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Submission to:
Great Barrier Island Local Board Strategic Plan

From:
Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust
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The Great Barrier Island Trust endorses the inclusion of a community consultation exercise on pest management and eradication in the Board's draft Plan. The Trust believes that after a number of years of promoting the vision of eradicating rats and feral cats, reintroducing species lost to the island, and assisting to build an eco-based economy that such a consultation process is timely and appropriate. The environment of Great Barrier is its 'bank' – the Trust's vision of building an eco-based economy maximises, through protection, the natural assets of the island.

The GBICT believes that it is imperative the Local Board addresses the need to **establish a set of objectives that ensure that the ecology of Great Barrier Island is sustained and enhanced for future generations.** The key issue towards that goal is the reduction of mammalian pests – especially rats, cats, and rabbits. This has been clearly documented in the GBICT State of Environment Report (www.gbict.co.nz). This document is the only comprehensive source of environmental planning data for Great Barrier Island.

We note that high numbers of pests currently compromise many potentially sustainable developments, especially in horticulture and local food production. There is considerable local concern over this, and recent growth in the area of pest management on public and private land (eg. Okiwi Reserve, Mulberry Grove, Glenfern Sanctuary, Motairehe, Mohunga Peninsula, and others).

Research aimed at reducing pest numbers to low levels, allowing the reintroduction of iconic bird species such as **kokako**, and ensuring the viability of threatened species already here, is supported by local Iwi and the majority of residents and rate-payers. Improvement in visitor experience of rare biota in the natural environment would have a positive feedback effect on tourism. Such a strategy would also necessarily increase capacity and skills in monitoring and

assessing outcomes, biosecurity methods and conservation management. It would support strategies to enhance population growth and be specifically directed towards engaging the younger age group.

The Trust submits that the **social, environmental, and economic** issues of the island need to be given **equal priority** in keeping with Council's governance requirements for Local Boards.

For the above reasons we suggest a further strategic target be added to the Local Board plan:

- that mammalian pests be reduced to a level allowing the re-introduction of species lost from the island (e.g. kokako in the north) and populations of existing threatened species enhanced. [The island is currently a national stronghold for pateke, kaka, kereru, black petrel, NZ dotterel and chevron skinks. These threatened species are all suffering from predation by mammalian pests].

Note that the above strategy is measurable, with specific targets and monitored outcomes.

The GBICT submits that in order to sustain the ecology and economy of the island, activity is needed in 3 areas:

1. *Improving and protecting biodiversity - pest management and eradication – the options available are constantly changing with technology and world-wide growth of experience in these fields. Private and public land must be considered together. There is a need for landowner education and participation.*
2. *Ensuring more visitors are aware of, and can access and experience, what is present on Great Barrier - this means working with DOC, Council and Tourism agencies to promote the island and manage infrastructure*
3. *Exploring how the community can develop job skills and sustainable businesses based on the above activities.*

Based on the above considerations we are presenting three fundable projects (next 3 years) linking environment and economy.

- (1). An "Issues and Options" study covering the wide issue of pests and the future ecology of Great Barrier.

Our proposed brief is a first step in an independent appraisal of community views with regard to the future ecology and economy of Great Barrier. Such a study would address possible scenarios from pest management on private and public land with specific aims and quantifiable outcomes to an island-wide eradication. Part of such a study would require thorough community consultation gathering opinions on how best to ensure that the ecology of Great Barrier is sustained and enhanced now and into the future. The consultation would also gather community attitudes and expectations about how this may be achieved. The study would identify options and would address (a) the ecological/conservation issues and options; (b) the economic implications; (c) the likely effect on the demographics of the island. It would also outline the steps involved, the costs and the possible outcomes for each option. Emphasis would

be on identification of those scenarios which provided both measurable conservation gains and positive economic and demographic outcomes.

The brief should be drawn up by a joint committee of the LB, GBICT, Iwi, DOC, Auckland City and other agreed stakeholders, but the subsequent research would be carried out by independent contractor(s) with skills in the relevant fields.

The GBI Trust offers to write the initial draft as a basis for this group to work from. The funding for such a consultation process may well be in the region of \$150,000 and this cost could be shared between the Council, the Board, the Hauraki Gulf Forum, DoC, and the GBI Trust. The consultation project could be approached as a series of stages with appropriate costings at each stage. The Board may allocate a sum for a particular stage that is commensurate with its budget and the remaining costs to be met by the other organisations.

(2). Tourism

Appointment/secondment of a research officer/company with the specific task of measuring the annual cycle of human population numbers and structure island.

A comprehensive survey of tourist numbers and profile has not been undertaken for Great Barrier since the Boffa Miskell study in 1993. The variation in the number of visitors in different months, impacts on all aspects of the island infrastructure and environment need to be addressed. Information is required from ferry operators, airlines, and rental property owners etc. Having a more detailed analysis of the demographics of the annual population cycle, form of travel - to/from/on –the island, types of accommodation required, length of stay etc. form the baseline data for economic growth. Understanding visitor numbers and motivation is fundamental to creating good tourism products. Reliable data on these topics are not currently available. Visitor numbers, economic indicators etc. are a key growth area.

(3). Building Capability in the Community

Appointment/secondment of a person with the specific task of building local skill levels in such things as facilitating and managing small local community (village) pest management projects, and monitoring and assessing species population trends (outcomes). Training people to develop environmental knowledge for guided walks, producing environmental information for locals and tourists, and managing environmental contracts, could also be part of the requirements. Growth of capacity in biodiversity management and monitoring techniques in future is likely and could be a key employment area on Great Barrier. A part time salary of say \$20,000 per annum could well meet this projects brief.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Local Board Plan process. We wish to support this submission in any hearings process to come.

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For: Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust

ADDENDUM

Suggested Environmental Programmes and Performance measures (from Local Board information and Draft Agreement 2. Auckland Council Draft Annual Plan 2011-12. p. 16.

Uncoloured: Table as presented. Yellow: Programmes mentioned in this submission.
 Pink: Programmes already partially in place. Note that this Table is incomplete and further programmes and performance measures could be inserted in collaboration with DOC, GBICT and AC.

What we do.	How we will measure success (performance measure)	How we will know if we are successful	
		GBI Local Board 2010-11	GBI Local Board Target 2011-12
Work with young people, schools and targeted communities to fund and support local environmental programmes and initiatives	Measures to be developed		
Consultation on pest management and eradication. Initiate Brief for this process	Brief prepared Consultants contracted Community engaged		Report received
Work with Local Environmental Community Groups and including Iwi and DOC, to initiate a feasibility study on the return of the kokako to GBI.	Participation agreed to by all relevant authorities and Environmental groups (Percent of groups).	Initiate	100
	Percent of ratepayers supporting this action		75
Employ contractor(s) to initiate rat and feral cat control in all local communities on Great Barrier Island	Active pest control, monitoring and data collation established in all communities.	Initiate	Program initiated in at least 3 communities.
	Percentage of ratepayers supporting this action (in each local community).		75
Work with Auckland Council Environmental Programmes (Biosecurity) to improve GBI pest biosecurity	Number of incursions by pests (Mustellids, Possums, Norway rats, Hedgehogs)	No incursions or incursions located and immediately destroyed	Zero incursions
Work with Auckland Council Environmental Programmes (Biosecurity) to prevent further spread of PTA on GBI	Number of kauri trees dying due to PTA	Numbers monitored and prevention measures in place	No further areas of infection.
Work with Auckland Council Animal Control to keep dogs off New Zealand dotterel nesting beaches during spring and summer.	Dogs restricted to dog exercise areas. Regular inspections of all beaches by animal control officers. Dotterel monitoring by DOC.	Dotterels successfully breeding again at Medlands and Okupu beaches.	Dotterels successfully breeding on all eight known nesting beaches.