National Policy Statement For Indigenous Biodiversity Submission:

Over the past 40 years I have been thrilled that in the area of agriculture, I have been able use my talents and skills with vision and passion. I recognise that there is nothing ‘brain dead’ about this calling. My response has been to work with and collaborate with nature and people.

I enter into this phase of putting forward a submission for a much greater reason than the mere ‘blink in time’ of my 40 years.

We farm Ha with altitude ranging from 165m. to 525m. a.s.l., being farmed and operated by our immediate family.

The land areas I want to bring attention to as Significant Natural Areas (SNA’s):

- **Native Bush** approx. Ha
  - This area is a timeless retreat. For the last 25 years while we have not taken or required anything from this area, we have recognised there is a wonderful resource there- yet in a time of need.
  - We have observed degeneration and regrowth of timber, which is how nature works. Historically this native area was managed, timber taken by selective harvest which is also a part of our ethos.

- **Wetlands** approx. Ha
  - Our wetland areas have been managed with a browsing animal system. If that was not so, our wetlands would have become overgrown and highly infested with broom, gorse and briars and weeds. It then becomes a habitat or haven for mustelids (ferrets, stoats), also rats and hedgehogs; leading to higher risk of bovine Tuberculosis.
  - In some of our wetlands we have a great population of native fish, bugs and beetles and there is a strong symbiotic relationship between the grazing sheep and these areas. This previous practice is being reconsidered in NZ and has been re-adopted in northern parts of America.

I am concerned with SNA’s where fences are erected and these areas are put into a theoretical time warp. I have watched this implemented practice over many decades, to note that the outcome of what once was beautiful vegetation becomes a heavily wooded overgrown mass. Plants go from an active vegetative state where a high level of photosynthesis and cycling of carbon happens, to plants that become mature and woody as they sit dormant, to then become a dangerous reservoir prone to out-of-control fires. Many retired areas potentially become corridors for fire. The biodiversity within many of these areas can totally change without management.
One of the challenges we are finding with our re-establishment of wetland areas has been the huge increase of unwanted water fowl (see NPSIB 3.15 Highly Mobile Fauna). It is not unusual during the autumn months to be inundated with large mobs of waterfowl that seem to be totally out-of-control. We ourselves and many of my colleagues have had crops decimated. These crops were planned and significantly vital during both summer and winter grazing periods.

Sheep, beef and dairy farmers have historically been blamed for high levels of e-coli and sediments in waterways. However, science and tests (DNA) have shown us that avian contribute between 70-90% to many waterway contamination. There should be the immediate removal of all protection for these invasive, introduced species. I sight my reasons for this as environmental; right through to animal and human health.

**Tussock approx. 1000 Ha**

On our properties we have Silver and Red Tussock which has brought an important balance to our pastoral farming. In the case of serious rain, snow, drought or other weather events, tussock areas can become stand-off areas for stock. Tussocks are one of the wonders of nature with their ability to capture atmospheric moisture in times of dry. In harsh, wet, cold conditions, tussocks also provide a bulk dry feed. If left unmanaged whereby they grow to maturity, often they can die out or become a potential fire risk. These areas can also develop further to become weed and vermin infested, with potential devastation to native fauna. Management with understanding to maintain optimal vegetative status is key.

**Rivers, creeks approx. 10 kms**

We are all for the protection of our waterways. We are priviledged to be situated in the headwaters of the Wairepo, the Catlins, the Waipahi and the Mokoreta. While fencing off waterways seems a great idea, my observation shows it unfortunately leads to congestion of waterways.

For that reason, I oppose the Strong direction for exclusion of Livestock (See NPSIB 3.9 Managing Effects on SNA’s), as I have seen the negative impact of this in the past.

A thicket of vegetation, and a catching of sediments build up on the banks and lead to a chronic overload on the bank’s structure. I have been disappointed to observe that what appeared to be the ideal for waterways 40 years ago, has become the opposite. Additionally, in the case of a major weather event, we see the same banks that we thought we were protecting, slump and release huge amounts of sediment and trash into waterways, also altering the bank from its natural water-edge.

For us to fence off and maintain a weed free riparian strip would create significant financial and physical hardship. However, where browsing stock have had access to the water edge, very little damage occurs. This is a more balanced mutually beneficial management practice.

We have areas of native fish in some of our waterways, the Flathead galaxias, 2 areas which are well documented. One area is retired from pastoral farming, the second one is open to high activity pastoral farming. In one, we have high numbers of healthy juvenile to adult
galaxias, and in the other we have galaxias that are struggling both in their numbers and in their individual physical condition score.
Fresh water koura (yabbies) and whistling tree frogs also occur across our property.

Summary
The SNA’s on our property currently, and, the potential for new SNA’s in the future, must not be seen as a handicap. They must deliver direct advantage to our farming entities. If stewardship brings forward SNA’s in a farming business, it should in no way bring degradation or points of economic failure. The huge fears that are gripping the majority of NZ farmers at the moment, have been instigated from the many compliances now current. Rather than ‘compliance’ being measured in a documented, oppressive report, which could also be measured as failure, any success in biodiversity should be highlighted to those in stewardship of those areas. Indigenous biodiversity has got to become our passion and our story. I view this as an opportune time to incentivise and encourage the caretakers of the land.

Thank you for considering these submissions.
I am available to speak to these.

Yours sincerely,