

2025/26 Annual direction

Chatham Islands Landscape Restoration Trust



July 2025



Chatham Islands
Landscape Restoration Trust
Restoring nature's gifts.

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Cover Image: Restoration planting at Blind Jims.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the Chatham Islands Landscape Restoration Trust's strategic direction and priorities for the year 1 July 2025-30 June 2026.

This will

- provide staff, trustees, and partners with a clear understanding of our direction
- guide our Trust's work, including the development of a more detailed workplan
- allow us to approach partnerships and funding in a targeted, strategic way
- put the Trust in the best possible position to ensure the future sustainability of its work and mission.

Introduction

Background of the Trust

The Trust began in 2019 as the Chatham Islands Landscape Restoration Working Group, a group of islanders brought together to explore the potential for a landscape-scale restoration project for the islands. This was driven by the opportunities presented by One Billion Trees and Predator Free 2050, and was spearheaded by the Department of Conservation and Predator Free 2050 Limited.

Predator Free Chathams project was established as the group's flagship project, with a long-term goal of eradicating possums, feral cats and rats from main Chatham. It's supported by other restoration- and community-focused work and big picture aspirations. Mandated representatives from both Hokotehi Moriori Trust and Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri Iwi Trust sit on the board to ensure alignment and connection with imi and iwi goals.

In 2021 a 1FTE Predator Free Coordinator was appointed to lead community-based engagement and other project work, and a Communications Lead and Project Support was brought in part-time in late 2023. The Trust was formally established as a legal charity in 2024 and currently has 1.4 FTE staff and six trustees.

The Trust's work, including Predator Free Chathams, is about more than just biodiversity – it's about the future sustainability for Aotearoa's most remote community. This is built into the Trust's Strategy. The importance of Predator Free Chathams and landscape scale habitat restoration is also identified in the Chatham Islands' Investment Strategy 2024-2027 as priorities for investment on the island.

Predator Free Chathams has begun, with a pilot area identified and 138 traps put out in this area as of May 2024. This has mostly been done by Trustees and a few locals volunteering time, along with the Coordinator. It's estimated over 500 more traps will be needed to fill this network, and there is more planning and fieldwork needed to get the pilot into full swing off the back of a feasibility study.

The Trust is also talking with the community about a Pitt Island feral cat removal project, and is supporting research and restoration projects that will benefit the islands.

What we've achieved so far

We achieved a lot considering the Trust so far has run on under two staff, the volunteered time of Trustees, support from key partners over the last years.

Our key successes include:

- Engagement with landowners, the local community, and imi/iwi to establish there is social license to undertake Predator Free Chathams
- Undertaking a project selection exercise with community, imi/iwi, and technical experts to determine the best area to complete a pilot study project for proof of concept. This area was northeast main Chatham
- Completing a Technical Feasibility Study for the removal of possums and feral cats from the pilot area, which determined that it was possible
- Gaining landowner consent to carry out the pilot of Predator Free Chathams
- Beginning to set up a trapping network in the pilot area to start the 'knock down' phase
- Establishing the Trust as a legal Charity in Aotearoa
- Supporting on-island initiatives, including establishing community and backyard trapping groups, educational school programs including supporting the annual school camp, subsidising the microchipping of cats, participating in the Festival of Science, and supporting the Pig Hunting Competition
- Securing \$789,000 through partnerships and grant applications, and \$28,800 through donations and fundraising.
- Building an ever-growing online presence that has raised awareness of the Chathams and the Trust's work and helped to build a network of supporters
- Partnered with Maukahuka/Auckland Island, Rakiura/Stewart Island, and the Department of Conservation to form Aotearoa's pledge into the international Island-Ocean Connection Challenge.

[Read our Annual Report 23/24](#)

Strategy and Priorities

Our Strategy

Our Strategy, reviewed February 2025, sets out the Outcomes we want to achieve. These are:

Our islands' biodiversity is thriving.

1. The korowai is restored across the islands.
2. The seabird-driven ecosystem is flourishing.
3. Our unique species and natural ecosystems are prospering.

Our society has nature at its heart.

4. We have robust conservation capability and capacity that carries through to future
5. generations.
6. The islands are more resilient to climate change.
7. We share knowledge and have strong, collaborative relationships.
8. Our social ecosystem is aligned with our natural ecosystem.
9. The abundance of species allows for harvesting and for the continuing revival of cultural practices.

There are four key actions in our approach to achieve these outcomes:

1. Pest control and introduced predator eradication.
2. Restoring and protecting habitats and ecosystems.
3. Bringing conservation and nature into all facets of our islands' community.
4. Collaborating with and empowering others.

[Read our full Strategy.](#)

Our key challenges

The pilot phase of Predator Free Chathams could be fully operational in the next financial year.

As well as being a key step for the Chatham Islands community's goals, it is an essential phase in meeting the Island Ocean Connection Challenge pledge for the Chathams and, through research and learnings, the other two signatory islands.

With strong community support and good momentum, it is important to ensure the Trust's work can continue and expand. There is a risk the project will collapse without funding, creating an even more serious risk to the ability to carry out conservation work on these biodiversity-rich islands in the future.

We see two main challenges right now:

- **Staffing.** We do not have enough staff resource currently to sustain our current level of work (including baseline/Business As Usual work) over a prolonged period, and certainly not enough for the pilot of Predator Free Chathams to become fully operational. In early phases

it is important to have staff with existing skills and context to set things up well to scale the project, where there is broader opportunity for upskilling and development.

- **Funding.** A change in the economic and political landscape since 2019 has led to a reduction in available grant funding and higher competition for what is available, as well as a limit to other previously available in-kind support. It can also be challenging to find funding for BAU. An additional challenge lies in being a small, remote community; the Chatham Islands has historically struggled to find support and funding many other mainland communities receive.

Priorities

Based on our Strategy and these core challenges, the top priorities for the Trust this coming financial year are:

1. **Secure resources to ensure the Trust can continue to operate, and in an ideal world to grow.** This includes securing baseline funding for fundamental roles that will provide the Trust with expertise and position it to grow as an organisation.
2. **Identify knowledge gaps** and any plans or documentation that might be holding us back.
3. **Leverage and grow partnership opportunities**, including those through the Island-Ocean Connection Challenge.
4. **Continue to service and grow the trapping network in the pilot area** of Rēkohu/Wharekauri, supported by planning, research, and infrastructure development.
5. **Continue supporting and engaging with the community.** Although listed last, this is a critical and enduring part of the Trust's work.



Workstreams

Based on this, we are beginning the year with the below Project and BAU workstreams.

Project workstreams	
Workstream	Substreams
Predator Free Chathams delivery	Northeast Pilot Study
	Pitt Island Scoping and Feasibility
Restoration and rewilding	Complete the Restoration Plan
	Restoration planting
	Goat eradication
Research and knowledge sharing	Biosecurity
	Social Impact Assessment for PF Chathams pilot
	Collaborations
Business as Usual workstreams	
Workstream	Substreams
Communications	Strategy and planning
	Digital channels and content
	Media
Fundraising and partnerships	Strategy and planning
	Island Ocean Connection Challenge
	Funding streams/campaigns
Working with community and iwi/imi	Iwi and imi aspirations
	Connecting and supporting community
	Community and backyard trapping
Baseline and administration	Governance and Trust meetings
	Administration support
	Finances
	Health and Safety
	Human resourcing and setup

Deliverables

A number of other deliverables will emerge through the year, but based on our current priorities we see the following as key initial deliverables:

- Annual and monthly workplans (see Appendix I)
- Job Descriptions for roles (see Appendix II)
- Establishment of a Technical Advisory Group to support work
- Implementation Plan for the northeast pilot
- Restoration Plan

- Plan with Pitt community on how to progress with Pitt Island
- Fundraising and Partnerships strategy, supported by relevant policies
- Updated Communications Plan
- Employment systems, policies and processes scoped and in place
- Health and Safety polices and tools in place and being used



Measuring success

The Chatham Islands Landscape Restoration Trust is committed to regularly evaluating our progress and impact. This allows make sure we're moving in the right direction, and to more easily identify challenges to meeting our goals. The nature of our work means we may need to adapt as we go, so flexibility is important and supported by measuring progress.

Each year, the Trust will assess its performance against a balanced set of measures that capture both conservation outcomes and organisational health. This approach ensures that our work remains aligned with our long-term vision, supports our community, and delivers meaningful results for biodiversity.

We will identify specific goals for our work as part of more detailed work planning, but the below are some key measurables we can draw on.

Biodiversity outcomes

- Increase in hectares actively having predator control undertaken.
- Reduction in target predator populations within the operational areas.
- Increased area of habitat actively restored, protected or managed.
- Successful completion of species translocations.
- Ecological monitoring indicates improvements in habitat quality and ecological function.

Community engagement and support

- Participation levels of community volunteers, and school groups in Trust activities.
- Total volunteer hours contributed over the reporting period.
- Number of educational, outreach, and public engagement events delivered.
- Positive feedback received through community consultation and engagement processes.

Partnership and collaboration

- Number of active partnerships with imi/iwi, government agencies, and conservation organisations.
- Joint initiatives delivered or advanced that contribute to shared conservation, cultural, or community outcomes.

Organisational capacity and resilience

- Staff development opportunities delivered, including technical training, leadership development, and Health and Safety capability.
- Investment in operational infrastructure, equipment, and long-term operational readiness.
- Growth and diversification of funding sources, including grants, philanthropic support, and partner contributions.
- Strengthening of organisational systems, to support long-term delivery.

Governance, compliance and accountability

- Full compliance with all statutory, legal, financial, and health and safety obligations.
- Timely completion of strategic and policy reviews, financials, performance reporting, and risk management.
- Governance – process remains transparent, accountable, and aligned with the Trust's charitable purpose.

Progress against Strategic Plan

- Delivery of priority projects and annual deliverables as identified in the Annual Direction.
- Alignment of all operational activity with the Trust's long-term strategic objectives.
- Ongoing review and adaption to ensure the Trust remains responsive to emerging risks, opportunities, and community needs.

Appendix I – Annual calendar

There are some key activities we already know the Trust will be involved in, and there are also

Month	Events and activities
July	Planting
August	Festival of Science (12-17) Winter trap service Install additional AT220's Restoration Plan consultation Planting
September	Restoration Plan consultation
October	Pig Hunting Competition (Big 4 Pests) Annual General Meeting
November	IOCC Roopu and Partners visit the island Summer tourist season on island Spring trap service Restoration Plan field work begins Social Impact Assessment begins
December	Heritage Tours season Restoration Plan field work Social Impact Assessment finishes
January	Restoration Plan field work
February	Otago Uni Visit School Camp Summer trap service Restoration Plan field work
March	Chatham Islands Big Day Out Restoration Plan field work
April	Restoration Plan field work finishes
May	Autumn trap service
June	World Albatross Day Matariki/Puanga

Appendix II – Organisational structure

Staffing over a year

Initial work has been done by a Subcommittee (Trustees, Treasurer and current staff) to develop a potential organisational structure. Many other Predator Free projects have identified the importance of skilled Project, Communication and Administration skills in the initial phases of setting up projects. The value of being a good employer has also been emphasised by these projects as well as the Subcommittee.

Based on this, the below org charts show three levels of staffing growth that might develop over the year as salary funding and work increase. Job descriptions and salary bands are still to be finalised.

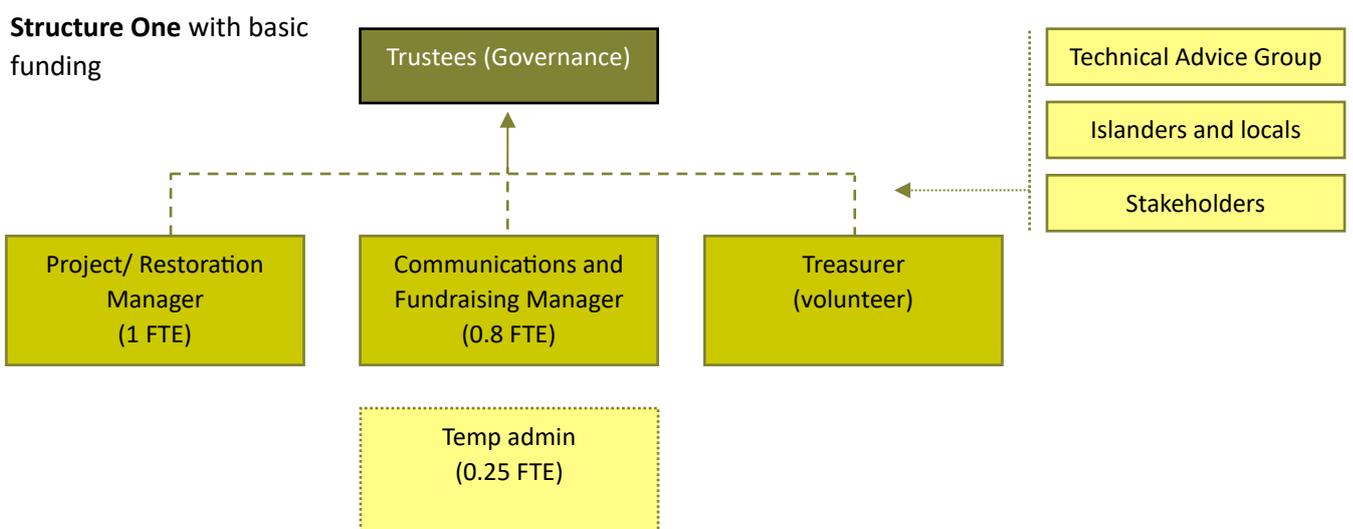
The Trust also has a strong desire to employ islanders where possible, both to support the economic stability of the community and develop capacity on island. Particularly in the longer term, this may involve a degree of upskilling and training.

Proposed organisations structures

The below three structures show how staffing might develop throughout the year, which will allow the strategic growth of the Trust and good management of its work. Setting solid foundations is the first step, then bringing in more capacity to plan and then start to deliver more field-based work.

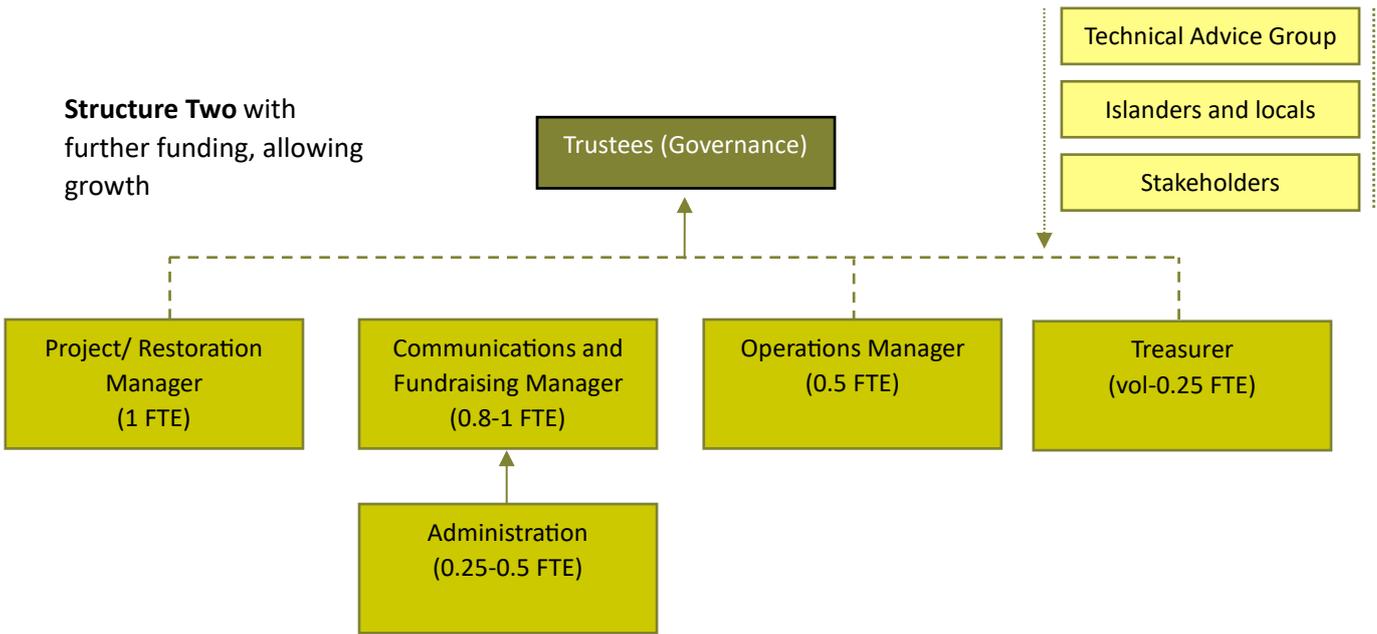
The Trustees hold a governance role, setting the purpose, objectives and direction for the management team to deliver. Initially, the core management team can report directly to the Trustees, with a CEO coming onboard as work and staff increase.

Core stakeholders (the Technical Advisory Group, islanders and locals including iwi and imi, and others) will also provide advice and input helping to shape the Management Team and CEO's work.



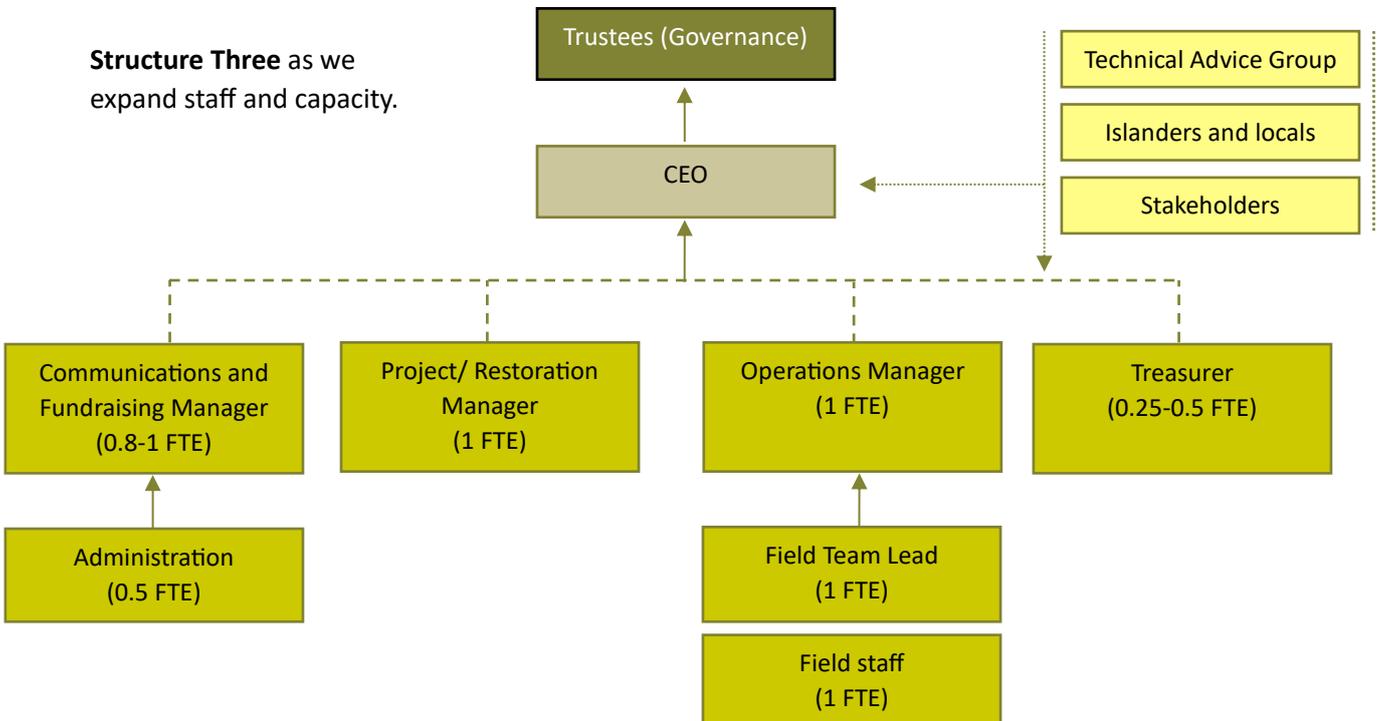
NOTE Admin role could come on part-time for a short period (based on current funding) to help Trust set up well at start of Financial Year, supporting all other roles.

Structure Two with further funding, allowing growth



NOTE The Administration role could also report to the PRM.

Structure Three as we expand staff and capacity.



NOTE Number of field staff will depend on projects happening. If projects on both islands are happening, we are likely to need two Field Team Leads reporting to the Ops Manager, with field staff reporting to the Leads.