

# Submission on the proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity

## **Te Nohonga Kaitiaki Project Team**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This is a submission on the proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) published in November 2019.
- 1.2. Te Nohonga Kaitiaki (TNK) is a project facilitated by Genomics Aotearoa. The TNK project has been tasked with the development of guidelines on genomic research involving taonga species.
- 1.3. The TNK team have held various hui, wānanga and workshops with kaitiaki and traditional knowledge holders in the development of a robust cultural basis for the guidelines.
- 1.4. We believe that some of the key concepts and frameworks that have emerged from this work may support the objectives outlined in the proposed policy statement.
- 1.5. These submissions apply to Section B, Part 2.2 Policy 12 Part 3.14 of the proposed policy statement.

## **2. Summary**

- 2.1. We submit some of our key findings and frameworks as a resource that may be useful in:
  - 2.1.1. Understanding concepts and ideas within the Māori worldview relevant to taonga species
  - 2.1.2. Prioritising resourcing in this space, and
  - 2.1.3. Assisting in navigating relationships with kaitiaki.
- 2.2. Some of our key findings are that:
  - 2.2.1. Taonga species are not homogenous and require different levels of management.
  - 2.2.2. Mātauranga Māori is taonga and also requires recognition.
  - 2.2.3. Genomic data are taonga and of interest to Māori.
  - 2.2.4. Kaitiakitanga is broad and dynamic. Taonga species may or may not require a number of kaitiaki to take on various diverse roles.

## **3. Reflections on the proposal**

- 3.1. We agree that councils should work more closely with tangata whenua in identifying and managing taonga species.
- 3.2. We understand that identification of specific information may pose potential threats to taonga and the ability of kaitiaki to carry out their duties in the best way possible.
- 3.3. We maintain that tangata whenua are key in maintaining and enhancing Indigenous biodiversity, and as such, should be made more central in this document.
- 3.4. We believe that both Treaty principles and the RMA make allowance for us to more meaningfully incorporate Māori values into policy, and that the document can go further to do so.

## **4. Definitions**

- 4.1. Throughout the course of the TNK project, we've brought together a range of kaitiaki, kaumātua, kuia and a range of Māori thought leaders over a series of hui and wānanga. Their involvement and contributions have assisted in understanding and refining relevant concepts relating to taonga species, specifically within the context of genomic research.
- 4.2. The above have informed our definitions of the following concepts.
- 4.3. We share this knowledge in these submissions to assist in strengthening the cultural basis of the NPSIB.

### **Taonga**

- 4.4. Taonga species includes all living things within the Maori worldview.
- 4.5. Feedback from our hui and wānanga have confirmed that taonga species comprise all aspects and biological systems both internal and external to the taonga that support its function and wellbeing. This includes plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms.
- 4.6. Not all taonga are equal in nature or level of care that may be required.
- 4.7. The nature of taonga relies on the following factors. These influence the extent to which kaitiakitanga may need to take place:
  - 4.7.1. Provenance, relating to whether the taonga possesses a discernable whakapapa of Māori origin.
  - 4.7.2. Opportunity, whether a taonga supports the aspirations of Māori for the future of their people, culture or whenua.
  - 4.7.3. Utility, the extent to the usage of the taonga, whether its utility is exhausted after a single use or whether it is renewable.

### **Mātauranga Māori**

- 4.8. Mātauranga Māori is an important taonga that goes hand in hand with taonga species. Traditional knowledge relating to taonga species materialises its value.
- 4.9. Mātauranga originates from a local level, relating to regionally specific information. Common principles emerge from the collective to create a general body of mātauranga Māori. All of which are taonga.
- 4.10. Local mātauranga may assist in working out who has responsibility in certain spaces, however, doesn't exclude anyone from participating in more contemporary aspects of kaitiakitanga.

## Genomic Data

- 4.11. Genomic data generated from and about taonga species are taonga.
- 4.12. Māori have interest in any data generated from research on taonga species.
- 4.13. We submit that future versions of the NPSIB should make mention of genomic data within the scope of taonga, acknowledging that provisions within the RMA in accordance with the Treaty principle of good faith makes allowance for its inclusion.

## 5. Kaitiakitanga

- 5.1. Kaitiakitanga has broad, dynamic and contemporary applications.
- 5.2. There are a number of kaitiaki relationships that require diverse skills and expertise to maintain. Each relationship bearing its own set of rights, roles and responsibilities. These include relationships with:
  - 5.2.1. Te taonga, the primary relationship with the physical taonga or ecosystem.
    - 5.2.1.1. This includes the right to maintain the resource.
  - 5.2.2. Mātauranga taketake, the traditional mātauranga or knowledge associated with the taonga in all its contexts and use.
    - 5.2.2.1. The rights associated with this relationship is the right to preserve the integrity of the mātauranga, and traditional narratives be supported and not interfered with.
  - 5.2.3. He maramara pūtaiao, relating to any samples that are taken for research.
    - 5.2.3.1. Kaitiaki maintain the right to determine how these samples are to be managed.
  - 5.2.4. Te raraunga pūtaiao, the relationship to data generated from potential research.
    - 5.2.4.1. Kaitiaki maintain the right to reasonable access, privacy, permissions and provenance of data generated from or about taonga species.
  - 5.2.5. Mātauranga hōu, or new knowledge that may be generated from research.
    - 5.2.5.1. Kaitiaki are entitled to share in benefits from new knowledge.