



## DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY

Submission on the publicly notified draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

**On:** Ministry for the Environment – draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

**To:** Ministry for the Environment

### Personal Information

*\* indicates required fields*

Company name:

Given names\*: [REDACTED]

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## Submission

- Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

## Background about my farm

I farm [REDACTED] of hill country [REDACTED]. It was converted from native bush to grassland between 1938 and 1973. I have farmed here for 47 years. The farm still has considerable stands of native bush that have been fenced and managed control of pests and weeds is undertaken as necessary.

## Why am I making this submission?

*To assist the development of this policy and to protect the rights of land ownership.*

## Section A: General responses to the proposals:

- I support the overall goal of the proposals that recognise the value of indigenous biodiversity to New Zealand, its people, and communities, and to ensure that Indigenous Biodiversity is protected, and where it has been significantly lost is restored.
- New Zealand farmers have retained [REDACTED] of indigenous habitat within their farms which is testament to the value farmers place on indigenous biodiversity. A total of [REDACTED] total indigenous habitats occurs on the [REDACTED] hectares covered by sheep and beef farms, with over [REDACTED] covenants being on sheep and beef farms. The area of indigenous habitats formally protected by QEII, Ngā Whenua Rāhui, and other covenants is growing.
- I support provisions which recognise that for conservation actions to be enduring, they require landowner and community support and leadership. Policies need to recognise that people are critical to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, and acknowledge the importance of respecting and fostering the contribution of landowners as custodians and Kaitiaki to these habitats and species.
- However, I oppose provisions which seek to 'lock up indigenous biodiversity' and in so doing penalise those landowners who have done the most to protect indigenous biodiversity. I seek changes to the policy to ensure that indigenous biodiversity can be integrated within pastoral based land uses and activities, and which recognise these can co-exist for mutual benefit.

- Indigenous biodiversity should be considered as an asset to the farming business, and communities, and not as a liability. Subtle but significant changes to the NPSIB are required to ensure that existing conservation efforts are rewarded, and ongoing conservation is supported and incentivised. The recognition of the values of indigenous biodiversity as part of pastoral based landscapes and farming businesses is required to ensure that these values, habitats, and species, are sustainably managed. A strong regulatory or stick approach to the recognition and ongoing management of indigenous biodiversity could, if not carefully constructed, undermine existing and future conservation efforts.

## Section B: Impacts and implementation:

- I am deeply concerned about the potential impacts of these proposals on my farm in relation to areas being identified as Significant Natural Areas (SNA's), areas identified as being important for the protection of SNA's which may include land adjacent to SNA's, and the identification of highly mobile species, in relation to the impacts this may have on my farming business and its resilience and viability. The provisions could be interpreted as precluding the ongoing grazing of animals adjacent to and within these areas, which means that those that have done the most to protect indigenous habitats and species within their farming businesses could shoulder the greatest costs including restrictions to their farming businesses.
- The compliance costs of the various proposals are likely to be significant and include the identification of these habitats and species, fencing of these habitats (could require deer fencing to manage wild populations), and ongoing pest management. As currently proposed, it is unclear where these costs fall. Financial, technical, and human resourcing support should be provided to assist landowners to continue to protect and restore indigenous habitats and populations within their farming businesses and communities. Support should be provided to not only areas where indigenous biodiversity is being restored, but also to where it currently exists.
- I am concerned that New Zealand does not currently have the extent of technical expertise available to assist regional and district councils to identify SNA's and mobile species across their territorial areas within the next five years, to ground truth this work, and to work with farmers. The requirements on regional and district councils including timeframes should ensure that the identification of these habitats and species is robust, and is undertaken in a way which engages landowners and communities, builds understanding and knowledge, and which empowers local conservation efforts.
- The specific provisions of the proposal that this submission relates to and the decisions it seeks are as detailed in the table in Section C below.

## Section C: Specific responses to the proposals:

<b>Specific Provision in the Proposed Plan</b>	<b>Submission</b>	<b>Decision sought</b>
<i>The specific provisions my submission relates to are:</i>	<i>My submission is that:</i>	<i>The decision I would like MfE and DoC to make is:</i>

<p><b>Hutia Te Rito</b>  (Discussion document on a proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity, page 23)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I support with amendments.</li> <li>• I support the objective of local authorities recognising the relationships between indigenous biodiversity and people and communities, and that conservation requires custodianship.</li> <li>• I support provisions which recognise and empower ground up, landowner, and community led conservation actions, and which prioritise non regulatory over regulation management frameworks.</li> </ul> <p>* More than 90% of native bush on my farm has been fenced to exclude grazing animals.</p> <p>* In these areas are 39 opossum bait stations, stoat and ferret traps and goat exclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I seek that the term “stewardship” is replaced with “custodianship” which more correctly reflects the values I place on indigenous biodiversity within my farm and as part of my family’s history and our future, and our relationship and ties to our land.</li> </ul> <p>* Assistance with the cost of fencing and rates relief on areas fenced.</p> <p>* assistance in the cost of pest control. Poisons for bait stations.</p>

**3.7 Social, economic and cultural wellbeing:**

(Discussion Document Page 45)

- I support objective 3.7.
- I support the recognition that people and communities are critical to conservation actions and the protection and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity.
- I support provisions which empower and support landowner and community conservation activities and local approaches.
- I support the recognition that the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity can occur while still providing for use and development.

- I seek that objective 3.7 is retained as notified.
- I seek that the NPSIB be amended so that policies and rules reflect Objective 3.7 including prioritising non regulatory approaches and partnerships over regulatory frameworks, and the establishment of conservation frameworks which recognise that the protection and, where required, enhancement of indigenous biodiversity can be provided within pastoral based farming land uses and alongside pastoral based activities, and that these are not mutually exclusive.
- Establishing animal crossings through wet areas gives an opportunity to create a wet area to catch silt, provide for aquatic animals, saves animals becoming bogged in a wet area and allows more realistic stock movements.


<p><b>3.9 Managing adverse effects on SNA's</b> (Discussion document page 42)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I support with amendments.</li> <li>• I support requirements to manage new activities that effect significant natural areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I seek that 3.9 is amended so that the effects management hierarchy is based on the level of the habitats significance e.g. whether it is "rare", "threatened", or "at risk", and is tailored to the attributes which underpin the habitats significance.</li> <li>• Amend 3.9 so that the provision relates to consent applications and the assessment of effects, and requirements to avoid, remedy, or mitigate the effects. New activities should be provided for where the effects of the activity on the attributes that underpin the habitats significance (such as representativeness, rarity, and distinctiveness) can be avoided, remedied, or mitigated.</li> <li>• Amend provisions so that the ability to offset effects should only be provided for where the offset can occur in the same ecological area. The ability to offset an activity in the urban environment, onto the rural environment should not be enabled.</li> </ul>



<p><b>3.13 General rules applying outside SNA's:</b> (Discussion document, page 51)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I support the intention of recognising areas around SNA's as important for protecting SNA's themselves and their values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I seek amendments to 3.13 to ensure that existing activities as outlined under 3.12 are provided for.</li> <li>I am concerned that 3.13 as proposed may result in areas of my farm around my SNA's being 'locked up' from pastoral based farming activities. This could result in significant areas of my farm being impacted which ultimately would significantly impact my farm viability and resilience.</li> <li>I seek that 3.13 is amended to prioritise non regulatory, partnership, and landowner led approaches to managing areas around SNA's in order to protect the attributes that make a SNA significant. I seek that clause (2) is deleted.</li> <li>I seek that 3.13 is amended to prioritise engagement with the technical expert and landowner to co-design management frameworks for the farm which ensures that indigenous biodiversity is provided for as an inherent and integral part of the farming business. These plans can be provided for through tailored Farm Plans bespoke to the biodiversity values and the farming business.</li> </ul>

<p><b>3.15 Highly Mobile Fauna:</b> (Discussion document, page 38)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I support with amendments.</li> <li>• I support the intention to recognise and provide for highly mobile fauna through non regulatory/ partnership-based frameworks generally, and where required regulatory approaches in relation to new subdivision, and development.</li> <li>• I oppose provisions which seek to mandate this protection through regulatory frameworks where this may impact on existing activities and land uses. Enduring and effecting conservation approaches to protect these species are best achieved through working with landowners, and in particular the role of the expert in working with landowners to build understanding of these species, their values, and any management which is required for these populations to be healthy and resilient.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I seek that 3.15 is amended to prioritise non regulatory, partnership, and landowner led approaches to managing mobile species and their habitat and lifecycle requirements.</li> <li>• I seek that 3.15 is amended to prioritise engagement with the technical expert and landowner to co-design management frameworks for the farm which ensures that mobile species is provided for as an inherent and integral part of the farming business. These plans can be provided for through tailored Farm Plans bespoke to the biodiversity values and the farming business. These plans should be at no cost to the land owner.</li> <li>• The land owner should have the final say and advice from experts and DOC etc should be cost negative.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
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## Conclusion

*As a land owner the SNA were included in the price I paid for my property. If these are to be defined for some other use there needs to be some compensation. This proposal leads me to believe I will be giving away my right of ownership to manage these areas in the way I see best.*

*There needs to be some form of compensation to the land owner. This could be an annual rental, rates relief or purchase at the unimproved value of the land. All fencing or making the area secure should not rest solely on the present land owner. It is ironical that years ago our Regional council did give rates relief to land owners who had fenced such areas. In their*

*wisdom years later they took away this incentive. I would be dissappointed to see regulation replace encouragement.*

*Any plans for these areas should be cost free to the owner. No DOC consulting fees,iwi, or local bodies etc.*

*A precedent may be set for such if the NZ Government makes payment for a culturally significant piece of land called Ihumato in Auckland. The same rules should apply to anyone who has land desiganated a a SNA.*

*Plans like this need to be designed carefully so in years to come there are not claims for recompence as is occuring under Maori claims at present.*

- Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes. I/ We welcome the opportunity to further discuss any of the points above with the Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Conservation, should you wish for more information.
- For any inquiries relating to this feedback please contact .
- [REDACTED] Phone: [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED]
- Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

[Date]12 March 2020