

# **THE AOTEAROA-NEW ZEALAND LANDSCAPE CHARTER**

**NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**  
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## **PREAMBLE**

Landscapes are the result of unique combinations of biophysical, cultural and social processes, evolving over time and interwoven with memory, perception and tradition. They include land, water systems and marine areas, and play a vital role in human nurture, fulfilment and in shaping individual and collective identity. Landscapes range from the outstanding and the memorable, to the familiar and commonplace, and the NZILA has a duty of care to ensure that the distinctive characteristics and potential of all landscapes are not compromised through insensitive or inappropriate change. Landscapes are the outdoor places where people live, work and play; they are important because they provide an opportunity for people to identify with their neighbourhoods and their nation, and allow people to connect with the land and their own plant and animal communities.

The sustainable management of our landscapes is a fundamental objective of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Incorporated (NZILA). Important aspects of that objective, in the widest possible range of different landscapes, include the preservation of common heritage as a reflection of identity and diversity; retention of ecological health; and consideration of the productive capabilities of land. This approach aims to maintain important life-supporting functions such as water quality and biodiversity, while providing for the appropriate utilisation of landscapes for social, cultural, and economic development. The profession of landscape architecture in Aotearoa-New Zealand, represented by the NZILA, therefore has a significant role to play in promoting such sustainable management.

The importance of the deep and fundamental relationship that the Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa have with the natural world is also acknowledged. Where appropriate, those attitudes and beliefs should influence and inform the ways in which we approach the protection, planning, design and management of our landscapes.

The NZILA has had a Statement of Philosophy since its incorporation in 1973, which summarises the purpose of the Institute:

*The landscape reflects the cumulative effects of physical and cultural processes.*

*The New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects aims to foster and develop an understanding of these processes and to ensure that this knowledge is applied in such a manner as to conserve or enhance the quality of all natural resources and human values.*

The scope of landscape architectural practice and pressures on the landscape have expanded since that philosophical statement was written, and a comprehensive set of principles is now required to underpin this philosophy, and support the diverse aspects of contemporary landscape practice in Aotearoa-New Zealand. These principles have been structured to form a Charter, or guiding document, which outlines the principles and purpose of the NZILA in pursuit of its promotion of the protection, planning, responsive design, sustainable management and maintenance of the landscape resource.

The NZILA Landscape Charter sits within a global context and framework which comprises a series of National Landscape Charters and Conventions coordinated through the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), and other significant statements about our approaches and attitudes to the landscape. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Resource Management Act (1991)
- The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter (1993)
- The European Landscape Convention (2001)
- The Local Government Act (2002)
- The Urban Design Protocol (2005)
- The Global Landscape Charter (2009)

## 1 Purpose of the Aotearoa-New Zealand Landscape Charter

The Charter is the NZILA's declaration of a set of fundamental principles to support the active stewardship of, advocacy for, and enhancement of the landscapes of Aotearoa-New Zealand. It serves as a set of guiding principles for practising landscape architects, and as a frame of reference to inform decision-makers about the broad scope of landscape matters.

The Charter sets out principles and values for the protection, planning, enhancement, design and management of landscapes in Aotearoa-New Zealand, and provides a framework through which other disciplines, Government agencies and departments, and other appropriate parties can cooperate on landscape and landscape-related issues.

## 2 General provisions

### 2.1 Scope

This charter applies to the entire territory of Aotearoa-New Zealand and covers all aspects of the landscape, including natural, cultural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, water systems and marine areas, and applies to a diversity of landscapes including those which are outstanding, those which are spiritually, culturally or naturally significant or protected, and everyday, productive or degraded landscapes.

### 2.2 Aims

The aims of this charter are to promote the sustainable protection, planning, design innovation and management of the landscape resource, and to encourage co-operation between all stakeholders, including Tangata Whenua, on landscape issues.

### 2.3 Signatories

Each party which adopts the New Zealand Landscape Charter shall undertake to work towards implementing the aims and provisions of the Charter, in harmony with its own policies.

## 3 Key principles of the Aotearoa-New Zealand Landscape Charter

The following key principles form the basis for the Charter document:

### 3.1 Sustainable management

Sustainable management underpins the workings of the Resource Management Act [1991] (RMA), and informs landscape management and change throughout Aotearoa-New Zealand. Sustainable goals can be manifest through a variety of means including (but not limited to) ecological health, economic viability, social vitality and cultural expression.

### 3.2 The Treaty of Waitangi *(Note: this and the following section draft on the relationship to Tangata Whenua will be reviewed by Nga Ahau to enable an appropriate reflection of the views of Maoridom.)*

The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of our nation and is the basis for indigenous guardianship in Aotearoa. The Treaty is between Maori and the Crown, and accords Maori special status as *tangata whenua*, yet does not deny any other cultural or ethnic group their rights to their own identity and practices in a multicultural society.

There are five key principles embodied in the Treaty that influence the work of landscape architects:

1. The principle of government (the Kawanatanga principle);
2. The principle of self-management (the Rangatiratanga principle);
3. The principle of equality;

4. The principle of reasonable cooperation;
5. The principle of redress.

### **3.3 Maori Values**

A Maori perspective on landscape, as well on all matters, is rooted in and informed by the Maori worldview and cosmology, in particular the creation tradition, and Maori cultural concepts increasingly inform national culture and practices.

There are seven elements which encapsulate the key concepts underpinning Maori values:

1. A direct ancestral relationship between human and non-human;
2. The relationship of Kaitiaki; elements of the natural world with responsibility to that world, capable of punishing transgressions against nature;
3. Complex systems of social control through identification of actions as sacred or profane, which supports the management of scarce resources;
4. The concept of generosity and exchange to enable the gifting of valuable commodities, with an expectation of reciprocation;
5. The concepts of Kotahitanga, a commitment to a consensus approach to decision-making;
6. The concept of Te Putahi, the connection of everything to everything else, a holistic world view, where all things are interrelated; and
7. The concept of Puta Noa, a commitment to do things correctly, in keeping with Tikanga.

### **3.4 Stewardship**

We all have a responsibility to nurture the continued health and diversity of landscapes, and ensure the sustainable integration of protection, production, recreation, and habitation values for all living things.

### **3.5 Identity**

People may be grounded in place, by tradition, genealogy, or identification with 'home'. This can occur at both a local and regional scale, as well as at a national scale, and is powerfully expressed through landscape.

### **3.6 Human health and wellbeing**

Physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing are aspects of human health and vitality that can be sustained, enhanced and revitalised by landscapes, whether natural, cultural, or designed for that purpose.

### **3.7 Place making**

Landscape change should occur creatively and responsively, and provide design innovation and approaches that inspire, enrich, or reveal natural or cultural elements of landscapes to create settings in which people can flourish.

### **3.8 Inclusivity**

The Charter provides a mechanism for communities to actively participate in the sustainable planning, design and management of their landscapes, through the articulation of values associated with their regional and local places.

## **4 Definitions**

**4.1 Landscape** Is the cumulative expression of natural and cultural elements, patterns and processes in a geographical area.

**4.2 Landscape protection** Action taken to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, based on the particular qualities of the

landscape's natural and/or cultural resources, heritage value, and/or human activity.

- 4.3 Landscape management** Programmes and action to maintain, adapt or enhance landscapes in response to changing social, cultural, economic or environmental goals, needs and dynamics.
- 4.4 Landscape design** An active process of developing creative and innovative solutions for landscape change.
- 4.5 Landscape planning** A process of developing responsible, creative and long-term strategies, proposals or actions to manage, enhance, protect or restore landscapes.
- 4.6 Landscape policy** An expression by relevant local or central Government authorities of general principles, strategies and guidelines that enable or direct specific measures aimed at the protection, planning, design and management of landscapes.

## 5 General provisions

Each party undertakes to:

- Acknowledge all landscapes as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity;
- Establish and implement landscape policies to encourage landscape protection, conservation, planning, design and management through specific provisions described in paragraph 6 below;
- Establish procedures for the participation of all stakeholders, including the general public, Tangata Whenua, local and regional authorities, and other parties in achieving those goals described in paragraph 6 below; and
- Integrate landscape considerations into national, regional and local policies in relation to any environmental, economic, cultural or social change with possible direct or indirect impacts on landscapes.

## 6 Specific provisions

Each party undertakes to contribute to advocacy, education, development of assessment methodology, research and policy in respect of the landscape, and co-operate and collaborate in order to enhance the effectiveness of measures taken under other paragraphs of this Charter, as follows:

### 6.1 Advocacy

- Increase awareness in both public and private organisations about the character and value of landscapes, their contribution to human health, wellbeing and heritage, and the potential consequences that arise from changes in or to the landscape;

### 6.2 Education

- Support, and where appropriate promote and implement, training programmes for landscape policy, planning, evaluation, assessment, design and management;

- Support, and where appropriate promote and implement, school and university courses which address landscape character and values, and the issues raised by their protection, planning, design and management;

### **6.3 Assessment, Research and Policy**

- Encourage and support programmes and actions with a focus upon the identification of Aotearoa-New Zealand's landscapes, the analysis of their characteristics, the forces and pressures transforming them and the ways in which they have changed or are changing;
- Support the application of consistent assessment methodologies to those landscapes, taking into account the particular values assigned to them by the Tangata Whenua and the other stakeholders in those landscapes;
- Contribute to the development and definition of landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed, after appropriate stakeholder consultation; and
- Support the development of landscape policies aimed at sustainably protecting, planning, providing for appropriate design innovation in, and/or managing the landscape.

### **6.4 Mutual assistance**

- Share knowledge and information, and/or render such technical and scientific assistance arising from experience or landscape related research to other parties to achieve the outcomes covered by the Charter.

## **7 The Aotearoa-New Zealand Landscape Award**

The Aotearoa-New Zealand Landscape Award is a distinction which may be conferred on organisations or individuals that have instituted policies or measures to protect, plan, design or manage their landscapes, and which have proven to be effective. This distinction may be conferred on local or regional authorities, central Government agencies or departments, representatives of the Tangata Whenua and other organisations, or individuals or parties to this Charter that have made outstanding contributions to sustainable landscape protection, planning, design or management.

The NZILA shall establish a committee with representatives from the Tangata Whenua and other signatories to this Charter to define and publish the criteria for conferring such an Award, and to make recommendations to the Institute in regard to nominees for the Award. Nominations for the Aotearoa-New Zealand Landscape Award will be accepted on an annual basis, as provided for in the criteria and rules of the Award, and may be submitted by parties to the Charter, or from other organisations, bodies or individuals that promote or embrace the provisions of the Charter.

The granting of such an Award is a prestigious honour acknowledging important contributions to society, aimed at further encouragement to those receiving the Award to continue to ensure the sustainable protection, planning, design and/or management of the landscapes concerned.

## **8 Relationship with other documents**

The provisions of this Charter shall not prejudice other more specific provisions concerning sustainable landscape protection, planning, design and/or management contained in other existing or future binding national or international documents.

## 9 Adoption of the Charter

This Charter provides an opportunity for the widest possible range of stakeholders in the landscape to be invited to become signatories and uphold the principles of the Charter, while also working towards the achievement of the goals of the Charter. Signatories may include representatives of Tangata Whenua, Government agencies or departments, regional and local authorities, individuals, organisations that represent various stakeholders with an interest in landscape, or organisations that represent professions with an interest in landscape.

In particular, parties that promote sustainable landscape protection, planning, appropriate design innovation and management, and that support co-operation between all stakeholders on landscape issues, shall be invited to become signatories. Such Charter adoption shall be formally promulgated by the party concerned, and an instrument of ratification shall be deposited with the Hon. Secretary of the NZILA.

An agreement to adopt the Charter by any party may be withdrawn by that party through a declaration of such withdrawal to the Hon. Secretary of the NZILA. Any such withdrawal shall be promulgated by the party concerned. Any party that fails to uphold the principles of the Charter, or acts to undermine the achievement of the goals of the Charter, shall be requested to modify their actions; failure to address any concerns shall result in such party being removed from the list of signatories to the Charter.

## 10 Amendments to the Charter

Any party that is a signatory to this Charter may propose amendments to the Charter by notifying the Hon Secretary of the NZILA of the proposed amendment with supporting statements or evidence that demonstrate the value of the amendment in further promoting the provisions of the Charter. Any such proposed amendments that clearly further the intentions of the Charter will be examined by the Executive Committee of the NZILA. If such amendments are supported by the Institute, all parties that are signatories to the Charter will be notified to enable discussion of the proposed amendment to occur prior to such amendment being considered for adoption by the NZILA at an AGM.

## 11 Notification

The Hon. Secretary of the NZILA shall notify all parties that are signatories to this Charter of:

- any new signatories to the Charter;
- any proposal for amendment to the Charter, with a time frame for consultation and discussion, and the date upon which it is proposed to take effect and be binding upon all signatories to the Charter; and
- any other act, notification, information or communication relating to this Charter, including identification of any recipients of an Aotearoa-New Zealand Landscape Award.

This Charter was adopted by the NZILA at their AGM on ..... in ....., and signed by the President of the Institute. The original signed agreement was deposited in the archives of the NZILA, with certified copies made available to all parties that are signatories to this Charter.