

# Healthy Nature, Healthy People .....

The Healthy Nature Healthy People movement has recently been adopted in New Zealand by the Department of Conservation (DOC). It is based on Healthy Parks Healthy People, which was first launched in Victoria, Australia in 2000 and is now spreading globally. The programme seeks to reinforce and encourage the connections between a healthy environment and a healthy society.



Healthy Nature Healthy People aims to encourage us to use New Zealand's natural spaces for recreation and physical activity to maintain and improve our health and wellbeing. These spaces include land and water from our urban parks and beaches to our national parks, lakes and wild rivers. DOC will be working together with other government agencies, NGOs, health services and providers, local government and parks organisations, as well as the private sector to improve the health of our nature and our people.

The movement is based on four key foundations:

1. The wellbeing of all societies depends on healthy ecosystems.
2. Parks nurture healthy ecosystems.
3. Contact with nature is essential for improving emotional, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing.
4. Parks are fundamental to economic growth and to vibrant and healthy communities.

In essence, the movement acknowledges the inextricable link between natural environments and people, and that the health of each is dependent on the other. Nature has no boundaries

and Healthy Nature Healthy People extends from everyone's backyard and beyond, into natural environments variously administered. It means working with others to improve the health of people and the health of nature.

Individual and community health are reliant on healthy natural environments, which are integrally linked to the value placed on them by communities. It means working across agencies in innovative ways to collectively address health issues in the wider context - for example NZRA's Parks Week taking place 5-12 March 2016 has been underpinned by the core principles of Healthy Nature, Healthy People. The more people place importance on the environment for their health and wellbeing, the more they value and seek to protect it.

Global challenges are also local challenges – an aging population, the increase in lifestyle diseases, and increasing urban populations. DOC actively supports Healthy Nature Healthy People as most recently seen through **Conservation Week** and is working across multiple sectors to improve the health of both nature and people. Long term DOC seeks to enrich 90% of New Zealanders lives through their connection to nature.

The movement is beginning to take shape and you can expect to see the name more often as others join the journey.



If you or your organisation would like to know more or be involved in shaping this for New Zealand please contact the Healthy Nature Healthy People team at [hnhp@doc.govt.nz](mailto:hnhp@doc.govt.nz)