

# SUBMISSION ON PROPOSED NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY

TO: MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT  
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## Submitter's Name and Contact Details

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## PART A – Introduction

Our families have farmed at Kaimai, Bay of Plenty for over a century. We ourselves have been farming for 35 years. We farm sheep and beef - breeding, green kiwifruit orchards and small pine lots.

### Biodiversity on my farm

[REDACTED] ( [REDACTED] ha ) of our land area is currently in native bush blocks .Scattered trees in most paddocks are used by stock for shelter and shade. The larger areas are SNAs, mapped by us and Western Bay District Council. Most of the bush is not fenced off and some has fences through it. There are also numerous streams and swamps.

### Why am I making this submission?

Once again we feel compelled to submit on a proposed policy that we as a landowner are being made to provide something for the benefit of everyone - "the greater good". Surely, just the fact that we own / still have the bush blocks means we have already done our bit. More and more rules and regulations, costs etc make life and livelihood difficult.

## PART B – Provisions of the NPSIB

### General responses to the proposals:

- We 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 both protected and restored.
- However, we seek changes to the NPSIB 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. 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.

### **Impacts and implementation:**

- What concerns us in relation to areas being identified as Significant Natural Areas (SNA's), is that land adjacent to SNA's could also be identified for protection. This would have a negative impact on our farming business e.g livestock management and financial 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 on their farming businesses.
- The compliance costs of the various proposals are likely to be significant and include the identification of these habitats and species, potential fencing off these habitats, and ongoing pest management. As currently proposed, it is unclear where these costs fall (hopefully not landowners or councils i.e ratepayers). 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. Financial support understanding and knowledge should be provided not only for areas where indigenous biodiversity is being restored, but also to where it currently exists.

Our farming operation is probably unique and sometimes challenging in that the area we farm in has many lifestyle blocks (none of which were created by us). Our farming operation has 3 different river boundaries - [REDACTED] kms, in total. We farm on one or both sides of 2 Council Roads and 1 State Highway (29) - [REDACTED] kms long. We have boundaries with 32 neighbours. The road boundaries are fenced. Neighbour boundaries are mostly fenced but river and bush blocks are not. At a conservative estimate fencing the bush blocks ([REDACTED] kms needed) would cost [REDACTED] for labour and materials for construction plus any earthworks required. If these costs are to be paid by us it will be financially crippling, make stock management harder in some places and possible unemployment for our workers.

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

- Support with amendments because we have concerns that this clause will not be well implemented in the proposed form.
- We support the recognition that the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity can occur while still providing for use and development.
- We support the recognition that people and communities are critical to conservation actions and the protection and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity.
- We support provisions which empower and support landowner and community conservation activities and local approaches.
- We propose that 3.7 is amended to recognise the importance of providing for farming land uses and business resilience, in supporting indigenous biodiversity protection.
- We propose that the NPSIB be amended so that policies and rules reflect Clause 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.

On an area of our farm we host an annual 2- day golf tournament to raise money for the local school. The appeal for those playing is not so much the game (as it is a bit challenging) but the biodiversity, views and farm animals. If the river, streams, swamps and bush require fences the events will be nowhere near as enjoyable, with lost balls, access and safety issues climbing over fences etc.

### **3.8 Identifying Significant Natural Areas:**

- Oppose.
- We support the intent of 3.8 in identifying Indigenous Biodiversity which is significant. We have been through this process with Western Bay of Plenty. However, with the extended criteria and no examples provided all indigenous biodiversity could be captured whether significant or common. Habitats and species specific to different regions will need different levels of protection.
- We propose changes to provision 3.8 so that the significance criteria are narrowed so that only habitats or species which are endangered, or threatened, are identified. Management frameworks can then be tailored to the level of risk that the habitat faces and the values that underpin the habitats significance.
- Exceptions can be provided for but should be specified in the regional or district plan.
- We support the identification of areas with significant indigenous plants and or species, by experts working with communities and in partnerships with landowners. This assessment should be undertaken in a consistent manner, with the significance of habitats verified or refined through an on the ground assessment, rather than just through reliance on spatial maps. Often the landowner knows exactly what fauna and flora is on their farm (they live and breathe it ) they are the expert.
- We oppose the requirements on local authorities that the assessments have to be completed within 5 years. This is because it is unlikely that the technical expertise is available within New Zealand to be able to undertake the assessments appropriately including through on the ground verification of the significance of habitats, in partnership with landowners.
- We propose that provision 3.8 is amended to enable local authorities the time to undertake this work in a robust manner. The ability for experts to work with landowners in identifying these habitats and in informing the ongoing management of these habitats within pastoral based land uses and activities, is an essential element to providing successful and enduring conservation outcomes.

There are currently SNAs on our farm. These were mapped using desktop analysis and then corrected and amended through discussions between ourselves and WBOP District council. Stock is not excluded (not fenced) and areas are not being reduced in size or degraded, though we think it is inappropriate and unreasonable for us to be required to pay for an ecological assessment to have to proof that, to allow us to continue our current farming practices.

### **3.9 Managing adverse effects on SNA's**

- Support with amendments.
- We propose that 3.9 is amended so that the effects management hierarchy is based on the level of the habitat's significance e.g. "endangered" or "threatened", and is tailored to the values which underpin the habitat's significance.

- Amend 3.9 so that the requirements relate 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 values that underpin the habitats significance (such as representativeness, rarity, and distinctiveness) can be avoided, or remedied, or mitigated.

### **3.10 Plantation Forests**

- We support proposal for Plantation Forest Diversity Areas.

### **3.12 Existing activities in SNA's**

- We support the intention of providing for existing activities, but are concerned that 3.12 as proposed does not do this.
- We propose that 3.12 be amended to specifically provide for the following activities within and adjacent to an SNA and areas identified as important for mobile species, where this is an existing activity:
  - Grazing of productive animals;
  - Pasture renewal;
  - Cultivation;
  - Track & Water table maintenance
  - Vegetation clearance.
- We propose that 3.12 be amended so that existing activities are provided for as a permitted activity. Where consents are required, then the effects of an activity should be assessed in relation to the attributes which underpin the significance of the habitat such as representativeness, rarity, and distinctiveness.
- WE propose that 3.12 be amended to delete restrictions on the ability to undertake an existing activity in areas which have become SNA's.

### **3.13 General rules applying outside SNA's:**

- We support in part the intention of recognising areas around SNA's as important for protecting SNA's themselves and their values.
- We propose amendments to 3.13 to ensure that existing activities as outlined in my submission re 3.12 are provided for. Under this rule (3.13) buffer zones could be required adjoining SNA's. This could prevent normal farm activities being carried out. This could cause inconvenience and farm viability and resilience.
- We propose 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.

### **3.15 Highly Mobile Fauna:**

- We oppose provisions which seek to mandate protection for highly mobile fauna through regulatory frameworks where this may impact on existing activities and land uses. Enduring and effective conservation to protect these species would be better achieved through working with landowners by offering financial support, understanding and expert knowledge if required.
- Understanding species, their values, and any management which is required would allow these populations to thrive with the exception of Paradise ducks which in our situation reach plague proportions in summer. They eat and foul quality pasture, foul waterways and spread diseases eg. salmonella, campylobacter to humans and animals.

- We propose that 3.15 is deleted in its current form. The goals of this clause can be achieved or amended to prioritise non regulatory, partnership, and landowner led approaches to managing mobile species and their habitat and lifecycle requirements.

### **3.16 Restoration and enhancement:**

- Support with amendments
- We support the goal of restoration and enhancement, but consider when applying robust cost/benefit analysis that this should only be achieved on the ground through non-regulatory means – such as advice, support, partnerships and incentives.
- Delete 3.16(6) which raises considerable concerns and uncertainties because it takes the provision well beyond a non-regulatory implementation framework.

### **Conclusion**

**If Indigenous Biodiversity is so important a monetary value should be put on it and those that protect, enhance and / or restore it should be financially rewarded by all New Zealanders or at the very least not financially disadvantaged on behalf of all New Zealanders**

Above are our detailed comments to selected provisions on the draft NPS  
We thank the ministry for considering our views