

indigenusbiodiversity@mfe.govt.nz



www.taputeranga.org.nz

C/- 20 Prospect Terrace
Johnsonville
Wellington
New Zealand

Ph 04 478 4391

Email: proventure.nz@gmail.com

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Ministry for the Environment - Submission on National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB)

The Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve Trust (FoTMR) was formed in October 2009 to help ensure that the full range of the Marine Reserve's potential benefits could be realised and to give the community both a voice and an involvement in its future and the wider protection of marine habitat and species. The initiative for the Trust has come from individuals who have either been involved in the establishment of the marine reserve or who have provided crucial support for it from within the local and wider Wellington communities. The Trustees represent, or have had experience in marine science, the local community, commercial and recreational diving, central and local government, and conservation and marine users.

Submission

The Trust supports the need for a NPSIB to strengthen requirements for protecting our native plants, animals and ecosystems under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Inadequate legislation has resulted in an ongoing loss of biodiversity on private land throughout NZ, particularly in regions where land use intensification (including urbanisation) has occurred and this in turn has impacts on our freshwater and our coastal species (e.g. reducing sea bird nesting habitat, sedimentation and pollution impacting wetlands and coastal margins).

It is the Trusts view that the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) **needs to include and focus on our freshwater, wetland, estuary and coastal indigenous biodiversity** which in turn influences our ocean species.

Increasing pressures of fishing, habitat destruction and climate change is having a huge impact on our oceans. There is a lack of awareness of importance of species that create ecosystems (like seaweed beds, seaweed gardens and forests, mangroves and seagrass). Restoration and enhancement of freshwater and marine biodiversity is very important. Other countries start replanting seaweed and seagrass for a lot of money as those are highly productive and diverse ecosystems along our coasts and provide shelter and food for marine life. Seaweeds do a lot more for us. They mitigate climate change (take up CO₂ in photosynthesis), filter pollutants, take up nutrients and protect our coasts by buffering wave energy.

There is only a very little protected area around the coast compared to 30% on land and commitments of 30%. There is an importance to protect diverse habitats and significant marine biodiversity areas, and a need to restore coastal marine areas. This needs to be urgently addressed and remedied to help reduce the loss of biomass and biodiversity of our marine environments.

The Trust supports the incentives for the protection of indigenous biodiversity on private land are required and suggests:

- a) Increased funding for private owners covenanting and/or purchase of such areas (including fencing and predator control).
- b) Once protected by covenant, for example, enabling those landowners to participate in the Emissions Trading Scheme, or other future carbon sequestration programmes, as long as predator control measures and fencing off waterways etc are carried out to a certain standard.

The Trust considers that the NPS-IB part 3.16 requires an addition to reinforce the interactions between terrestrial, freshwater and marine indigenous biodiversity (areas that provide important connectivity or buffering functions) and, at the same time strengthen both the NPS-IB and the NPS-Freshwater Management.

The Trust suggests:

Part 3.16(1) requires a new clause:

e) Fresh water, estuarine and coastal marine ecosystems and their riparian margins.

Part 3.16(4)(c) requires a similar addition, e.g.:

c) areas that provide important connectivity or buffering functions, *including estuarine and coastal marine ecosystems and their riparian margins.*

The Trust strongly supports requirements for a monitoring regime and framework that is developed, managed, maintained and reported on at the national level. This reflects the view of the PCE (2019) *Focusing Aotearoa New Zealand's environmental reporting system* report, which emphasises the need to gather data in a consistent way, and to develop a core set of robust environmental indicators. This national measurement system must have clarity and deadlines in order to ensure quick implementation and ongoing accountability.

The Trust is very concerned that the NPS-IB does not apply to freshwater and marine indigenous biodiversity in wetland, coastal and freshwater ecosystems. Current legislation affecting the status of NZ's native freshwater fish and fisheries, has failed to halt declines and the increasing pressure on marine species is perilously evident. Similarly, the RMA has, to date, failed to adequately protect these habitats. This oversight needs to be remedied.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Yours sincerely

Nicole Miller

Chair

Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve Trust