

INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY SUBMISSION

My family and I have [REDACTED], after moving from Waikoikoi where my family farmed for 120 years.

We farm a maximum of [REDACTED] consisting of a breeding ewe flock, retaining hoggets with all lambs finished on the farm.

Our farm is divided by the Tahakopa river which is still lined with native bush, has many creeks across it, with 19 originating from DOC. These are still surrounded by bush until they reach the river flats.

Like most farmland in the Catlins it was logged in the early 1900's. Once the largest mill in the South Island was located beside my drive-way. So, of course all large timber trees, in easy to reach places were felled. But pockets of bush and wet lands still exist. Our property would have at least 15% covered in native bush, including a large peat swamp.

These areas survived the early logging due to their location or lack of productive value.

They still survive today because farmers have retained them, either because of their beauty, shelter value, habitat for wildlife or the fact that it was un-economic to develop them.

Or a combination of all these reasons.

I bought this property due to the fact it still had a lot of native bush on it, it's beautiful, supporting wildlife and provides excellent shelter for stock.. We have no intention of clearing it. We work very hard to maintain it. Spraying weeds and controlling unwanted pests.

So I support this policy to "protect our significant natural areas".

But rural New Zealand also needs to be protected, so that farms can be profitable, supporting healthy happy communities.

Mapping of these SNA's needs to be done within a partnership of council and landowners, ensuring a balanced outcome where farms can still be profitable and function, alongside nature.

So I would like to see teams created for each catchment area which consists of local land owners, local authorities with technical expertise, to ensure a good understanding of each environment to achieve the best outcome for each, as New Zealand is so varied.

One size doesn't not fit all.

The Catlins still has large amounts of native bush within its farms, there are no intensive farmed properties in Tahakopa, we look after our land and it looks after us.

I believe we have a good balance, maintaining good water quality with a recent MCI {macroinvertebrate community index} test done on the Tahakopa river scoring very good, and on a creek within our property returning a good reading also, while managing a successful farming operation, supporting our community and local businesses.

I value our bush areas and "yes" some will be of high SNA value. But I don't want to see every pocket of bush classified as a SNA, with tight restrictions attached. That would leave me with little area to farm, destroying the future of my business.

What I worry most about with this process of identifying SNA's is the impact on farmers and their communities. We were also already under a huge amount of pressure from our current political environment, with the "Fresh Water Policy" being dumped upon us in Spring with little time to respond.

My anxiety and broken sleep is now compounded by the effects of coronavirus19 and widespread drought, leading to reduced produce prices, lack of, or no processing space for livestock.

This has impacted all New Zealand farmers.

What is going to happen !

I support protecting New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity. But please remember about the New Zealanders working and owning these farms, living in these small remote communities.

We are New Zealand, this is what New Zealand was built from.

If we are not profitable and healthy neither is our community and its people.

Family owned farms are already under threat, we need to ensure that they can survive and thrive in the future too.

Healthy indigenous biodiversity within healthy rural communities.

Regards

██████████