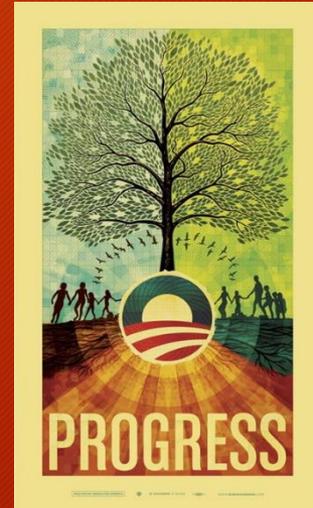

Upping the Ante: Making Real Environmental Gains in the Whau



Rachael Trotman
WEAVE LTD

Rachael.Trotman@xtra.co.nz

October 2016

table of contents

01

Purpose and process

02

Whau context

03

Shifts in
environmental
approach required

04

Best opportunities for
environmental gain

05

Messages to Whau
Local Board

06

Recommendations for
action

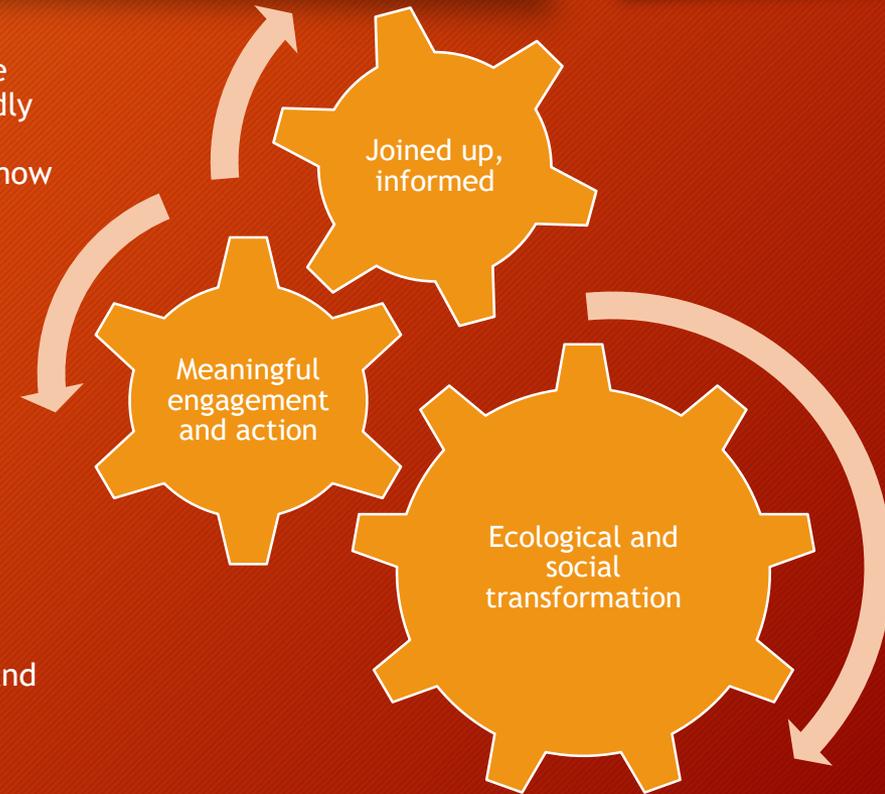
A greater difference together

The 2013 and 2015 Whau Environmental Action Reports show the range of environmental action underway in the Whau, and broadly who is doing what. Many other reports highlight local environmental conditions, issues and opportunities. It is timely now to develop for the Whau area:

- a shared understanding of environmental issues and opportunities
- clear environmental priorities
- opportunities for collaborative environmental action
- messages to the Whau Local Board on its best roles and investments to improve environmental outcomes.

This document presents the results of a process designed to identify these things.

The aim is to engage more people with the Whau environment and each other, to support ecological and social transformation.



Process

Review Information on environmental issues and priorities in the Whau



Interview Key players on best tactical approaches and actions



Workshop Findings and recommend action, socialise results



Documents were analysed and face to face interviews were undertaken with key individuals from Auckland Council and two local organisations (see Appendix One). A joint workshop with the people interviewed was held to discuss the findings and crystallise environmental priorities and recommendations for action.

Whau context

The Whau Local Board area was created in 2010 and its identity is a work in progress. The area is criss-crossed by major transport routes and much of its stunning ecology and natural beauty is hidden from view.

The Whau is one of the most culturally diverse and fastest growing areas of Auckland. Its 70,000 plus residents are 45% pakeha or European, 35% Asian, 18% Pasifika, 9% Maori and 2.5% Middle Eastern, Latin American or African*. Around 42% of the population was born overseas, most commonly from China. This fast growth and cultural mix pose both challenges and possibilities for environmental and social development.

The leadership and conditions exist for the Whau area to radically improve environmental outcomes and to pioneer new ways of doing things. It has strong local community organisations and visionaries and leaders across sectors.

This leadership and innovation is critical and urgent, because local ecosystems are struggling. Water quality in the Whau is very poor, weeds and pests dominate, biodiversity and habitat is low level, littering and dumping is an issue and environmentally friendly behaviour is not the norm.

The next page summarises the high level environmental challenges and opportunities in the Whau.

A young area building its identity

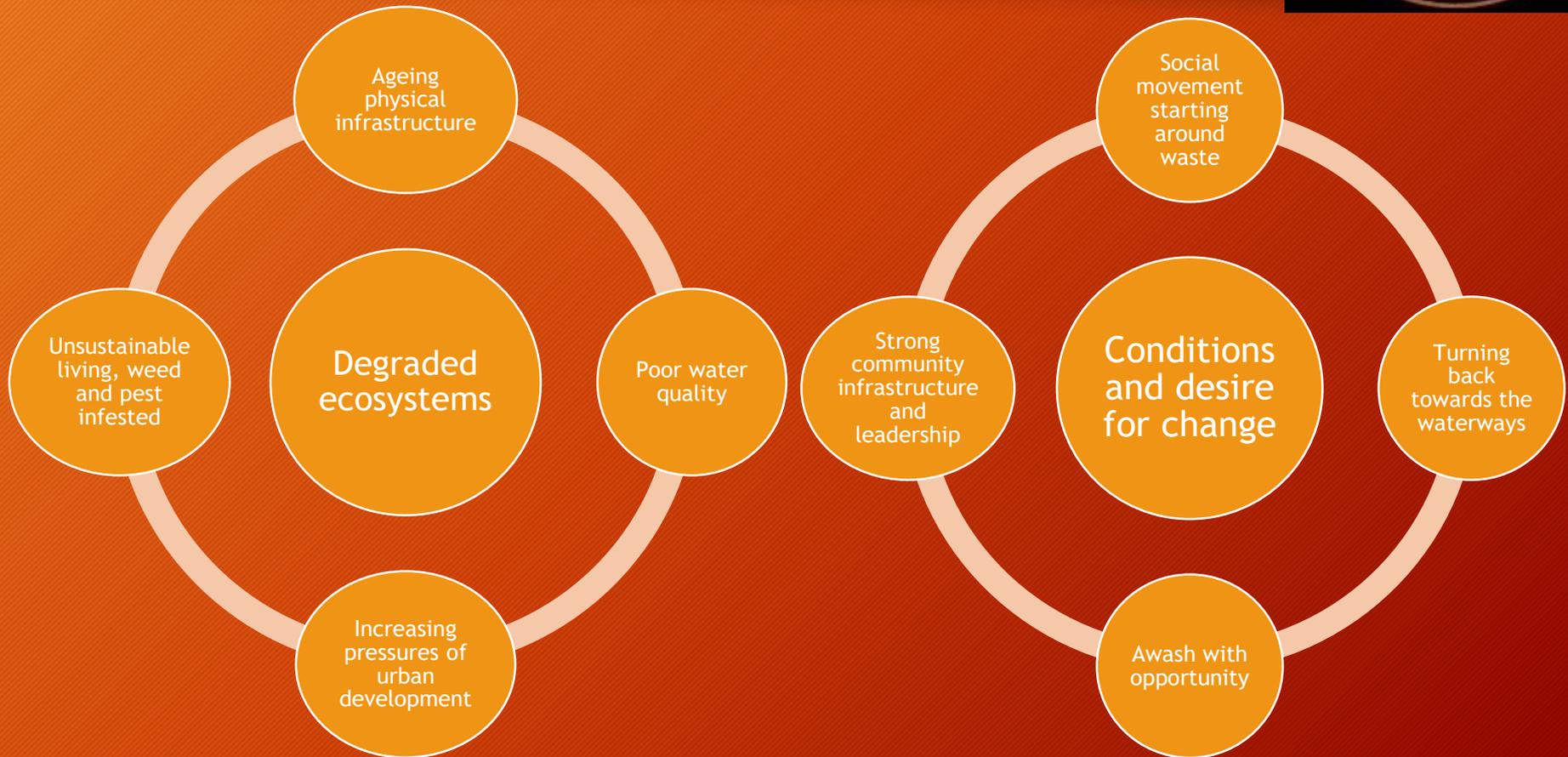
Fast growing population, culturally rich and diverse

Struggling ecosystems

Fertile ground for improvement and innovation

*See <http://stateofauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/demographic-report-card/whau-local-board-2014/>, for more on the Whau Local Board population.

Yin and yang in the Whau



Shifts in environmental approach required

CHANGE IS
GOOD.
TRANSFORMATION
IS EVEN BETTER.

The people interviewed wanted to see these shifts in environmental thinking and action in the Whau.

From this

Short term and inefficient environmental action - 'Spray and walk away'

Fragmented and scattergun

Mitigate environmental damage - bandaid, react, affirm status quo

Competitive

Usual suspects engaged in environmental action

To this

Sustained effort - ongoing maintenance, environmental work is long term

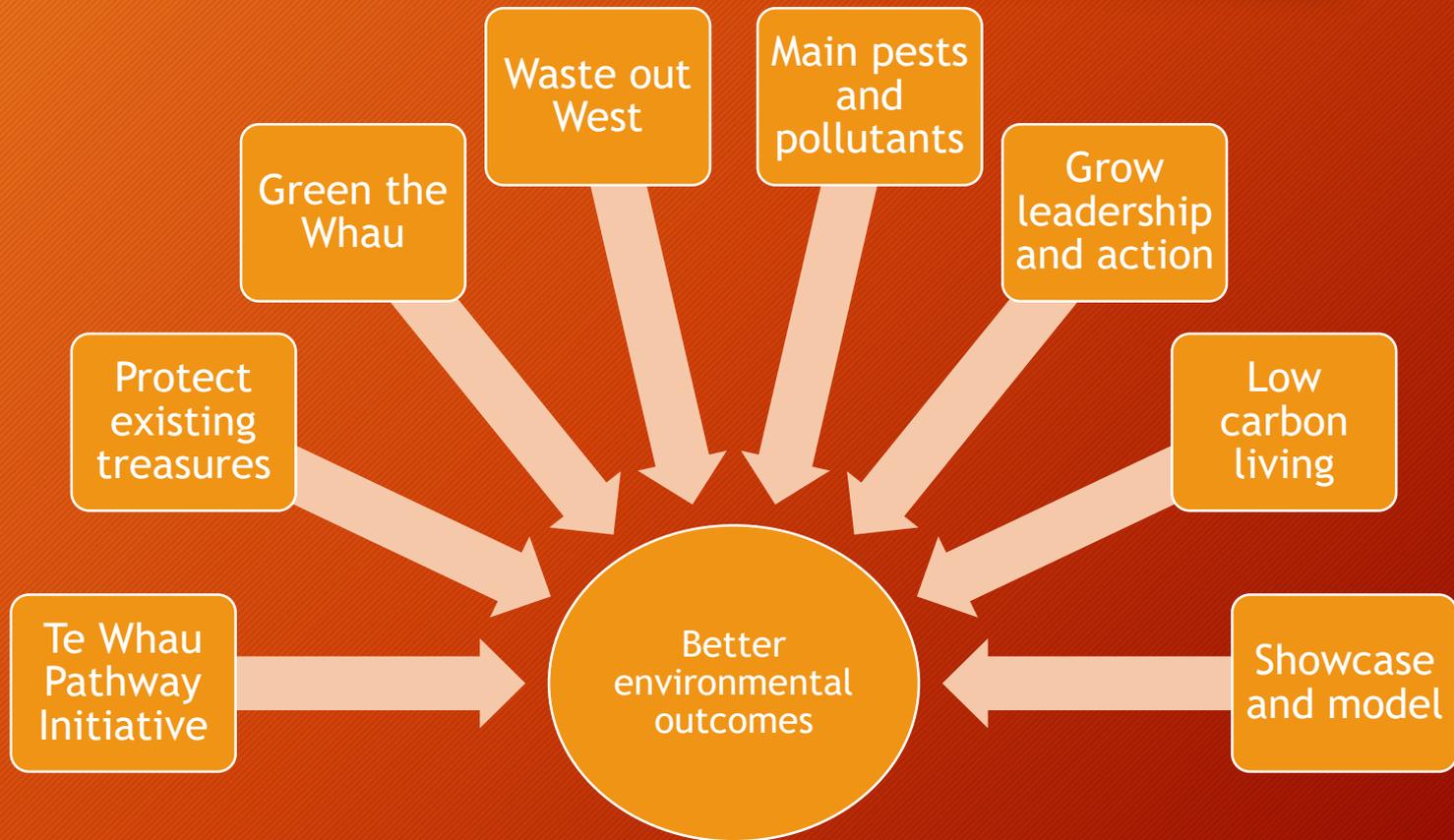
Holistic, ecosystem focus

Prevent further harm and pioneer new ways of doing things

Collaborative

Diversity of the community engaged

Best opportunities for environmental gain



Best opportunities in summary



Opportunity area	Summary
Te Whau Pathway Initiative	Develop a Master Plan and community centred approach to maximise benefits from Te Whau pathway and connect this with other ecological work in the Whau River area. Make this the focus of collective action for the next five to ten years. Done well, this will create an amazing community asset for generations to come and achieve long term environmental and social outcomes in the process.
Protect taonga/treasures	Protect and enhance the areas of highest ecological value in the Whau, especially Motu Manawa (Pollen and Traherne Islands) and other already identified high value stream and conservation sites.
Green the Whau	Develop a map and a clearly staged programme to develop green corridors through tactical native planting, combined with weed and pest control, focusing on public land. Create and strengthen native flora and fauna habitat, implement the Greenways Plan, implement street tree planting recommendations.
Waste out West	Develop a new behaviour change campaign to reduce littering, dumping and food waste, and to increase composting and community recycling, food growing, use of cloth nappies and recycling of building demolition waste.
Main pests and pollutants	Linked to all of the opportunity areas above, focus on keystone predators and noxious weeds in strategic areas, prevent and minimise industry pollution and develop collaborative approaches and campaigns around the biggest environmental challenges - cars, pests, weeds, waste.
Grow community leadership, action and diverse engagement	Focus on engaging well with Pacific, Asian, Maori and business communities on environmental issues. Understand the drivers and interests of these communities and how to work together. Take a community centred approach to environmental action in the Whau and grow community action.
Low carbon living programme	Through the engagement above, find community leaders who can motivate and help communities to lower their carbon footprint in ways that meet their needs (e.g. help save money, connect with others through car pooling, eating healthy food, warmer homes etc).
Showcase and model	Tell stories of community change, showcase what is working, pioneer new ways of doing things: e.g. influencing travel demand around schools, water sensitive design, waste free markets, sustainable design

Focus areas

“Where focus goes, energy flows.”



Te Whau Pathway Initiative



- Map the current and planned work around the Whau River, including people/groups involved
- Collectively develop, mandate and communicate a holistic, staged programme of work - a 'Master Plan'
- Resource community led coordination and engagement, working side by side with council
- Engage diverse local communities, business, schools
- Success indicators: level and diversity of engagement, funding leveraged, environmental improvements, social benefits, awareness and use of pathway

Green the Whau



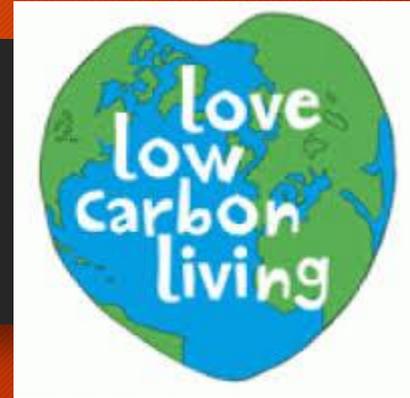
- Create a map and programme to Green the Whau:
 - Enhance existing Parks map to show exceptional areas, current green corridors, priority connections etc.
 - Focus on public land first (Parks and Biodiversity teams' prioritisation)
 - Greenways and street tree planting (see reports)
 - Te Whau Pathway planting, guided by Master Plan
 - Strengthen existing ecological taonga/treasures
 - Link to strengthening of key species (fish, birds, animals) and incorporate appropriate weed and pest control
 - Connect with the North West Wildlink
 - Identify how to progress increasing biodiversity on private land

Waste out West



- Work with the council waste team and support community led action to:
 - Reduce food waste and increase home composting
 - Support local food growing (Kai in the Whau)
 - Support zero waste markets
 - Divert construction and demolition waste from landfill
 - Support waste free parenting
 - Reduce littering and rubbish dumping
 - Promote public art, beauty and pride of place
- Utilise the Waste Minimisation Innovation Fund

Low Carbon Living



- Understand the big drivers and opportunities to lower the Whau carbon footprint (Whau Local Low Carbon Plan)
- In terms of the big drivers above, showcase 2-3 key initiatives, document and share results
- Work with diverse local communities, including local businesses to identify interests and drivers for low carbon living (e.g. saving money, warmer homes)
- From here, resource local community leaders to drive community action

Grow community action



- Create and resource a council and community leadership group for environmental change in the Whau
- Ensure group understanding of issues and opportunities
- Agree collective priorities, with measures of success that make sense to all
- Collectively steer, report on and communicate 3-4 demonstration projects (Te Whau Pathway initiative, greening the Whau, waste, low carbon living)

Messages to Whau Local Board

Important
Message

- Facilitate Te Whau Pathway being a collective priority for next 10 years
- Help make 'waste' a focus of collective action
- Green the Whau and weave art and 'bumping spaces' into the greening (placemaking)
- Promote the Whau as a mecca for walking and cycling and a cultural capital for food, leisure and horticulture
- Co-lead innovation in sustainability and low carbon living - showcase, demonstrate, experiment
- Facilitate environmentally focused networks and joining up

Most useful roles for Whau LB



- Support community to lead - council staff to focus on internal coordination, enabling, resourcing and removing barriers
- Keep investing in local organisations and leaders
- Seed fund, leverage, little bits of funding and flexible funding critical
- Strengthen support for Te Whau Pathway
- Strong internal environmental advocacy to Auckland Transport, Watercare and the Governing Body (Healthy Waters, Waste Solutions, Parks)
- Provide maps and pictures of environmental priorities
- Communicate these priorities and help fund over time

Recommendations for action

Action
Changes
Things

Actions for Whau Local Board

1. Adopt the environmental priorities on page 8
2. Resource and ensure skilful facilitation of the collaborative opportunity areas (page 10)
3. Resource production of Te Whau Pathway Master Plan and Green the Whau map, with monitoring regimes to track progress
4. Resource production of a water quality heatmap for the Whau which shows areas of low and high water quality, sources of water contamination and recommendations arising
5. Communicate environmental issues and priorities in the Whau
6. Support environmental leadership, connection and action in the Whau
7. Engage constructively with relevant council departments to action identified priorities (Waste Solutions, Healthy Waters, Auckland Transport, Watercare, Parks)

Appendix One



Documents reviewed

Environmental Services Operating Strategy, Draft 2015

Greenways Plan, 2015

Helen Reid, et al (2010), Implementation of the River Styles Framework in the Whau Catchment, University of Auckland, for Waitakere City Council

Minutes of the Te Whau Working Group

Minutes of Environmental partnership team workshop, September 2015

Presentation to Whau Local Board on the Whau Environmental Action Update, 2015

Street Tree Planting Report, 2015

Whau Environmental Action Report, 2013

Whau Environmental Action Update, 2015

Waitemata Low Carbon Community Plan, 2016

Whau Local Board briefings, agenda reports and presentations

People interviewed

Community: Tony Miguel, Gilbert Brakey (Whau River Catchment Trust), Damon Birchfield (EcoMatters Trust), Pamela Gill from EcoMatters attended the joint workshop

Council: Mark Allen (Local Board Services), Robert Sutherland, Chris Ferkins (Environmental Services), Gill Thurlow, Finn Mackesy, Hilton Furness (Sustainable Catchments), Huw Hill-Male, Helen Biffin (Parks), Pepe Sapolu-Reweti, Gail Fotheringham (Community Empowerment Unit), Jacki Byrd (Te Whau Pathway Project Lead) attended the joint workshop