

REGIONAL SECTOR BIM

THE REGIONAL SECTOR

The sixteen Regional Councils and Unitary Authorities (collectively referred to as the Regional Sector) are at the coalface of significant environmental, social, cultural challenges that have direct impacts upon the wellbeing and prosperity of Aotearoa New Zealand. These councils are:

- **Northland** Regional Council
- **Auckland** Council¹
- **Waikato** Regional Council
- **Northland** Regional Council
- **Greater Wellington** Regional Council
- **Bay of Plenty** Regional Council
- **Marlborough** District Council
- **Otago** Regional Council
- **Taranaki** Regional Council
- **Nelson** City Council
- **West Coast** Regional Council
- **Environment Canterbury**
- **Gisborne** District Council
- **Environment** Southland
- **Tasman** District Council
- **Horizons** Regional Council

WHAT WE DO

We are charged with the integrated management of natural and physical resources, regional transport planning and provision of public transport services in our regions. Specifically, this includes making decisions on:

- Discharges of contaminants to land, air or water
- Water quality and quantity
- The coastal marine area
- Soil conservation
- Land use to avoid natural hazards
- Investigating land to identify and monitor contaminated land
- Ensuring enough development capacity for residential and business land to meet expected long-term demands of the region
- Preparing regional policy statements
- Preparing regional land transport plans
- Managing and delivering public transport services

¹ Transport services are provided through Auckland Transport

- Maintaining biodiversity and biosecurity
- Maintaining flood protection and drainage infrastructure.

Together, the Sector recognises the value of collectively working together to realise:2

- **Astute regions that are empowered** to deliver on shared outcomes for central government and the Sector.
- **Transformation of the Regions** through our role as the primary managers of the nation's natural resources. We are well-positioned to act as 'agents of change' for the Government's stated outcome of transitioning the nation to a low-carbon economy.
- **Communities that are vibrant, connected, resilient** and provide access to social, cultural and economic opportunities.
- **Delivery of the broader policy objectives of central government** through our strategic and implementation capabilities.

The primary vehicle for the Sector is the Regional CEOs or 'RCEOs' group which oversees the strategic direction of the Sector, as articulated through the Regional Sector Business Plan. The Sector is supported by a network of subject-matter experts organised into Special Interest Groups or 'SIG's. The role of SIGs is to provide the RCEOs with tactical advice and expertise on a range of issues pertinent to the operation of the Sector, as well as working with central government to achieve outcomes. The SIG network also plays a vital role in championing best practice, information sharing and collaboration across councils. We are also form part of Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ).

WHAT WE OFFER GOVERNMENT

Our value to central government and New Zealand Inc. can be articulated in several ways:



Robust Relationships with iwi and hapū: The Sector has positive and productive relationships with iwi and hapū that also recognise issues unique to each individual rohe.



Close Connectiveness and Accountability to Communities: We are immersed in the issues of importance to our communities. This connectivity and intel informs our ability to effectively deliver and implement.



Skills and Expertise: The Sector is powered by a unique mix of skillsets and technical expertise including planners, project managers, land managers, engineers, scientists and IT specialists.



Convenor and Conduit role: Councils are an important point of connection between central government and multiple agencies in the Regions, thereby cutting down on transaction costs.



Advantage of Scale: Our scale both in terms of geographic coverage and legislated responsibilities and functions allows to drive central government aspirations at a regional level.



Implementation and Delivery: We bridge the gap between policy development and effective implementation and delivery on the ground.



Unified approach: We speak with one voice to government.



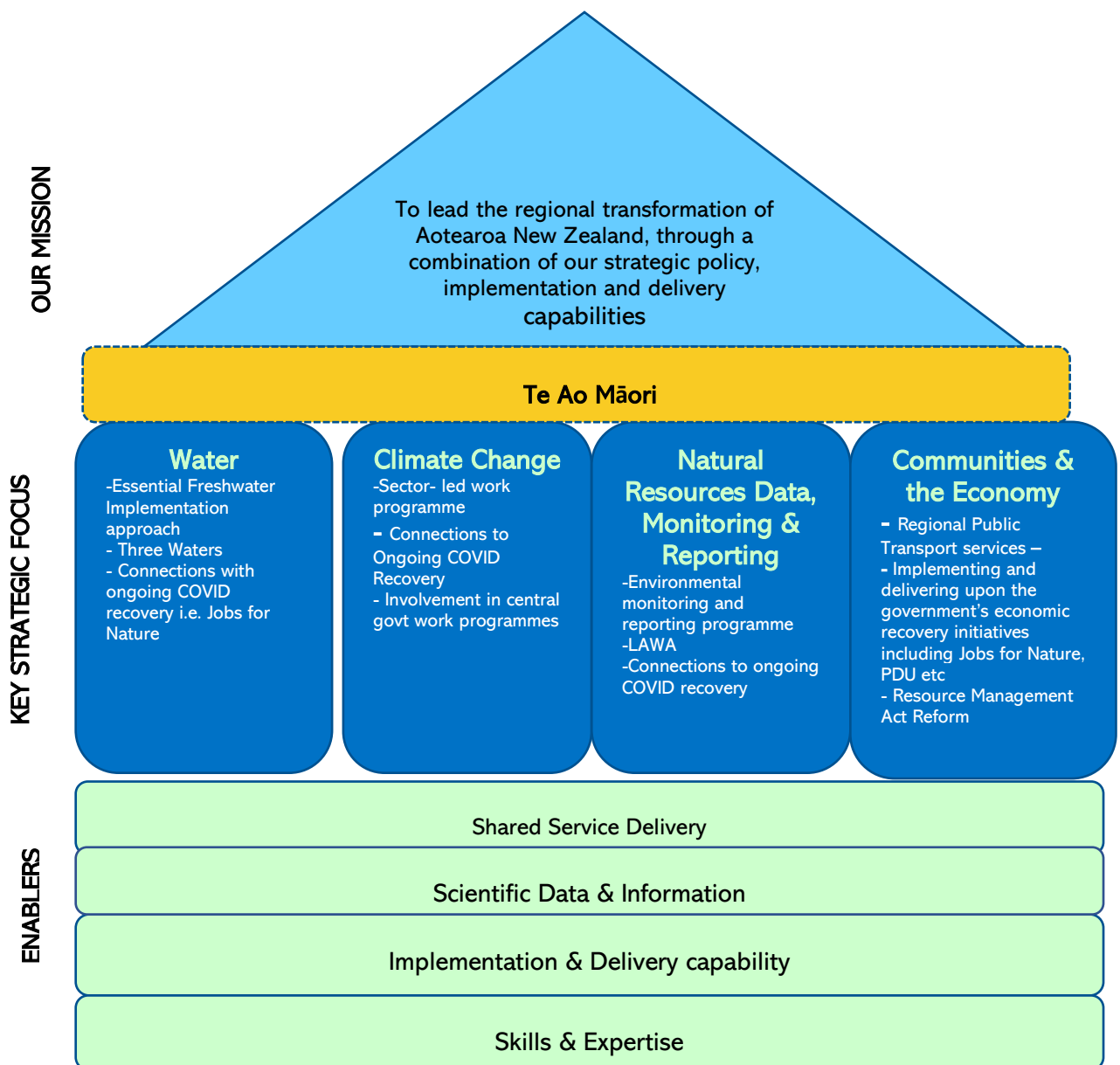
Finger on the pulse: We effectively co-design policy with central government in a manner that complements our implementation and delivery strengths.

OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Sector's overarching mission is:

To lead the regional transformation of Aotearoa New Zealand, through a combination of our strategic policy, implementation and delivery capabilities.

Our strategic approach is outlined in the following diagram:



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR THE SECTOR?

- The Sector is a trusted partner of choice for government, with a two-way exchange of knowledge, information and policy co-design.
- The Sector is recognised externally for its skills and expertise and attracts and retains high-quality talent.
- We are the 'go-to' for successful delivery and implementation of policy programmes.

- Our collective strengths are harnessed to generate efficiencies, for example through shared services.
- The Sector strategically and actively plans for the future, as opposed to operating in a reactive mode.
- The Sector has a recognisable and trusted identity with iwi and hapū, central government, communities and other stakeholders.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The following themes and challenges characterise the operating context for the Sector, along with several real-time examples of how we are responding to these challenges:

1. **Climate Change:** This is one of the most significant issues for the Sector as it pervades every aspect of our BAU, including biodiversity, transport, coastal and marine management, freshwater and natural hazards. For the Sector, there are significant opportunities to contribute towards meeting national emissions reduction targets in areas such as public transport (decarbonising our public transport fleet), and other sustainable, low carbon initiatives such as afforestation. Notwithstanding the recommendations from the Resource Management Review Panel, there is still a great deal of uncertainty currently as to who will shoulder the burden of meeting costs associated with addressing climate change. In addition to working closely with government as it formulates its responses, the Sector is also currently working on developing strategies in the form of a dedicated workstream that will outline steps for addressing these challenges in a joined-up way.
2. **COVID-19 economy recovery and response:** The Government has launched a broad range of initiatives aimed at limiting the economic damage of COVID-19. The Sector has a pivotal role to play in standing-up the quick generation of employment, through initiatives such as the Jobs for Nature programme, Provincial Development Unit (PDU) and others. Furthermore, we understand that the impacts of COVID-19 will be far-reaching, and Councils are currently recalibrating what constitutes the 'new normal'. Delivery and implementation are core strengths of the Sector; however, we recognise the need to be innovative in the way that the Sector deals with the growing pressures and demands being placed upon us by Government. A specialist working group comprised of cross-Sector experts in the fields of operational delivery and implementation has been formed and they have been charged with identifying methodologies and tools for successful delivery across all councils.

Notwithstanding the negative effect that COVID has had on the nation's economy, the Sector is fully cognisant that this presents an opportunity to consider how it responds to the challenges

with novel and innovative interventions that offer greater economic resiliency in the long term, and will drive a transformation in the regions. This includes low carbon initiatives and climate change 'smart' infrastructure.

3. **Freshwater reform:** The Sector is committed to assisting government with achieving its aspirations to clean up the country's waterways primarily through its Essential Freshwater and Action for Health Waterways package. It is recognised that the proposals pose very significant implementation challenges to councils, particularly considering the ongoing economic effects of COVID-19. In acknowledging the scale of the issues and nature of the challenge, the Sector is currently developing a Programme that will set out a detailed Sector approach to implementation. In addition, we continue to work closely with the Ministry for the Environment and other agencies in delivering upon government's broader objectives.
4. **Transport:** The Sector is responsible for regional transport planning and the provision of public transport services. Transport is the one of the biggest contributors to regional greenhouse gas emissions and regions have an important role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Ways to reduce emissions include better integrated land use and transport planning (to reduce the need to travel), the promotion of mode shift towards active and shared modes and the provision of carbon-free public transport. The Sector is working with government partners to ensure that the transport system continues to fulfil its important function as an enabler of social, environmental and economic outcomes, while aiming to reduce the need to travel.
5. **Iwi and hapū rights and interests:** The Sector is committed to growing its partnerships with iwi and hapū (including PSGE organisations) and the mutual opportunities that are afforded from forming enduring and effective relationships. The granularity of relationships at the marae/whanau/hapū and iwi level are a key strength for the Sector. At a more national level, we are mindful of the growing expectations from iwi and hapū around their desire for a broadened scope of involvement in natural resources management, and with that there are challenges for both councils and iwi/ hapū to appropriately cater for and resource this growth. This includes the unresolved and complex issue of iwi and hapū rights and interests in freshwater, and the strong desire within Māoridom for Government to address this comprehensively. Regardless the Sector is shifting from a consultative relationship with iwi and hapū to one that reflects partnership. Many councils are already reflecting this back via approaches such as co-governance, co-management and elected iwi seats at the governance table.

6. **Natural resources data, monitoring reporting:** The Sector is the critical data holder for New Zealand's natural resources, and we collect, collate and produce a significant amount of data and information. In addition to our ongoing legislative requirements under the Resource Management Act, the Sector is moving towards a more federated and consistent approach to how it collects, monitors and reports information across the sixteen councils. Added to this is an increasing appetite from the public, stakeholders and government agencies to have access to this information in real-time. To meet these challenges, the Sector is progressing with an environmental data and information programme which looks at standardising systems and addressing inefficiencies. This programme will build on the successful online LAWA (Land Water Air Aotearoa) platform.
7. **Resource Management Reform:** The Sector recognises that the Resource Management Act is no longer fit for purpose and that significant changes are required. The primary recommendation of the Review was to repeal the RMA and replace it with the Natural and Built Environments Act, Strategic Planning Act and Managed Retreat and Climate Change Adaptation Act. If progressed, these new statutes will result in wide sweeping and fundamental changes to how councils operate. The corollary to this is opportunities presented by greater clarity for councils in the areas of climate change, relationships with tangata whenua and urban planning.

The Sector is currently engaged in the following projects of importance to central government aspirations:

- ***National Climate Change Risk Assessment:*** In partnership with Ministry for the Environment, the Sector undertook three projects in Hawke's Bay, Otago, and West Coast aimed at gaining insights into community values and decisions around coastal impacts of climate change. The results of these projects informed a new policy approach that was grounded in partnership and transferred on the ground lessons to central government policy development, culminating in the country's first National Climate Change Risk Assessment framework.
- ***Sector Environmental Data Management System:*** The Sector is progressing an environmental data and information programme which looks at standardising systems and addressing inefficiencies across councils. At present, the Sector has sixteen different data management systems. This programme will create a single access point to data from these multiple sources in a consistent format. This workstream compliments the success of LAWA (Land Air Water Aotearoa), a national and public facing platform that aims to improve the public awareness of freshwater quality issues.
- ***COVID -19 Public Transport Response:*** Public transport is one of the essential services identified by the Government under the COVID-19 response. The Transport SIG have been instrumental in establishing a coordinated approach alongside NZTA and the Ministry of Transport to collaborate and deliver upon the public transport response to COVID-19. This has ensured that the public transport system can continue to operate safely for drivers and passengers.

- ***Jobs for Nature and Recovery Infrastructure CIP/PDU Flood Protection Shovel-Ready Projects Packages:*** The Regional Sector worked at pace to develop a package of shovel-ready initiatives for consideration under the Budget process aimed at generating quick employment and rebuilding the economy. Sector efforts contributed directly towards securing \$210 million of Government co-investment in flood protection works as well as \$1.3 million for the Jobs for Nature package (riparian planting, pest control, wetland restoration etc). The Sector is currently focussed on delivery and implementation of these initiatives.

NEXT STEPS

This document was designed to provide you with a high-level overview of who we are, what we do and how we can partner with Government to achieve objectives. The Sector intends to follow up by providing you with a more detailed briefing. In addition, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you.