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Ministry for the Environment

Te Arawa River Iwi Trust Response: Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity

Introduction:

Te Arawa River Iwi Trust (TARIT) has its genesis in the Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Raukawa and Te Arawa River Iwi Waikato River Act 2010. The Trust represent the three Te Arawa River Iwi; Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa, Ngāti Kearoa-Ngāti Tuarā and Tuhourangi-Ngāti Wāhiao, who assert Mana Whenua, Kaitiakitanga, Ahi Kā, Mana Whakahaere and Mana o te Wai over the Waikato River and its tributaries that run through our rohe.

TARIT is committed to environmental sustainability and strategic goals:

1. Mana Tangata: Enabling our people to participate in the restoration and protection of the Waikato River, tributaries and environments.
2. Mana Taiao: Implementing measures to restore and protect the Waikato tributaries and environments.
3. Mana Mātauranga: Upholding tikanga, preserving wāhi tupuna and enhancing mātauranga of Te Arawa River Iwi.

Te Arawa River Iwi Trust (TARIT) would like to thank the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) for the opportunity to comment on the Proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB).

TARIT provides the following submission points on the discussion document to be considered.

Te Āo Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi

TARIT supports the purpose of the NPSIB document in recognising that the Te Āo Maori view has an intrinsic and holistic approach to viewing the environment. It is critical that the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi is upheld and integrated into this document, to ensure that iwi are included in the discussion and design of these documents via their mandated iwi authority whom represent mana whenua, mana o te wai, mana taiao, and through those whom practise kaitiakitanga.

1.7 Hutia te Rito

TARIT supports Hutia te Rito as a Māori concept. This concept is fundamental to achieving an integrated and holistic approach to indigenous biodiversity. However, in order to achieve this concept, this must be carried throughout the objectives, policies, and methods of the NPSIB. As stated in section 1.7 - "Fundamental Concepts" of the NPSIB document, Hutia te Rito recognises the impact people have on our natural environment and its survival is dependent on us making changes. TARIT believes that this is not reflected in the first Objective of the NPSIB. Objective one states "*to maintain indigenous biodiversity*". The discussion document record, indigenous ecosystems have been degraded, lost and fragmented. This is evident within the TARIT rohe due to development pressures, aquatic pests, weeds and the deterioration in water quality.

In the situation of what has been lost and what lays ahead for TARIT, specifically water quality, the objective to "maintain indigenous biodiversity" will lead to a decline in the freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity of the Waikato River. To "maintain", denotes that our current actions to protect our biodiversity is enough, however, the objective should incorporate "to maintain and **enhance** indigenous biodiversity" which denotes that our current actions need to not only be maintained but to be significantly improved on for the benefit of our biodiversity. TARIT seeks that objective one should be amended to read "*to maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity*".

3.16 Restoration, Enhancement and Increasing indigenous vegetation cover

TARIT supports the decision to restore, enhance and increase indigenous vegetation cover across the regions. However, TARIT notes that priorities should be allocated to both rural and urban areas after engaging and consulting with iwi through their iwi management plans, goals and aspirations based on the whakaaro of the area.

3.18 Regional Biodiversity Strategies

TARIT supports the intent of strengthening regional biodiversity strategies. More specifically, the preparation of the strategies in collaboration with tangata whenua is supported. TARIT view this as an excellent opportunity to integrate an holistic management approach by aligning and integrating other Regional Management Plans with the Regional Biodiversity Plan.

As treaty partners, the Government and Government Agencies need to include Māori whakaaro into the creation of these documents. In particular, TARIT would like to see the incorporation of the above changes implemented in the NPSIB

TARIT as a co-governing and co-managing partner look forward to the outcome of this discussion document and we look forward to being actively involved in the future development of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

If you have any queries please direct these through to,

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