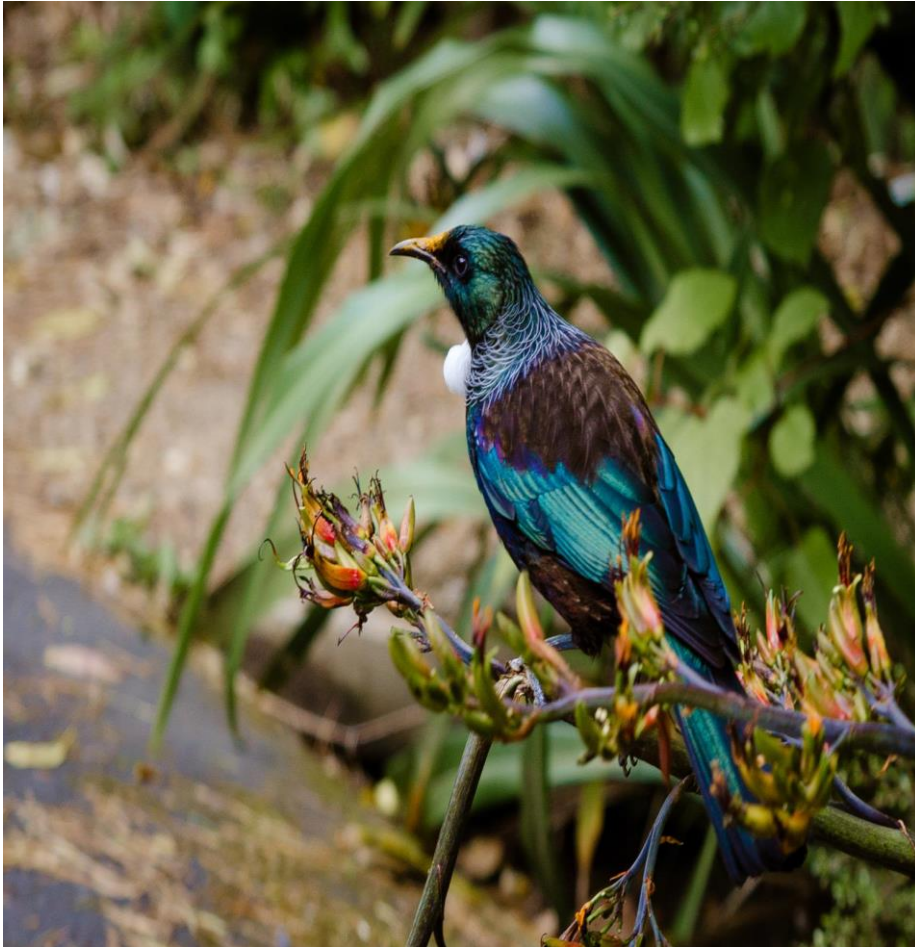


# Waiheke Rat Eradication Social Research Report

Prepared for Te Korowai o Waiheke

Prepared by Beca Limited



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## Conclusions

This social research report has outlined the potential positive and negative social impacts arising from the eradication of rats from Waiheke Island and has identified measures that may impact the social licence to do so. A range of sources has been drawn upon to identify these potential impacts, including interviews, surveys, and focus groups with the Waiheke community, conversations with technical specialists involved in rat eradication and/or biosecurity, and a review of literature and case studies on rat eradication.

The social research has identified a number of key themes regarding rat eradication, including the following:

### *Support for and knowledge of rat eradication*

- The Waiheke community has a good understanding of the difference between rat control and rat eradication, but less understanding of what the implications of rat eradication and ongoing biosecurity/monitoring practices would be for their day-to-day lives.
- There is widespread support for the concept of removing rats from Waiheke Island – but also a degree of scepticism about whether island-wide rat eradication (and maintaining this rat-free status into the long term) is actually feasible.
- People do not anticipate needing to make many changes to their daily lives as a result of rat eradication or long-term biosecurity/monitoring efforts. Technical specialists and literature indicate that changes are likely to be required.

### ***Potential social impacts***

- The potential social impacts relating to the outcomes of rat eradication (i.e. the impacts of Waiheke being rat-free) are predominantly positive and will likely occur on a permanent/sustained basis. These could include improvements to people's quality of environment and a boost to Waiheke's reputation.
- Rat eradication and biosecurity measures, however, may give rise to some potential negative social impacts, such as changes to people's routines and privacy impacts. Some of these impacts will likely be temporary, while others will be sustained.
- Many of the changes required of people (particularly those relating to biosecurity) will need to be permanent in order to keep the island rat-free. The public buy-in will need to be sustained on a long-term basis to ensure that compliance continues on a permanent basis.
- Traps and bait stations are the preferred methods amongst the community.

### ***Community engagement and Buy-in***

- Interactions with the field team have been one of the most commonly reported positive aspects of the operational pilot; these interactions have helped people to understand what is happening and stay interested and engaged.
- Community buy-in could be impacted by a number of factors including the perceived feasibility and value of rat eradication, the methods used in rat eradication, and people's trust in the organisation leading the rat eradication.
- Most people are interested in supporting rat eradication by hosting traps or bait stations on their property; there are lower levels of interest in more active ways of being involved such as donating, assisting with monitoring, or removing existing food sources from properties.
- Recommended measures to mitigate negative impacts and build social licence include maintaining regular, transparent communication with the community, working alongside existing community organizations, and providing plenty of notice before accessing private properties. TKOW are already engaging in many of these measures and as such it is recommended that they continue each of these measures and also consider how best to make the wider community aware of this.
- There appear to be some misunderstandings or information gaps around what TKOW is currently doing well / could do better; for example, people were keen to see TKOW offering jobs and volunteer opportunities to locals before hiring off-island contractors – this is already something that is prioritised by TKOW.