

L 8 Restoring Biodiversity on a Regional Scale

I support this project through lobbying for its continuation and working on various projects that are part of the whole vision.

The Hamilton Halo Project

Before European settlement in 1840, the Waikato region was covered in native vegetation (except for open water and areas of bare lava or permanent snow and ice). Today we have only 1.6% of our wetland areas left and 26 per cent of our region remains in native vegetation.

Hamilton, the major city in the region (population 140,00) is surrounded by a ring of this native vegetation covering old volcanic cones etc but very little of it actually remains within the city boundary. The Hamilton Gullies Project and the Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park project are part of an effort to bring birds back into the city by engaging in biodiversity restoration and pest (rats, possums, cats, mustelids) control.

Hamilton Halo combines the scientific expertise and efforts of many groups as project partners. It is co-ordinated by the Waikato Regional Council's Natural Heritage group with Landcare Research as a senior project partner which conducts and shares research related to the project. The project is supported by the Department of Conservation, Hamilton City Council, Weedbusters and Tui 2000 Inc, a Hamilton-based environmental group involved in the restoration of Maungakawa Scenic Reserve, a Hamilton Halo key site.

This project is typical of many combined efforts in our region. Lobbying politicians to keep the project in good heart, funding support, and volunteer effort in planting and pest control: we all have a role and believe the desired outcome is worth the toil. It is a co-ordination exercise like many carried out in NZ. We don't seem to act alone on a project. Networking and building eco-partnerships continues to evolve and flourish amongst those who see New Zealand as having a unique biodiversity value and believe future generations should enjoy the benefit of such wealth.

