

# MILLION TREES PROGRAMME

## **POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**August 2016**

# PHIL GOFF FOR A BETTER AUCKLAND

Auckland was once covered in a rich and diverse rainforest. Kauri, rimu, totara and kahikatea towered over lower canopies and forest, and teemed with native birds.

Over generations, clearance of bush for farmland and urbanisation has resulted in only small fragments of bush remaining outside the conservation areas of the Waitakere and the Hunua Ranges reserves. It is now time to restore some of the tree cover and take steps to green our city.

Planting trees will make our city a more beautiful place to live. It also enables us to address major environmental problems such as water and air quality. Trees reduce runoff and siltation and improve water quality in the Hauraki Gulf, the Kaipara and Manukau Harbours, and our rivers and streams. They provide a carbon sink to off-set emissions and slow global warming.

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- ✓ **INCREASE TREE COVER IN AUCKLAND BY PLANTING A MILLION TREES OVER THREE YEARS.**
  - ✓ **DEVELOP A CROSS CITY TREE STRATEGY THAT BUILDS ON EXISTING PLANTING.**
  - ✓ **PROVIDE PRACTICAL SUPPORT AND COORDINATION TO EXPAND CURRENT PROGRAMMES.**
  - ✓ **MINIMISE COSTS BY IDENTIFYING AND PARTNERING WITH NGOs, BUSINESSES AND IWI.**
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My commitment as Mayor is an urban forestation programme for Auckland which aims to plant a million, predominantly native, trees and shrubs across the region in the next term of Council.

Local boards, schools, service and social sector groups, private entities, farmers, Department of Conservation, New Zealand Transport Association and developers are just some of the organisations that already plant trees and shrubs around the region. However, I believe there is a role for Council to assist to improve coordination between these groups and help to provide an overall strategy around what tree species are planted and where.

As Mayor, I will ensure Council works alongside all of these groups to facilitate the planting of an additional one million trees.

Auckland Council will budget \$1 million each year to fund its contribution to the Million Trees Programme. The fund will be used to provide practical support and coordination to expand existing planting programmes. Costs will be off-set by partnering with NGOs, businesses and iwi.

We will also work with established groups like Te Whangai to combine tree propagation and planting with social programmes to enhance job seeker experience and skills. The fund will not cover

administration costs which will be funded from existing resources. Progress reports will be provided half yearly.

Council will work with Local Boards and encourage them to lead tree plantings in their communities. The Million Trees Programme will support other community-led developments that are already underway. By providing Council support and coordination, we can ensure more trees and shrubs are planted where communities most want them and promote best practice in our efforts to green the city.

New Zealand urgently needs to plant extensive areas of trees to help combat climate change and keep our country on course to meet the requirements set out at the Paris Conference on Climate Change. With more than a third of the country's population, Auckland needs to do its fair share towards combating climate change.

Planting trees will not only help combat our carbon emissions but also improve the health of our harbours and rivers by preventing erosion, run-off and reducing siltation. Planting to protect riparian and coastal areas will be a priority. Increasing our green areas will also enhance biodiversity and bring back native bird populations.

Economically, afforestation supports our drive to become "clean and green". It also helps New Zealand to reduce costs such as the hundreds of millions of dollars it will otherwise need to purchase carbon off-sets to fulfil the Paris agreement. The programme will help beautify our city and region with plantings in parks and reserves, school grounds, streets and along motorways.

The Million Trees Programme will enhance our already great natural environment and the quality of life we enjoy from living in Auckland.



Phil Goff  
For a Better Auckland