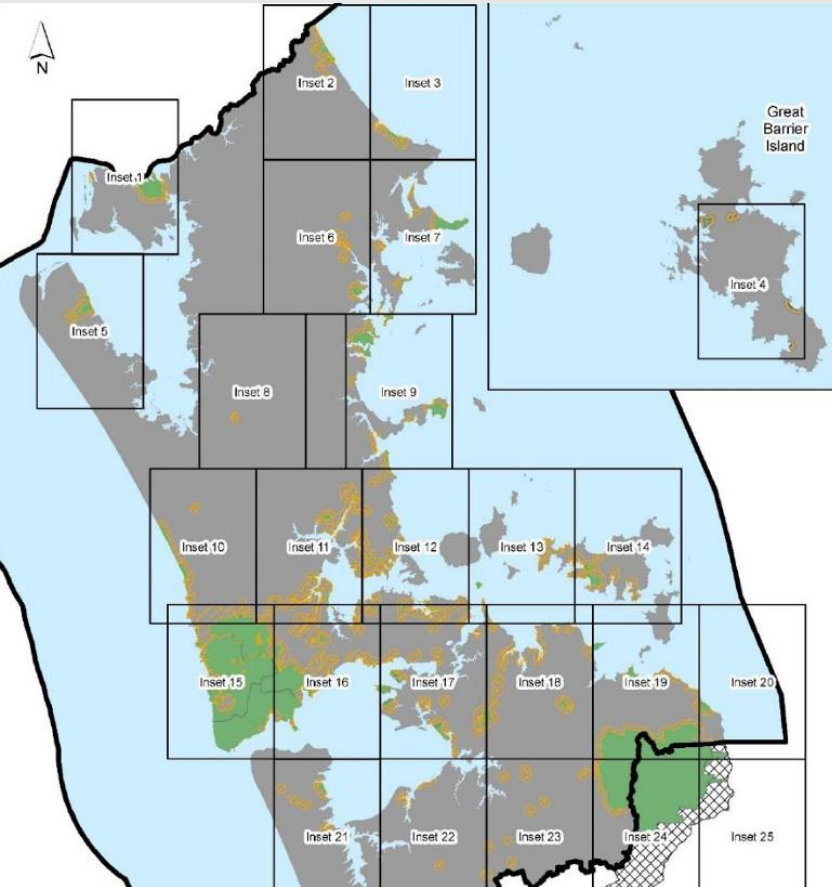
Honeysuckle

Privet

Ginger

Tradescantia & tuber ladder fern

RPMP requirements for private land occupiers to do weed control



Rules applied to 500m buffer areas around high value parkland, because:

- People want council to manage weeds on our own land before enforcing on others
- Council parkland has security of investment and is a public good
- Council land includes much of the region's highest value mainland biodiversity
- 500m is a precautionary distance encompassing most (but not all!) bird/wind-dispersed weed spread.

In buffers, land occupiers must control:

- Moth plant
- Woolly nightshade
- Ginger
- Climbing asparagus
- Bushy asparagus
- Rhamnus

Council can also enter these properties to control:

- Jasmine
- Honeysuckle
- Ivy
- Blue morning glory
- Coast banksia



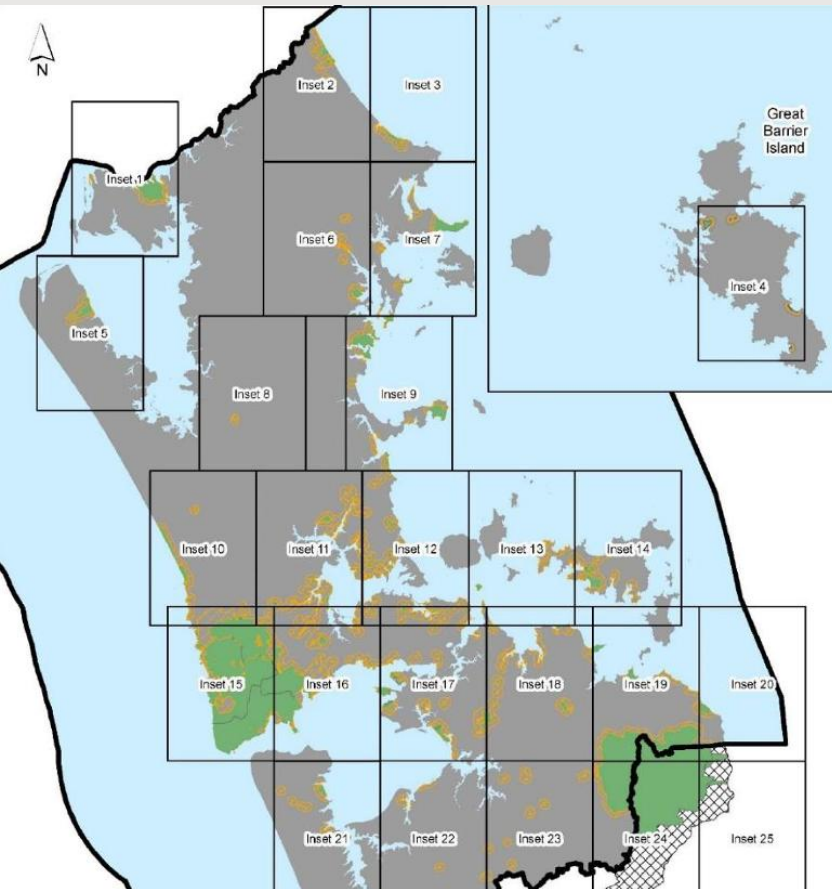
Weed control by other parties including crown agencies

- DOC, NZTA, Kiwirail & other government departments are land managers.
- For most, with the exception of DOC, weed management is not their core business.
- Transport corridors have many neighbours, are narrow & easily reinvaded.
- All have budgets insufficient to manage weeds on all their land.
- Council has limited powers to bind the crown via our RPMP, but our buffer rules do apply to them. They still don't have enough budget to deliver on them.

We use our buffer rules to prioritise and coordinate their investment in weed management.



RPMP requirements for private land occupiers to do weed control



- Current budgets sufficient to only operationalise a fraction of these buffer areas
- How might we refine these to get the most impact from available budgets?
- Narrower buffers?
- More tightly linked to critically endangered ecosystems?
- Only apply to certain land types eg vacant land, where most of the community is on board?
- How do we ensure equitable and fair?



Bylaws vs Biosecurity Act – what's the difference?

Biosecurity Act (RPMP) can be used by council to manage impacts on:

- economic wellbeing
- environment
- human health
- enjoyment of the natural environment
- relationship between Māori, their culture, and their traditions and their ancestral lands, waters, sites, wāhi tapu, and taonga.

Bylaws can be used by council to manage impacts on:

- public health
- safety
- nuisance
- use of council-controlled public places.



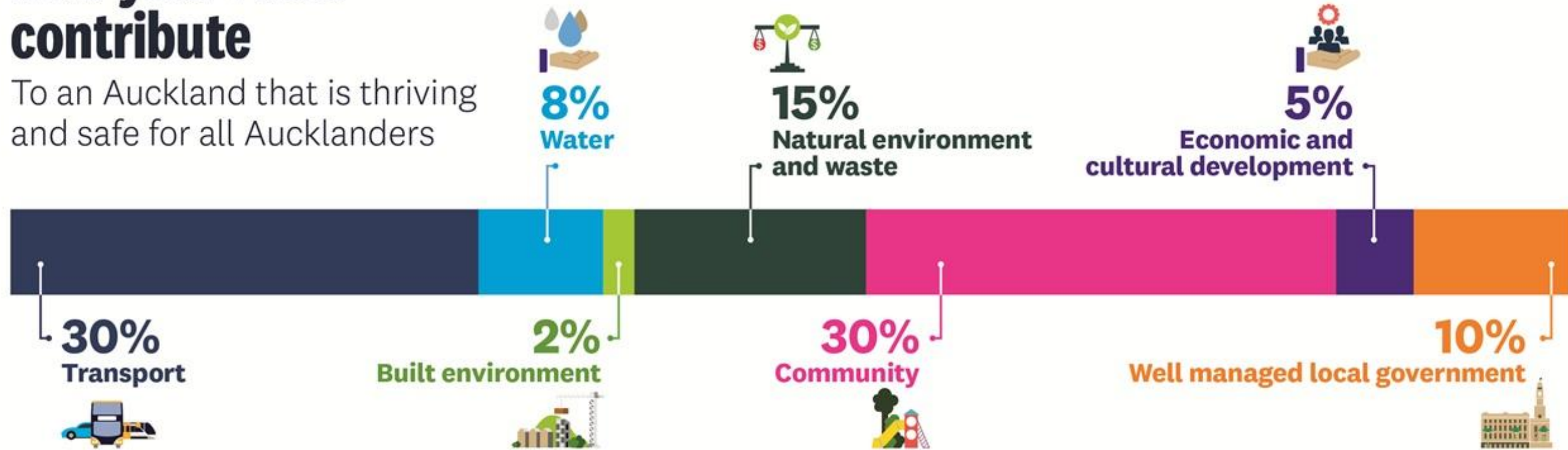
We need your help!

Where and when should we require land occupiers to control weeds on their property?



How your rates contribute

To an Auckland that is thriving and safe for all Aucklanders



Current context:

- Mayoral commitment to an average annual rates increase of 3.5%
- Fuel prices and other inflation could cause up to \$50M cost increases to achieve same outcomes





**\$34.9m total
this year**

**\$0.80 per
week for the
average
ratepayer**





**\$100,000 spent
by council**

***\$0.12 per year*
for average
ratepayer**





How is the natural environment targeted rate spent?



Provisional FY27 budgets for **weed management** by council:

- ~\$100K inspecting nurseries, markets, online trade
- \$275K biocontrol
- \$825K enforcement on private land, including community-led enforcement
- \$852K containing low incidence species regionwide
- \$824K topping up pest control on high ecological value local parks (note this contract includes some animal control too)
- \$990K containing low incidence species on Aotea Great Barrier
- \$1.01M managing widespread weeds at high ecological value sites on islands
- \$2.78M managing widespread weeds at high ecological value sites on regional parks

Additional to NETR:

- ~\$4M managing pests on high ecological value local parks (note this contract includes plant and animal control together, but mostly plants)
- Various other weed control budgets for roadsides, amenity, reveg weed control, stormwater, maunga





How is the natural environment targeted rate spent?

Provisional FY27 budgets for supporting **community-led conservation**:

- \$230K maintaining website and comms
- \$365K for tree planting days and other events through parks and schools
- \$4.3m in grants, tools, resources, training etc to community groups and landowners

Additional to NETR:

- ~\$5M local board grants for community conservation, including weed control
- Facilitating investment by businesses & philanthropy: \$500K secured to date



How is the natural environment targeted rate spent?



Provisional FY27 budgets for **other activities**:

- \$0.5m tech, eg geospatial data, drones, etc
- \$0.8m for freshwater biosecurity
- \$0.9m defending pest-free islands
- \$0.9m tackling marine pests, including Caulerpa seaweed
- \$1.7m survey, monitoring & planning for native species and ecosystem management
- \$2.8m in controlling pest animals such as possums, deer and goats at landscape scales
- \$2.9m managing pest animals on islands
- \$3.8m controlling pest animals on regional parks
- \$4.4m managing kauri dieback & other plant diseases, including maintaining tracks on local and regional parks



Mechanisms by which we can pay for weed management

- Rates
- Cost recovery / acting on default
- Infringement notes (not yet, govt will cap the amount)
- Imposing charges (eg to cover inspection costs)

Must consider who benefits, who makes the problem worse, and is the distribution of costs among them fair.

