

Media release

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Collaboration to restore the environment of the Hauraki Gulf

Environmental restoration, conservation and sustainability in the Auckland and Northland region is to get extra support as a result of an agreement between Auckland University and Foundation North.

Foundation North will collaborate with the University's George Mason Centre for the Natural Environment (GMCNE), a multi-disciplinary research centre in the Faculty of Science, to identify projects that can improve environmental outcomes in the region, particularly in relation to the Hauraki Gulf.

"Foundation North has established the \$5million dollar Gulf Innovation Fund Together (G.I.F.T) to support innovation that has the potential to turn the tide on the environmental degradation of the Gulf," says Foundation North Chief Executive, Jennifer Gill. "We anticipate that some of the multi-disciplinary projects that come to the George Mason Centre may fit our G.I.F.T criteria, and allow these projects to access this additional source of funding."

Ms Gill said the Foundation's decision to establish G.I.F.T followed the release of the *Hauraki Gulf – Tikapa Moana/ Te Moananui a Toi State of the Environment Report* published by the Hauraki Gulf Forum in 2014.

"This regional taonga is under pressure. To restore it to health will mean addressing a range of issues such as the sustainability of the Gulf's fisheries, high sediment and nutrient levels, the toxic chemicals and wastewater that are affecting water quality, and the loss of habitats for native species. These are complex issues for which there are no easy answers, so innovation is essential to help us find solutions."

Professor John Hosking, Dean of Science, said the collaboration aims to draw on the respective strengths of the two organisations to foster capability building and to support positive change in the region's natural environment.

"Both parties recognise their mutual interest in the natural environment and education sectors, and in particular initiatives that foster good governance and the conservation of natural capital."

Ms Gill said that a number of grants have already been made through G.I.F.T.

“We hope that with the assistance of the George Mason Centre we will identify more opportunities to support initiatives that will help restore the Gulf for future generations to enjoy.”

About The George Mason Centre for the Natural Environment (GMCNE)

The George Mason Centre for the Natural Environment is a multi-disciplinary research centre in the Faculty of Science at Auckland University that focuses on environmental restoration, conservation and sustainability. The centre fosters solutions-focused research to support a diverse range of projects that address questions within and across different natural ecosystems.

<http://www.science.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/our-research/research-in-the-faculty-of-science/george-mason-centre-for-the-natural-environment.html>