Environmental Protection Policy

Vision
All aspects of te taiao - the natural world - are protected and regenerated so they can thrive for all time.

Summary
We will implement holistic, enduring solutions for restoring and protecting the unique biodiversity and ecosystems in Aotearoa New Zealand. This policy document outlines these solutions through a lens of Ngā Atua - the gods.

Values and Principles
Environmental policies must align with the following values and principles:

- Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi: Tangata whenua hold a key role as leaders and kaitiaki with valuable mātauranga Māori. All whānau, hapū and iwi should have their tino rangatiratanga implemented under Article II of Te Tiriti in implementing their own best practices with regards to environmental protection.
- Ecological Wisdom: We must recognise the interdependence of humans and the natural world. Papatūānuku should not be viewed as a resource: We must respect our place within the ecosystems we rely on. Prioritising ecological sustainability and regeneration is vital.
- Social Responsibility: Access to environmental justice must be equitable: empowering communities and enhancing the wellbeing of all people. Overconsumption must be prevented: future generations should not be burdened with a lack of resources.
- Appropriate Decision Making: Environmental decision-making should be inclusive, transparent, led by those disproportionately affected and Māori as kaitiaki, and use both mātauranga Māori and Western science.
- Non-Violence: Violence towards the environment must be prevented, with comprehensive methods for monitoring, managing and sustaining ecosystem health. Impacts of environmental damage or its mitigation should not fall disproportionately on marginalised communities.
- Future Thinking: Long-term thinking is a key consideration in the guardianship of te taiao. Environmental protection must equitably meet the needs of both present and future generations, as well as the needs of wider ecosystems.
- Interconnectedness: Ki uta ki tai - from the mountains to the sea. Environmental management requires integrated management of terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.
Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

“All native species and their habitats will be thriving or on a path to recovery in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments.

Our laws and practices will respect the biological integrity of all life, while prioritising the health of indigenous species and ecosystems.

The customary and decision making roles of whānau, hapū and iwi will be integral to decisions about resource use.

Decision-making about resource use will provide for community participation and environmental justice.”

Actions in this policy that will help achieve this include:

1.2 Move away from exploiting the environment for the economy, and towards a circular economy.

2.2 Protect and restore populations of native species to ensure healthy ecosystems, access to these species for the purposes of tikanga Māori, and resilience to a changing climate.

5.1 Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi by resourcing tangata whenua to exercise tino rangatiratanga as kaitiaki, including through the return of land.

5.6 Resource youth-led research on environmental issues, and protect and restore the environment for future generations.

6.6 Implement and strengthen measures to rapidly reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions.

Connected Policies

Our Freshwater, Land and Soil, Conservation, Marine Environment, and Waste and Toxins Policies sit alongside this policy. Environmental policy is also found throughout our policies. We encourage the reader to also consult the following policies: Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Climate Change, Economic, Energy, Housing and Sustainable Communities, Research, Science and Technology, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and Transport.

Policy Positions

1. Papatūānuku

Human beings cannot exist without Papatūānuku: Our wellbeing depends upon the wellbeing of Papatūānuku as a living entity, not a resource. Despite this, our economic and other human systems are based on the extraction and consumption of the natural world for profit, and economic growth models ensure that the resulting losses are accelerating. At the heart of this problem is disconnection from and dominance over the natural world in Western culture, a mindset which is reflected in our decision-making systems in Aotearoa New Zealand. We strive to live in a system with a thriving Papatūānuku, who supports the health and mauri of us as her children.

Actions
1. **Uphold everyone’s right to have a relationship with te taiao, including:**

1.1. **Affirm Article II of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, by upholding the tino rangatiratanga of iwi, hapū and whānau as kaitiaki.**

1.1.2. **Ensure access to healing and healthy natural environments that support our own health and wellbeing (see our Health Policy).**

1.2. **Move away from exploiting the environment for the economy, and towards a circular economy (see our Economic and Waste and Hazardous Substances Policies), including:**

1.2.1. **Only engage with mining where it is essential for upholding environmental, social and cultural wellbeing and is limited to materials that are required for our transition to a just and sustainable circular economy (see our Mining Policy).**

1.2.2. **Prohibit new fossil fuel prospecting, exploration and mining permits and phase out existing extraction (onshore and offshore) (see our Mining Policy).**

1.3. **Develop a set of core environmental indicators, with meaningful tipping points and limits that are grounded in mātauranga Māori and Western science that can be used to track progress on improving the New Zealand Environment.**

1.4. **Support agricultural practices that protect and restore ecosystems (see our Agriculture and Rural Affairs Policy).**

2. **Tāne Mahuta**

The marae of Tāne Mahuta includes the forest and the creatures who call it home. We are currently experiencing a biodiversity crisis, linked to colonial views of the earth as a resource. Our native flora and fauna of Aotearoa New Zealand are a taonga, protected under Article II of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and are under threat. As Tāne Mahuta climbed to the twelfth heaven, seeking out the three kete of knowledge, we too are on a journey to ensure our future generations are equipped to restore and protect te taiao.

**Actions**

2.1. Implement recommendations of Ko Aotearoa Tēnei Waitangi Tribunal (WAI262) report.

2.2. Protect and restore populations of native species to ensure healthy ecosystems; access to these species for the purposes of tikanga Māori, and build resilience to a changing climate (see our Conservation Policy).

2.3. Protect and increase indigenous forests, and sustainably manage our plantation forests (see our Forestry Policy).

2.4. Include education on Te Mana o Te Taiao in the New Zealand Curriculum that challenges the current colonial system of the environment being used for resource exploitation and promotes a holistic, connected, restorative relationship with Papatūānuku. (see also our Education Policy).

2.5. Resource research and development that contributes to environmental protection and restoration (see our Research, Science and Technology Policy).

2.6. Resource the preservation and expansion of practices contributing to environmental health, such as those found in mātauranga Māori.
3. **Tangaroa**
The marae of Tangaroa includes the oceans, as well as the rivers, lakes and wetlands and the creatures who call them home. Our oceans, waterways and wetland ecosystems are being polluted and destroyed, and this continues at an alarming rate. Tangaroa gives us wai māori: without this, we cannot survive (see our [Freshwater](#) and [Marine](#) Policies).

4. **Rongo and Haumia-tiketike**
The marae of Rongo includes kai (food) cultivated from the ground, while the marae of Haumia-tiketike includes gathered and uncultivated kai. Current colonial land use systems are focused on individual property "rights" which operate at the expense of ecosystems and communities. In order for Papatūānuku to thrive, kai collection and cultivation must be sustainable (see our [Land Use and Soils](#), [Agriculture and Rural Affairs](#), [Food](#), and [Marine](#) Policies).

5. **Tūmatauenga**
The marae of Tūmatauenga includes the relationships between peoples, the pursuit of ecological protection and agreements between nations. Tūmatauenga teaches us to listen and respect one another and te taiao. The issues discussed in this policy are threats to the wellbeing of future generations of people and other species. The long-term future is discounted at the expense of short-term gains in our political and economic systems, and many voices remain unheard.

**Actions**

5.1. Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi by resourcing tangata whenua to exercise tino rangatiratanga as kaitiaki of Aotearoa, including through the return of land (see our [Tiriti o Waitangi](#) Policy).

5.2. Support environmental and climate action led by and centred around Indigenous leadership, and relationships between tangata whenua and tagata moana (see our [Tagata Moana](#) Policy).

5.3. Resource community-led environmental initiatives focused on the protection and restoration of the environment.

5.4. Promote community access to greenspace, protect and restore nature in our cities, protect the rural-urban boundary and valuable food growing soils and mitigate green field development (see our [Housing and Sustainable Communities](#) Policy and [Local Government](#) Policy).

5.5. Ensure that environmental management is integrated and consistent across legislative and administrative boundaries (for example, between the boundary of the coastal marine area and the exclusive economic zone).

5.6. Resource youth-led research and advocacy on environmental issues, and protect and restore the environment for future generations (see our [Youth](#) Policy).

5.7. Strengthen agreements concerned with the ecological health of the global commons, including the oceans, soils, forests, air and biodiversity (see our [Global Affairs](#) Policy).

5.8. Support stronger compliance, monitoring and enforcement regimes to prevent and penalise environmental harm.

5.9. Explore and support the criminalisation of 'ecocide' within New Zealand domestic law and a Te Tiriti o Waitangi context.
5.10. Support the use of restorative justice practises to address harm to both te taiao and human wellbeing, including the disproportionate harm to tangata whenua.

5.11. Support amending the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to recognise ecocide\(^1\) as a crime.

5.12. Recognise the ecological foundations of mass displacement (e.g. climate change-related displacement), including that exacerbated by conflict, and facilitate cooperative approaches to address this (see our [Defence and Peacekeeping](#) and [Immigration](#) policies).

5.13. Ensure appropriate, accurate, consistent and publicly-accessible measures and tools are used for state of the environment reporting at a local, national and international level.

6. **Ranginui and Tāwhirimātea**

The marae of Ranginui includes our atmosphere, and the marae of Tāwhirimātea includes the air. They are found together in this policy as we often experience them in the world: A reminder of Tāwhirimātea’s love for his father when Ranginui and Papatūānuku were separated. Atmospheric pollution impacts all ecosystems, including human health, resulting in less quality of life and an increased demand on the health system. Light pollution creates a barrier for everyone to connect with te taiao, including the night sky, and for tangata whenua to connect with their tikanga. Te Kahu o Ranginui, the sky, and the winds of Tāwhirimātea are ever present in our lives. We will:

**Actions**

6.1. Support natural climate systems that maintain a healthy atmosphere.

6.2. Reduce all air pollutants and eliminate where possible.

6.3. Facilitate a transition to clean transport options, including on land, at sea and by air (see our [Transport](#) Policy).

6.4. Introduce controls for fine particulate matter.

6.5. Increase and protect dark sky reserves while supporting research and development for efficient light technologies that minimise contribution to light pollution.

6.6. Implement and strengthen measures to rapidly reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions (see our [Climate Change](#) policy).

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\(^1\) As defined by the Independent Expert Panel for the Legal Definition of Ecocide (June 2021): [https://www.stopecocide.earth/legal-definition](https://www.stopecocide.earth/legal-definition)