

**To:** Ministry for Environment, [indigenousbiodiversity@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:indigenousbiodiversity@mfe.govt.nz)

**From:** North Canterbury Rural Support Trust, [ncrst.coordinator@gmail.com](mailto:ncrst.coordinator@gmail.com)

**Re:** He kura koiora i hokia: a discussion document on a proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity

The North Canterbury Rural Support Trust (NCRST) is making this submission to the Government's National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity discussion document. We wish to emphasise the importance that any new policies, requiring changes by farmers, include due consideration for the potential negative consequences they may have on farmer and family wellbeing. We ask that any changes allow adequate time and support to farmers, to facilitate them to manage these changes, minimising potential negative effects on their wellbeing. We support aspirations to achieve Indigenous Biodiversity, successful businesses and thriving rural communities.

- The NCRST is one of 14 regional Rural Support Trusts, which cover New Zealand's rural hinterland. We are a team of rural people whose aim it is to help rural North Canterbury people, by offering free confidential support to farming individuals and families in personal and/or financial difficulties. Our area representatives are trained to help people by offering a listening ear and support, and can refer to professional services like counselling and financial and farm management, or alternatively provide a mentor with a rural background in a specific sector.
- The NCRST support the principles of Indigenous Biodiversity outcomes for all New Zealanders, including rural people. We aspire to have healthy biodiversity on our land, successful businesses and thriving rural communities.
- We wish to emphasise that farmers are presently operating in an environment of significant change and uncertainty, much of which comes from external sources and are outside farmers control. At the NCRST we are observing the negative consequences and toll, which these changes and uncertainty are having on farmer stress levels and wellbeing. They are expressed in an increased workload for our services. Historically we have received on average one 0800 phone enquiry for support a month. In the twelve months to March 2020 we have received an average of four 0800 phone enquiries for support a month.
- We have found that financial downturns, for whatever reason, are a main driver of family stress and dysfunction, which we pick up in our support work. For this reason, we ask Government to please provide us with their financial analyses of the implications of the proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity. This will provide us with the extent to which it may increase demand for our services, which has to be clearly anticipated and planned for. We wish to emphasise the importance that any new policies, which require changes by farmers, include due consideration for the potential negative consequences they may have on farmer and family wellbeing, so that these effects can be prevented or minimised. We ask that any changes allow adequate time and support to farmers, to facilitate them to manage these changes in a healthy way.
- We support government agencies working with primary industry bodies so they can support farmers as we all work to achieve healthy biodiversity, successful businesses and thriving rural communities.

Thank you for considering our submission. We ask that you work with rural people and primary industry bodies to prevent or minimise negative effects of change and uncertainty on farmer and family wellbeing. We also ask that you provide us with the financial analyses of the implications of the proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity, to assist us in our planning.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Munro', with a horizontal line underneath.

Andy Munro  
Chair  
North Canterbury Rural Support Trust

Email: [ncrst.coordinator@gmail.com](mailto:ncrst.coordinator@gmail.com)