2026/2027 Annual Plan



THE NEW ZEALAND
POPLAR & WILLOW RESEARCH TRUST

May. 2026

Purpose

This Annual Plan outlines the key priorities and actions for the NZPWRT for the 2026 – 2027 financial year. It provides a clear framework for delivering the first phase of the 2026-2036 Strategy, ensuring the Trust focuses on high-impact activities aligned with its four strategic pillars.

The Trust recognises the importance of securing long-term financial sustainability and will actively seek and strengthen funding opportunities through partnerships, collaborative projects, grants, sponsorships and innovative investment approaches that align with the Trust's strategic priorities.

The Board will continue to think strategically and creatively about how NZPWRT can diversify and strengthen its funding base, build enduring relationships with partners and stakeholders, and ensure the Trust remains resilient, relevant and capable of delivering long-term value.

The Board will prioritise actions that:

- Strengthen the long-term resilience of poplar and willow resources in New Zealand
- Support evidence-based soil conservation and climate resilience solutions
- Improve adoption and understanding of poplar and willows
- Secure sustainable funding and partnerships

Key Actions

This is about implementing the first phase of the 2026-2036 Strategy. Key actions will include:

- **Develop a prioritised work programme across the four pillars**
- **Establish performance measures aligned with strategy outcomes**
- **Ensure alignment between breeding, research and extension investments.**



1. Breeding Pillar

To ensure that the breeding programme is robust with clarity around purpose, trait prioritisation, and delivery pathways.1

Outcomes

- There is a clear pathway to follow from breeding, selection and release
- NZPWRT has clearly shared the trait priority to a wider audience
- That there is clear understanding of what 'novel' poplar cultivars are being trialled and what makes them unique.
- Willow breeding programme has a clear focus on key traits and outcomes for current year.



Key Actions

1.1. Develop a clear selection pathway to release

1.2. Gain insight to what cultivars have not been undertaken and review

1.3. Investigate the development of 'sterile' willows

1.4. Review and ensure each cultivar is involved in a 'national trial'

1.5. Develop and approve breeding and selection criteria for poplar

1.6. Develop and approve breeding and selection criteria for willow

1.7. Evaluation of existing trials

1.8. Breeding focus on willow (shorter, sterile, bitter)

1.9. Support Regional Councils (refer 3.5)

2. Germplasm Pillar

The key focus is to ensure that the current germplasm is maintained and is current.

Outcomes

- Successful establishment of new germplasm at BSI, Clyde
- Ensure all parents and commercialised cultivars are represented in at least 2 known germplasms sites.
- All new cultivars are planted for germplasm purposes in known areas
- That we no longer rely on Lavello Estate to hold germplasm.
- That all germplasm stocks are in good condition

Key Actions

2.1. Oversee the relocation of germplasm held at BSI, Clyde

2.2. Ensure that there is a minimum of two planting sites for all germplasm – parent material and hybrid clones, and that these sites are known to NZPWRT.

2.3. Identify any landowners where agreements might be required.



3. Research Pillar

Position poplar and willow as multi-functional natural infrastructure that underpins resilient landscapes, productive farms and a thriving bioeconomy in New Zealand.

Outcomes

- Initiated collaborative research project to achieve 5 year goals.
- Clear definition of what is required around biodiversity and ecosystem services with a view to have or in process a pathway to seek evidence
- Have clear links between research outputs and breeding priorities and be in a position to share those with confidence or have identified gaps to focus on.
- Provided support to enable Nursery Managers to determine a way to improve productivity



Key Actions

3.1. Build a structured research programme highlighting the 5 year goals

3.2. Seek collaboration for funding and undertaking the research.

3.3. Identify low hanging fruit to focus on first

3.4. Collaborated identified nursery opportunity that will improve productivity of material

3.5. Support Regional Council trials through trial design and statistics

4. Extension Pillar

Whilst NZPWRT is known for undertaken work and holds a lot of information, it is not always accessible or easily understood.

Outcomes

- That Fit4Site and Explorer are being utilised
- Steps to proceed and prep for development of Audit Tool and MaPPi
- Completed 6 factsheets/case studies
- That all poplar and willows have an associated factsheet
- Successful workshop(s) held with feedback above 4.5 rating.
- Successfully raising the profile of NZPWRT by attending conferences, posting on LinkedIn and publishing newsletters.

Strategic Alignment

Strategic Goal	2026-27 Focus
Strengthen breeding capability	Develop selection criteria and national trials
Secure long-term germplasm	Relocate and secure germplasm holdings
Evidence for climate change	Initiate research projects
Increase adoption	Improve extension tools and communication

Key Actions

4.1. Identify and connect with key leaders and influences in the agriculture sector

4.2. Ensure the communication and media plan supports the promotion of NZPWRT to the wider public.

4.3. Support, promote and develop decision support tools.

4.4. Produce at least 6 factsheets / case studies around core information gaps.

4.5. Ensure there are cultivar factsheets for both poplar and willow

4.6. Continue to support funders and general enquiries around the use of poplar and willow

4.7. Invest in 1 or 2 workshops, with at least one of them being focused on River Engineering.

4.8. Attend and promote at least one conference

Financial

Table 1: High level predicted expenditure based on pillars

Budget	**$**	**$**
Estimated Income		**388,400**
Expense		
Breeding	96,000	
Germplasm	15,000	
Research	90,000	
Extension	100,000	
Overheads	86,350	
Total Expenses		**387,350**
Net Profit/Loss		1,050

Income

Income is largely derived from Regional and Unitary Authority, split 12 Councils. In addition NZPWRT seeks a minimum of $20k outside funding and derives around $12k from interest. A key focus will be seeking additional funding and/or collaborative partnerships to enable more work to be done. Material Levy has been calculated on expected pole material estimated at 92,900 (Nursery Managers Survey 2026), multiplied by average 3 metre pole ($16.02 in winter 2025), and taken 5% which is $74,413. This does not allow for sale of wands and other material.

Table 2: Estimated income sources for 2026-27

	$
Council Contributions	254,000
River Managers Contributions	25,400
Nursery 5% Material Levy	75,000
Interest	12,000
Other Income	20,000
Advertising	2,000
TOTAL INCOME	**388,400**

4.9. Minimum one post a month on LinkedIn

4.10. 4-5 newsletter published throughout the year

4.11. Website development

4.12. Nursery certifications

4.13. Focus on Ambassadors so that we have well equipped representatives to support NZPWRT.

Our Supporters

THE NEW ZEALAND
POPLAR & WILLOW RESEARCH TRUST

Northland Regional Council – Te Kaunihera ā rohe o Te Taitokerau
Auckland Council – Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau
Greater Wellington – Te Pane Matua Taiao
Bay of Plenty Regional Council – Toi Moana
Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti Gisborne District Council
Waikato Regional Council – Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato
horizons Regional Council
Hawke's Bay Regional Council – Te Kaunihera ā-rohe o te Matau-a-Māui
Environment Canterbury Regional Council – Kaunihera Taiao ki Waitaha
tasman district council – Te Kaunihera o te tai o Aorere
Taranaki Regional Council
environment Southland – Te Taiao Tonga

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