

# Nelson Biodiversity Forum Charter and Operating Procedures

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## Charter

### Purpose

**To align strategic, restorative action on biodiversity in te taiao o Whakatū (Nelson).**

### Commitment

Recognising that indigenous biodiversity in te taiao o Whakatū (Nelson):

- Is highly depleted where people live and use natural resources, and through the action of animal and plant pests;
- Still supports many natural ecosystems and native species populations;
- Continues to degrade due to human activity and biosecurity threats;
- Faces degradation and potential extinction from human-impacts including the global climate crisis;
- Can be restored to long-term resilience through concerted, sustained action;
- Is vital to our identity, health, and prosperity.

We, the Signatories and Partners, commit to working towards the vision outlined below through:

- Inclusion and respect, particularly through acknowledging, respecting and working with ngā Iwi tangata whenua;
- Acting promptly, purposefully and responsibly, together and individually; and
- Participating in good faith in the Biodiversity Forum.

### Vision

Our communities are woven together around strategic, restorative action on biodiversity and biosecurity to ensure that **kia ngotongoto, kia uekaha te mauri o te taiao ki Whakatū (the life force of nature is vibrant and vigorous throughout Nelson)** by:

1. **Protecting and restoring te taiao (the natural world).** This will mean:
  - i. Ecosystems and species are protected, restored, resilient and connected from mountain tops to ocean depths.

- ii. Biological threats and pressures are reduced through management.
  - iii. Natural resources are managed sustainably.
2. **Getting the system right.** This will mean:
- i. Treaty partners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations are rangatira and kaitiaki.
  - ii. Aligning with national and inter-regional strategies and initiatives.
  - iii. Governance, regulation, and funding enable delivery of biodiversity outcomes.
  - iv. Biodiversity protection is at the heart of economic activity.
3. **Empowering action.** This will mean:
- i. Collaboration, co-design and partnership are delivering better outcomes.
  - ii. Our people have the skills, knowledge and capability to be effective.
  - iii. Resourcing and support are enabling connected, active guardianship of nature.

## Function and role of the Biodiversity Forum

The function of the Biodiversity Forum is to align and proactively lead or support responses to biodiversity restoration and management of biosecurity threats. It is a collective of organisations, groups and individuals. It is not a legal entity and has no delegated authority to make decisions that bind its members to any specific action, including funding. Members participate in accordance with legal requirements that apply to them. The Biodiversity Forum endeavours to work by consensus. The Biodiversity Forum will keep current a living document **Te Mana o Te Taiao ki Whakatū / Nelson Biodiversity Strategy** and facilitate its implementation. All signatories and partners agree to work within Operating Procedures adopted by the Biodiversity Forum. A Coordinating Group assists with the content and culture of forum meetings.

## Membership of the Biodiversity Forum

Membership is available to individuals, groups and organisations as either signatories or partners:

### Signatories

Signatories to the Charter hold themselves accountable for actively leading implementation of Te Mana o Te Taiao ki Whakatū – the Nelson Biodiversity Strategy. They collectively ensure that actions in Te Mana o Te Taiao ki Whakatū - Nelson Biodiversity Strategy are undertaken in good faith and to the best of their abilities. Signatories approve changes to Te Mana o Te Taiao ki Whakatū – the Nelson Biodiversity Strategy and also to the Charter and Operating Procedures of the Biodiversity Forum. Signatories are represented at meetings by a voting representative. Other members of the organisation are welcome to attend meetings, but cannot vote;

## Partners

Partners endorse the Charter and commit to act within their functions and capabilities to support the Vision. Partners support Te Mana o Te Taiao ki Whakatū / the Nelson Biodiversity Strategy. Partners are involved in revising Te Mana o Te Taiao ki Whakatū - the Nelson Biodiversity Strategy, but do not have voting rights.

Regardless of the level of commitment (if any) chosen by tangata whenua under this Charter, the Forum will continue to engage with and work alongside tangata whenua as kaitiaki of the rohe and as partners under Te Tiriti o Waitangi<sup>1</sup>.

## Operating procedures

The purpose of these Operating Procedures is to document the standard ways that the Forum will function.

### Membership

1. Membership (as Signatory or Partner) is operative from the time it is registered in writing to the Chair or administrator of the Forum.
2. A Member may resign from the Forum at any time by informing the Chair or administrator in writing.
3. Membership may be rescinded by the Forum if a Member acts in a manner that is inconsistent with or undermines the Charter or Operating Procedures. Membership of any organisation, group or individual may be terminated by a 75% vote of the Signatories present at the meeting, on a motion by the Chair.
4. The Forum is not a legal entity and has no delegated authority to commit its Members to undertake specific actions nor powers to incur debt, take court action, sign contracts or hire employees.

### Functions

The Forum shall --

- a) Develop and enable the implementation of the Te Mana o te Taiao ki Whakatū / Nelson Biodiversity Strategy.
- b) Adopt the Operating Procedures and form working groups as it considers appropriate.
- c) Enable, support and encourage Nelson communities to implement the Te Mana o te Taiao ki Whakatū / Nelson Biodiversity Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> For clarity, not the Treaty of Waitangi.

- d) Support the implementation of any other plans or strategies developed by the Forum.

## Chair

1. At the first meeting of the Forum following endorsement of the Charter and thereafter at the last meeting of each calendar year, the Forum shall elect one of its members (Signatory or Partner) as Chair for the following year. This process shall be facilitated by an immediate past Chair, or someone chosen by the Forum if no immediate past Chair is available.
2. If the Chair cannot continue in the role, the Coordinating Group will appoint an Acting Chair until the Forum can resolve the issue.
3. The Chair shall:
  - a) Lead the Forum.
  - b) Facilitate consensus processes and keep accord among the Forum.
  - c) Work with NCC staff (Forum representative and admin support) to:
    1. call meetings with notification to Members at least one week, and preferably four weeks, prior to the meeting.
    2. Develop meeting agendas (preferably to be circulated two weeks prior to meetings), take minutes, and circulate minutes, supporting papers, and presentations.
  - d) Chair meetings according to the agreed agenda.
  - e) Remain neutral and focus on meeting management.
4. The Chair may:
  - a) Make rulings on the Operating Procedures at meetings of the Forum where matters require interpretation of the procedures;
  - b) Initiate the removal of Member status from any Member for action incompatible with the Forum Charter or these Operating Procedures;
  - c) Represent the Forum in other fora.

## Coordinating Group

1. The function of the Biodiversity Forum Coordinating Group is to:
  - a) Support the Chair to identify topics of interest and develop meeting agendas
  - b) Ensure the culture of the Forum remains positive and inclusive, and that members adhere to the Charter and Operating Procedures
  - c) Facilitate resolution of breakdowns in the functioning of the Forum
  - d) Lead the development and revision of the Strategy and Charter (to make these processes efficient and ensure that Forum meetings are engaging and productive)
  - e) Align actions of Forum members

- f) Support the Chair
  - g) Maintain open communication with the wider Forum
2. The Coordinating Group shall be made up of:
    - a) The Chair of the Forum;
    - b) Representatives of tangāta whenua iwi (as guided by iwi);
    - c) 1 councillor and one staff member of Nelson City Council;
    - d) 1 DOC staff member;
    - e) Up to 4 Members elected by the Nelson Biodiversity Forum.
  3. An election for the Forum-nominated members of the Coordinating Group shall be held at the last Forum meeting of each calendar year. A request for nominations for the Coordinating Group will be sent with the agenda for that meeting.
  4. The Coordinating Group can:
    - a) Regulate its own procedure;
    - b) Make recommendations on any matter to the Forum;
    - c) Co-opt Members to fill vacancies.
  5. A Quorum of the Coordinating Group consists of four members.

## Meeting Procedure

Meetings shall be managed as follows:

- a) Meetings of the whole Forum will generally be held quarterly.
- b) Meetings are usually held face-to-face, but may be held online when needed.
- c) Half the number of total Signatories being present shall constitute a quorum.
- d) Meetings shall be chaired by the Chair or in their absence by a Member chosen by consensus of those present.
- e) Wherever possible, decisions of the Forum will be made by consensus of those Signatories and Partners present. By seeking consensus, the Forum aims to empower and incorporate all perspectives whenever possible. Consensus means by the agreement of most participants, with dissenters and abstainers agreeing to recognise the majority opinion as being the decision (i.e. to not block consensus).
- f) If consensus is not achieved after reasonable attempts and the Chair of the meeting considers a decision is necessary to further the Goals of the Forum, the Chair may call for a vote of Signatories to resolve the matter. To pass, any motion decided by vote requires at least 75% of those Signatories present and voting (not abstaining) to be in favour of the motion.

- g) The Forum may constitute working groups or committees, which will operate as directed by the Forum and will report back to the forum on their activities.
- h) Questions for decision may be put by the Chair to Signatories via email and, if no dissenting votes are received, shall be deemed to represent a consensus decision by the Forum, provided Signatories have been given at least 5 working days to respond to the question. The outcome of questions considered in this manner shall be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting.
- i) Minutes of Forum meetings shall be recorded and confirmed as correct at a subsequent meeting.

## Observers

1. Forum meetings shall be open to the public unless the Forum decides to go into closed session, which only Members may attend. Discussions at closed meetings are confidential, subject to any applicable legal requirements relevant to Members, which shall be declared to the Forum prior to the closed session, and only the topic discussed and decisions made shall be recorded in the minutes.
2. Observers are welcome in meetings. Non-members have speaking rights only if specifically recognised by the Chair.

## Conflicts of Interest

Members must declare any conflicts of interest as they arise during meetings. These should be recorded in the minutes.

## Review

The operation of the Forum, its Charter, and its Operating Procedures will be reviewed by the Forum at least once every three years.

## Changes to the Charter and Operating Procedures

Any proposed changes to the Charter and Operating Procedures shall be notified to the Forum a minimum of two weeks ahead of any full-Forum meeting, and must be approved by the Forum.