

Cawthron Webinar - Q&A
NZ's Catchment and Biodiversity Groups: Goals, Activities & Needs

Webinar held on 9 March 2022

Full Cawthron report on survey results can be found here:

<https://www.cawthron.org.nz/our-news/waterways-groups-want-simpler-funding-process/>
Question Details (sorted by Topic)

#	Question	Topic	Answer (from Jim Sinner)
43	There is a strong funding emphasis on pest control and planting. There are many groups working in these areas possibly as a consequence of where the money is available. Was there any feedback from groups on other activities they wanted to do if the funding was available?	Activities	Yes, see sections 9 & 10 of our report.
63	Do you see the upcoming freshwater farm plans as a vehicle for achieving biodiversity outcomes, and consequently, an area that could receive funding at either the catchment or farm level?	Farm plans	Farm plans should definitely be a vehicle for achieving aquatic biodiversity outcomes and should also enhance terrestrial biodiversity in many cases depending on the actions taken. Eventually, these farm plans could explicitly address a wide range of environmental outcomes, eg including greenhouse gas emissions. This would help make sure that an action in one area doesn't lead to unintended adverse consequences in another area. But the perfect is sometimes the enemy of the good - we need to do this in a way that is manageable for people and not make it overly complicated.
53	Will there be more 'Jobs for Nature' funding available? This is a great initiative for all, although if it drops off then likely the good work will come undone. Smaller groups with technical advice and direction is great.	Funding future	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration. See note at end of this summary.
57	Does MfE have an appetite - alongside MPI, DOC etc - to state an explicit strategic intent to secure and deliver the longterm funding security all the catchment groups are asking for?	Funding future	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.

#	Question	Topic	Answer (from Jim Sinner)
67	As a funded group, our greatest priority is understanding what funding will follow on from JFN and the timing for any new funding. It will be disasterous for groups to lose momentum and then have to start up again.	Funding future	Thanks for your comment, which we have referred to MfE for their consideration.
59	Nga Mihi. I'm Rio, chair for the Waitangi catchment group. Adaptive managements and adaptive resources to be adjusted in the face of uncertainties as outcomes from actions and other events better understood , communitly and marae ?	Funding needs	We agree that adaptive management is appropriate in these situations of uncertainty, and that resourcing also needs to adapt as our understanding changes.
23	Thanks for this work. Did the survey explore the quantum of funds currently sourced and compare that to what groups may consider is needed to meet their objectives? Does this work provide insight into the quantum of financial support that may be needed? required?	Funding needs	We collected information on the amount of funding groups have received in the past three years, but not on the quantum they might need to meet their objectives. Given that most groups did not have specific and measureable objectives, it might be difficult to estimate how much is required to 'achieve' them.
26	Also, do we have any idea of the scale of resource required to respond to the recommendations?	Funding needs	See above
65	Has MfE done any modelling on the actual costs it takes to restore native bush. I understand that base conditions and terrain will vary. Costs will likely be higher on private land where it might be one landowner working on restoration rather than a conservation organisation with full access to council support.	Funding needs	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
71	Kaitiaki is hugely important ? Research shows that generally volunteers are mid to high economic status. How do we engage economically poorer communities when they already have an economic deficit for resources?	Funding needs	As some others have noted, we perhaps need to reconsider the extent to which we rely on volunteers and provide more funding for paid labour.
60	Will funding be distributed based on water quality? ie poor water quality trends = more funding available? Thanks	Funding needs	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.

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77	Alot of current activites such as remediation, planting & pest control seem to be responses to poor environmental decisions in the past - could funding be extended to groups who are more active in the policy/plan development space which aim to strengthen rules and improving decision-making, and thus potentially alleviating ongoing investment in repairing or restoring parts of the environment??	Funding needs	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
12	Could changes to the carbon market help fund groups? Example weed management > biochar > CDR funding (CDR=Clean Development Mechanism, one aspect of some carbon markets)	Funding process	Interesting idea, possibly could work if the group could get credit for work on public or private land, possibly through a formal agreement with landowner. Also requires recognition of weed mgmt, biochar etc as accepted mechanisms of carbon storage, and validated methods for calculating amount of carbon stored. All possible but not a quick solution.
18	What are the prospects that these recommendations will be uptaken by MfE? Funding is defintiely too small. Volunteering unfortunately is seen by policy/govt/managers as a panacea of 'free labour'.	Funding process	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
66	What is the current scope of private secor funding of groups and how do they cooperate with other funders? Is there a particular gap in funding for tools to empower groups to measure outcomes - water quailty, river health, biodiversity gains?	Funding process	We don't know what proportion of funding comes from the private sector vs public sector. It does appear that more funding is needed to support monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.
45	@Jim Sinner - First thing I took from this talk was the need for a single go-to location for funding. Not to say that funding can't be to different criteria.. but accessed in a standardised manner and predictable location with clear communication of ALL funds available. Perhaps also generic submission of intent-with the system able to match this against available funds; rather than all groups having to repeat this work individually (what a waste of human capital!!) I'm thinking something like NZ govt GETS.	Funding process	I think this would appeal to many groups. Thank you for the suggestion.

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9	Can you specify what is meant by streamlining funding processes? (seedfunding for writing applications seems like a good start, what else was suggested) or do you have suggestions?	Funding process	One idea is to have a single point of contact for central government organisations that fund community conservation, and perhaps a common application form. Multiyear funding would reduce admin costs and increase certainty for community groups.
11	Can you please expand on/provide an example of how you think the funding process could be streamlined?	Funding process	See above.
13	Thank you, timely piece of research. In relation to recommendations (the need to fund these groups) - can the insights be extrapolated to consider the question of how we fund biodiversity and conservation?	Funding process	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
75	Can you work with industry to co-fund work?	Funding process	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
24	Were there any indications from the survey as to what made the longer surviving groups "survive"? Not just related to funding or the like, but the top 3 things that ensure a group prospers. Like "trust /governance structure etc.	Group durability	The survey wasn't designed to investigate issues around the longevity or 'survivability' of groups, or the key elements for ensuring a group prospers. However, one might infer some things from answers to the question about obstacles – what's getting in the way – to which we got a wide variety of responses, as presented in the webinar and in our report. Many of these can be characterised as frustration with administrative challenges, whether it be dealing with councils; applying for, securing and reporting on funding; accessing technical support; or trying to recruit, coordinate and retain volunteers. This doesn't tell us what makes a group succeed - that might depend on the group - but does point to some of the things that are preventing them from doing more.

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68	Interested to explore 'group dynamics are holding us back'. How can we increase the capacity and capability of individuals and groups?	Group dynamics	See section 11.3 of our report about labour and capacity constraints and section 11.5 for more information on what we meant by 'group dynamics'. We don't have any simple solutions for increasing capacity and capability, though I believe some other work is being done to assess training needs.
41	Did you encounter any NGO groups and landowners working together to an integrated catchment plan to achieve a more cohesive and resilient outcome overall. Is this an angle that needs more support from govt, perhaps in conjunction with the FMU process?	Integration	Many groups told us that they are receiving non-financial support from NGOs and Māori entities (among others), though didn't say whether they are working together to an integrated catchment plan. Some government support for such planning would be useful.
28	The capacity (labour shortage) and capability issues are so key - did you ask in the survey for any suggestions from groups about how to address this? (And/or have you made recommendations for how to address this in the report?)	Labour	Some groups offered suggestions, e.g. funding for staff positions, including a paid position of volunteer coordinator.
62	Can we agree that the single most critical constraint for catchment groups is to address the reliance on volunteerism, particularly coordinator roles?	Labour	This is certainly a major issue, though it's not clear if it is necessarily the "single most critical constraint".
46	In regard to the make-up of group types, I think you mentioned that 90% of biodiversity groups were comprised of people living in towns. Do you have insight as to the land types that these groups work on ie private land, public land (reserves, parks)?	Land types	We got groups to describe the area they work on, and some replies indicate if it is public or private land but we haven't analysed the data from that perspective and I don't think the replies were consistent enough to draw robust conclusions.

#	Question	Topic	Answer (from Jim Sinner)
48	Jim were you not worried that this research might further disempower Māori? I mean this approach, Māori to be considered afterwards, seems to help entrench non-Māori values about the environment and confirms Māori are the after thought.	Māori involvement	Our survey was open to any Māori catchment group or biodiversity group who wished to participate. However, in designing the survey, we considered whether to actively seek out Māori entities such as marae or land trusts to participate in this survey. Given their much broader structure and purpose, we considered that entities such as iwi/hapū, marae, land trusts, and rūnanga merit specific additional research by Māori researchers who have a much better understanding of Māori entities than we do. Before we started the work we recommended to MfE that they should fund Māori researchers to undertake that research, and MfE agreed with our proposed approach.
58	Moana, are you confirming that Māori are afterthoughts eg the remaining funding. I am ahi kaa, not part of any of these groups. Without any funding we lobbied for 38 years to have our river rediverted through the estuary. We didn't pop up in 2019. So the research project is biased. When will you research Māori groups for their needs.	Māori involvement	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
64	Kia ora, will there be follow up with iwi to ask them what limits them in terms of working with other biodiversity groups in the community. I know of many groups that would like to work with iwi, but iwi don't have capacity to engage, and consequently the group doesn't get the funding they need. Because iwi can't engage, it makes them ineligible.	Māori involvement	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
40	Very good question [Jim suggested] to include in the Māori targetted survey MfE are considering/developing. Ngā mihi Jim me ou hoamahi	Māori involvement	Thank you for the comment. [Note: In the webinar, Jim suggested that we ask Māori entities if they are satisfied with the amount of engagement they have with local catchment groups]
25	Our group is supported by local Māori in our funding applications.	Māori involvement	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.

#	Question	Topic	Answer (from Jim Sinner)
61	What is it meant by 'participation' of iwi in catchment groups? Is it at consultation level, co-governance?	Māori involvement	We had one question about Māori membership and another about involvement or interaction with Māori entities. Beyond this, we did not ask about the nature of those interactions.
1	How many identified as Māori groups?	Māori involvement	Sorry, we didn't ask groups whether they identified as Māori.
15	Did you survey the groups district councils work with too? It would be interesting to know what barriers they face versus regional councils.	Methods	During the webinar, we referred to regional councils but it is clear from the survey that many groups work with and receive support from district and city councils. The comments about barriers often did not distinguish which councils they had difficulty with; we suspect the barriers were similar.
47	Are you happy with low survey response? Aaron Heimann Otago University had 986 responses to his 1000 conservation volunteers surveyed. Link might be useful for participants.	Methods	One would always like to have more responses, but given that we had no way to contact groups directly, we were reasonably happy with the response and consider that it provides useful insights into the wider population of groups.
37	https://www.otago.ac.nz/news/news/otago838000.html	Methods	Thank you for this link about a nationwide survey of conservation volunteers. This appeared after our survey report was completed.
51	Farm catchment groups are being suggested as a way to help farmers meet their future obligations for reporting. Would this be a completely different category of group?	Methods	We think some existing catchment groups could help farmers meet their obligations for reporting.
50	Can you remind me why MfE commissioned this research?	Methods	MfE asked Cawthron to develop a survey to find out more about catchment and community environment groups: how they are organised, what they are doing, and what support they would most benefit from.

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69	Kia ora Moana, many catchment groups have been collating monitoring data over long periods of time as part of their restoration work. They express frustration about their data not being used for policy development and guidance. Is there anything planned to create a platform for environmental citizen science data to give their data a home and allow them to contribute to wider picture?	Monitoring	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
30	Hi. Did you ask whether the groups measure success (in achieving their objective(s))? And how they measure success, or how you suggest they might do this?	Monitoring	Yes, see section 6 of our report.
16	I don't recall from the survey whether any questions were asked about monitoring results from community group work. Can you advise whether there was and, if so, what this told you.	Monitoring	See section 6 of our report.
38	Any questions around what the groups had achieved?	Monitoring	We didn't ask specific questions about this in the survey, but see section 6 of the report about monitoring.
72	What is the panel's sense of the overall efficiency or effectiveness of these different groups? How cohesive is the overall structure to ensure we get best bang for buck or effort?	Monitoring	Sorry, we didn't ask questions about this in the survey.
42	With groups identifying an advocacy focus, were you able to get a sense of how effective groups felt they were in doing this?	Monitoring	Sorry, we didn't ask questions about this in the survey.
33	For groups collecting data, Is there any information on what they are doing with the data, how it's being used and managed?	Monitoring	A number of the groups are reporting their pest control data using apps available via Predator Free NZ Trust.
56	Kia ora, great presentation, increasing the ability of iwi and hapū to engage with Catchment Groups needs more capacity yes. However, is there thought going into bulding capacity in education/training for succession and expansion?	Needs	Iwi/hapū capacity was an area that groups identified as needing support. The issue of succession was not raised often, but this could be because the question was phrased as "what's stopping you from achieving your goals?" rather than "what's worrying you"

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27	following on from a previous question - did they also cover social wellbeing?	Objectives	Among the "other objectives" of groups, there were a number of responses that could be characterised as seeking 'social well-being'. Eg "Maintain positive community spirit", "Maintaining good relationships with all who have interest in the Domain" and "Build a strong, connected, resilient community of volunteers and supporters"
73	Did any of the groups talk about educational opportunities to try and engage more of the community in these objectives or activities	Objectives	Education and community outreach were mentioned by many groups as one of their objectives, sometimes described as one of their top three environmental objectives, sometimes as "other" objectives.
35	Under nonenvironmental outcomes, did people talk about being social with other people or having fun together?	Objectives	see answer to Q27.
55	In this UN Decade of Ecological Restoration, did many groups have ecological restoration of catchments or subcatchments amongst their objectives?	Objectives	Restoration objectives feature prominently in many of the responses. For waterways groups, this was usually with reference to a catchment or sub-catchment. Biodiversity groups tended to be focused on a particular reserve or other area.
31	Were there regional differences in obstacles? or obstacles based on group's focus?	Obstacles	We have not analysed the data to assess this, partly because the sample size for most regions is probably not large enough to be representative.
29	Question to all speakers and policy makers etc....What volunteering are you doing for biodiversity yourself (not through your 'job' or as 'work' at present)?	Personal activity	For nearly 20 years, I (Jim) coordinated a group of volunteers doing citizen science, water monitoring in a small river near Nelson. My voluntary work now is mostly through my involvement in Rotary, with whom I organise an annual nature walk and rubbish cleanup along Nelson's Boulder Bank reserve.

#	Question	Topic	Answer (from Jim Sinner)
8	Re resourcing constraints: this is not a problem per se, it is more about priorities. And to be fair to the councils etc, there is huge policy churn sucking up the resources of govt agencies, councils, CRIs etc. Given the enormous goodwill and opportunity out there - maybe 1000 groups on the ground now and room for more - is it time for us to prioritise implementation, the action on the ground. Could we boldly consider a five year moratorium on environmental policy churn and see where we are then????	Policy change	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
22	Who are the recommendations made for? and what is the process to achieve/monitor delivery of these recommendations?	Recommendations	The recommendations are for MfE (and other government agencies) in the first instance, but hopefully of interest to a wider audience. Eg there may be sector groups that are able to help.
21	How are we going to get agencies to take onboard this feedback and implement change? At the Predator Free NZ Trust we commissioned research in 2018 which found similar outcomes for predator control groups. We've had very little success in getting any movement or change from lead agencies. Interested in your thoughts.	Recommendations	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
36	Thank you for a very informative webinar. Do you know what MfE will do now that they have all this information. Will they take your recommendations on board? What will the impact of your study be?	Recommendations	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
20	Of your four recommendations, just clarifying whether the second relates to labour alone or is also related to the fourth, regarding technical skills or expertise?	Recommendations	The second recommendation has broad coverage - where do these skills exist across NZ and how can they be connected to community groups. The fourth recommendation in contrast was specifically about how can we enable technical expertise within these types of organisations to serve community groups. So, the fourth recommendation is more specific than the second.

#	Question	Topic	Answer (from Jim Sinner)
32	<p>Not a question but a comment on my general observation.</p> <p>There are some very successful groups that run with a good volunteer base and others that struggle. Perhaps there could be a central organisation that could help struggling groups with their organising and perhaps help set up a structure for them.</p>	Support	Thank you for the suggestion
82	<p>Are you aware of the pilot fund DOC is administering for Community Conservation hubs supporting groups in their region? This is a useful model to look at and consider longer term support for/expansion in our view. Many of us are working to address a number of the issues your study has highlighted like funding and administration challenges for groups. Thanks for your time.</p>	Support	Thank you for the comment
49	<p>There are several biodiversity 'hubs' around the country that provide admin support to groups (Tasman Env'tl Trust is one). Did you get a sense as to how well this approach is working for groups?</p>	Support	We didn't ask about this in our survey but there is a report from the BioHeritage National Science Challenge that looked at this, and further work is being planned.
54	<p>Moana, has MfE engaged with Thriving Southland (MPI funded) to see how their province-level umbrella model helps subcatchment groups to overcome obstacles?</p>	Support	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
74	<p>Was a lack of access to information and interpretation of information through relevant experts an issue for many groups?</p>	Support	Yes, see section 11.3 of our report.
17	<p>Can you please elaborate more on the technical expert inputs these groups are looking for?</p>	Support	Yes, see section 11.3 of our report.
44	<p>Can we see the orange lines slide again please?</p>	Year established	Figures inserted at end of this summary; see also p.15 in report

#	Question	Topic	Answer (from Jim Sinner)
39	1. Do you think it is acceptable for regional council managers to prioritize politics over scientific evidence, compliance monitoring, and enforcement? 2. Do you think it is appropriate for water users/polluters to influence who gets funding? Dr Peter Trolove NZFFA	Comment	Thank you for your comment.
70	I can see that is biased against a Māori approach to the environment, ref: values, policy, relationships and who is empowered.	Comment	We have referred this question to MfE for their consideration.
80	NZFFA has been conducting its own freshwater quality monitoring in central Canterbury since August 2019. Our data on nitrate levels in groundwater and aquifer-fed rivers and streams is showing levels and trends of greater concern than Ecan data posted on the LAWA website. Why are our results diminished as "citizen science" when our calibrated Trios sensor is equivalent to Ecan's?	Comment	Thanks for your comment. Your question is perhaps best asked of ECan.
52	Kia Ora Moana	Comment	kia ora. Nga mihi mahana.
78	Thanks Jim. Compliments to MfE on funding this work.	Comment	Thank you for your comment.
79	Mauri Ora ! need more time to short ka pai . read this still need some work !	Comment	Thanks for your comment.
81	Thank you! This is very interesting and useful informatio	Comment	Thanks for your comment.
34	Were the groups involved in	Comment	Question is incomplete.
2	Why are Māori not considered part of the community?	Answered live	Answered during webinar
3	re the distinction between water and biodiversity groups - do you mean land based biodiversity?	Answered live	Answered during webinar
4	Were economic outcomes mentioned for group outcomes in addition to environmental or biodiversity outcomes?	Answered live	Answered during webinar
5	How were biodiversity groups defined?	Answered live	Answered during webinar

#	Question	Topic	Answer (from Jim Sinner)
6	Is the situation with funding likely to better or worse due to Covid? e.g. due to reduced government agency budgets	Answered live	Answered during webinar
7	Were there any further enquiries into the nature of interactions with iwi/Māori eg. what was the scope of any interaction. For instance one end of spectrum could be that we left a message to we have ongoing hui and share priorities etc., and how do we know if interactions were positive?	Answered live	Answered during webinar
10	Thanks for the great presentation. Jim, in an early slide you had the orange lines showing different versions of the NPSFM overlaid against the set up date of catchment groups. Were there other features of the survey that allowed you to intuit their establishment in response to the NPSFM, or is it solely the time correlation?	Answered live	Answered during webinar
14	What scale were these groups focussed on. Eg whole rivers like the Manawatu or whole mountains like Mangatoutari. what determined their scale?	Answered live	Answered during webinar
19	Jim I'm interested in your views on how the business of catchment groups have been (or ought to be) affected by the requirement to give effect to Te Mana o te Wai. Seems to me it requires a more systemic commitment to working in partnership rather than in silos. Thanks	Answered live	Answered during webinar

The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) has advised Cawthron that, regarding the four key recommendations and the questions referred to the Ministry:

1. Management and staff will discuss to agree appropriate responses and actions within MfE
2. MfE will facilitate discussions with other agencies on how we can better work together to address the issues raised going forward
3. Actions and responses will be shared on the Ministry's website, with Cawthron and webinar participants in April 2022.

Question Topic Answer (from Jim Sinner)

Number of groups established in each year

