

From: [REDACTED] on behalf of [REDACTED]  
To: [Indigenousbiodiversity](#)  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: [REDACTED] Submission on the Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity  
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#### Submitter's Information

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- Region: Clutha
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- Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

Background about my farm

We are a family owned and run Sheep and Beef Farm in [REDACTED], South Otago. Our farm, [REDACTED], is [REDACTED] of freehold with [REDACTED] being effectively grazed. The area is characterised by rolling to steep hill country with sharp gullies and natural waterways.

We have planted [REDACTED] of shelter belts and exotic trees as well as being home to approximately [REDACTED] of native bush. Our farm boundaries [REDACTED] (DOC), [REDACTED] one, and [REDACTED]. We also are fortunate to have The [REDACTED] which is [REDACTED], and is classified as a regionally significant area by the ORC. management. These are all well fenced and controlled from noxious weeds.

[REDACTED] has been in the [REDACTED] family since 1960. [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) had lived and worked in the Slopedown district since 1950 for the [REDACTED]. After 10 years' service [REDACTED] gave him a preferential lease for the 'front' [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] relinquished a [REDACTED] bare block which adjoined the front block, making a total farm area of [REDACTED]. The 2019 (July) stocking levels are for [REDACTED] effective are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Made up of Sheep 78% and Cattle 22%. The mixed enterprise of sheep and beef are essential tools in pasture quality.

[REDACTED] ranges from 160 to 540 metres above sea level. Its contour ranges from low river flats which are easy going, undulating grass paddocks up to steep, tussock covered, rocky faces and bluffs. The majority of paddocks or blocks have sharp gullies which have native scrub and bush, and water tributaries. The Tahakopa River starts in the hill blocks as well as a small stream which feeds into the Mokoreta River.

- Why am I making this submission?

We aim to promote sustainable land management, enhancement of water ways and aquatic life, land, air, and protection of native vegetation and biodiversity, whilst providing a economically viable farming business for ourselves and for the future. We believe that role modelling and education are effective tools to improving farm practices and developing stronger communities.

### **General responses to the proposals:**

- We support the overall goal of the proposals that recognise the value of indigenous biodiversity to New Zealand, its people, and communities, and to ensure that Indigenous Biodiversity is both protected and restored.
- We support provisions which recognise that for conservation actions to be enduring, they require landowner and community support and leadership. Policies needs to recognise that people are critical to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity while acknowledging, respecting and fostering the contribution landowners, as custodians and Kaitiaki, make to these habitats and species.
- However, we oppose provisions which seek to 'lock up indigenous biodiversity' and in so doing penalise those landowners who have done the most to protect indigenous biodiversity. We seek changes to the policy to ensure that indigenous biodiversity can be integrated within pastoral based land uses and activities, and which recognise these can co-exist for mutual benefit.
- Indigenous biodiversity should be considered as an asset to the farming business, and communities, and not as a liability. Subtle but significant changes to the NPSIB are required to ensure that existing conservation efforts are rewarded, and ongoing conservation is supported and incentivised. The recognition of the values of indigenous biodiversity as part of pastoral based landscapes and farming businesses is required to ensure that these values, habitats, and species, are sustainably managed. A strong regulatory or stick approach to the recognition and ongoing management of indigenous biodiversity could, if not carefully constructed, undermine existing and future conservation efforts.
- Our farm is proud to care for our diverse range of landscapes, from tussock country to native bush to all the fauna that live there. A large proportion of our native bush is fenced from animal grazing and the majority of the farm boundaries with DOC or commercial forestry blocks which means feral animals are constantly being dealt with.
  - We love taking our kids and their friends for walks exploring the native bush and forest and listening to all the native birds. We like to collect seeds and seedlings for propagating to replant in riparian strips and other areas that are suitable for regeneration on our farm.

### **Impacts and implementation:**

- We are deeply concerned about the potential impacts of these proposals on our farm in relation to areas being identified as Significant Natural Areas (SNA's), areas identified as being important for the protection of SNA's which may include land adjacent to SNA's, and the identification of highly mobile species, in relation to the impacts this may have on our farming business and its resilience and viability. The provisions could be interpreted as precluding the ongoing grazing of animals adjacent to and within these areas, which means that those that have done the most to protect indigenous habitats and species within their farming businesses could shoulder the greatest costs including restrictions on their farming businesses.
- The compliance costs of the various proposals are likely to be significant and

include the identification of these habitats and species, fencing of these habitats (could require deer fencing to manage wild populations), and ongoing pest management. As currently proposed, it is unclear where these costs fall. Financial, technical, and human resourcing support should be provided to assist landowners to continue to protect and restore indigenous habitats and populations within their farming businesses and communities. Support should be provided only to areas where indigenous biodiversity is being restored, but also to where it currently exists.

- We are concerned that New Zealand does not currently have the extent of technical expertise available to assist regional and district councils to identify SNA's and mobile species across their territorial areas within the next five years, to ground truth this work, and to work with farmers. The requirements on regional and district councils including timeframes should ensure that the identification of these habitats and species is robust and is undertaken in a way which engages landowners and communities, builds understanding and knowledge, and which empowers local conservation efforts.
- We currently have a [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED] and approximately [REDACTED] of native bush. We also have bush gullies and large tussock hills which could mean the majority of our farm could possibly be described as "significant" under the proposed changes. We are concerned our ability to farm economically and under our own management will be substantially diminished with all the areas being protected, require protecting, or requiring a resource consent for 'normal' farming practices

#### **Hutia Te Rito:**

- We support with amendments.
- We support the objective of local authorities recognising and providing for Hutia Te Rito which recognises the relationships between indigenous biodiversity and people and communities, and that conservation requires kaitiakitanga and custodianship.
- We seek that the term "stewardship" is replaced with "custodianship" which more correctly reflects the values we place on indigenous biodiversity within our farm and as part of our family's history, our future, our relationship and ties to our land.
- We support provisions which recognise and empower ground up, landowner, and community led conservation actions, and which prioritise non regulatory over regulation management frameworks.
- We have a SNA and native bush blocks fenced off from stock and we are constantly culling pests, such as wild deer and pigs from our farm. We have purchased traps to install a line for rats, possums, ferrets and stoats.
- We love being on our farm and feel at home on the land. Our goal is to farm productively whilst protecting and enhancing the natural flora, fauna and biodiversity for the future.

#### **3.7 Social, economic and cultural wellbeing:**

- We support with amendments.
- We support the recognition that the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity can occur while still providing for use and development.
- We support the recognition that people and communities are critical to conservation actions and the protection and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity.
- We support provisions which empower and support landowner and community conservation activities and local approaches.
- We seek that 3.7 is amended to recognise the importance of providing for farming land uses and business resilience, in supporting indigenous biodiversity protection.
- We seek that the NPSIB be amended so that policies and rules reflect Objective 3.7

including prioritising non regulatory approaches and partnerships over regulatory frameworks, and the establishment of conservation frameworks which recognise that the protection and where required enhancement of indigenous biodiversity can be provided within pastoral based farming land uses and alongside pastoral based activities, and that these are not mutually exclusive.

### **3.8 Identifying Significant Natural Areas:**

- We Oppose.
- We support the intent of 3.8 in identifying Indigenous Biodiversity which is significant. However, the criteria appears really broad and in our opinion could capture any indigenous biodiversity irrespective of how common it is. Because the criteria is broad and examples are not provided of what habitats and species it is intended to cover, it is difficult for us to work out what it means to our farming business, and community.
- We seek changes to provision 3.8 so that the significance criteria are narrowed so that only habitats or species which are endangered, or threatened, are identified. Management frameworks can then be tailored to the level of risk that the habitat faces and the values that underpin the habitats significance.
- Amend provision 3.8 so that a habitat that is identified as "threatened" is only included if it is 0.25ha or greater and contiguous.
- Amend provision 3.8 so that a habitat that is identified as "rare" is only included if it is 0.5ha or greater and contiguous.
- Amend provision 3.8 so that a habitat that is identified as "at risk" is only included if it is 1ha or greater and contiguous.
- Exceptions can be provided for but should be specified in the regional or district plan.
- We seek any consequential amendments to ensure provisions are aligned in identifying and then establishing management frameworks specific to the risk status of the habitat e.g. "rare", "threatened", or "at risk".
- We support the identification of areas with significant indigenous plants and or species, by experts working with communities and in partnerships with landowners. This assessment should be undertaken in a consistent manner, with the significance of habitats verified or refined through an on the ground assessment, rather than just through reliance on spatial maps.
- We oppose the requirements on local authorities that the assessments have to be completed within 5 years. This is because it is unlikely that the technical expertise is available within New Zealand to be able to undertake the assessments appropriately including through on the ground verification of the significance of habitats, in partnership with landowners.
- We seek that provision 3.8 is amended to enable local authorities the time to undertake this work in a robust manner. The ability for experts to work with landowners in identifying these habitats and in informing the ongoing management of these habitats within pastoral based land uses and activities, is an essential element to providing successful and enduring conservation outcomes.
- Our farm is home to a SNA in the Upper Tahakopa Swamp (17.8ha) which we have fenced and control noxious weeds and feral animals. We try to protect all of our farm in the same manner, whether it is grass, bush, tussock or wetland. All of this is at a cost to our business and to our personal lives.
- It is quite possible that a person looking at a map on a computer will consider all of our farm to be a SNA or at least lots of small areas which would be ridiculously uneconomical to fence and farm.

### **3.9 Managing adverse effects on SNA's**

- We support with amendments.
- We support requirements to manage new activities that affect significant natural areas.
- We seek that 3.9 is amended so that the effects management hierarchy is based on the level of the habitats significance e.g. "endangered" or "threatened", and is tailored to the values which underpin the habitats significance.
- Amend 3.9 so that the requirements relates to consent applications and the assessment of effects, and requirements to avoid, remedy, or mitigate the effects. New activities should be provided for where the effects of the activity on the values that underpin the habitats significance (such as representativeness, rarity, and distinctiveness) can be avoided, or remedied, or mitigated.
- Amend provisions so that the ability to offset effects should only be provided for where the offset can occur in the same ecological area. The ability to offset an activity in the urban environment, onto the rural environment should not be enabled.

### **3.12 Existing activities in SNA's**

- We Oppose.
- We support the intention of providing for existing activities, but are concerned that 3.12 as proposed does not do this.
- We seek that 3.12 be amended to specifically provide for the following activities within and adjacent to an SNA and areas identified as important for mobile species, where this is an existing activity:
  - Grazing of productive animals;
  - Pasture renewal;
  - Cultivation;
  - Vegetation clearance.
- We seek that 3.12 be amended so that the temporal and spatial nature of existing activities as part of pastoral based farming are recognised. Specifically, vegetation clearance, cultivation, or pastoral renewal, that may occur within a 7-year rotational basis, along with the pastoral grazing of livestock that also may be temporal in nature for example during drought periods.
- We graze our stock next to our SNA swamp which is fenced. The unruly vegetation that would overtake the swamp if areas adjacent to the SNA where included would be of more concern to the well being of the SNA. Our farming practices work in harmony with the local ecosystems.
- We seek that 3.12 be amended so that existing activities are provided for as a permitted activity. Where consents are required, then the effects of an activity should be assessed in relation to the attributes which underpin the significance of the habitat such as representativeness, rarity, and distinctiveness.
- We seek that 3.12 be amended to delete requirements to maintain or protect the 'ecological integrity' of a habitat, where the 'ecological integrity' of the habitat may have been impacted prior to notification of the NPSIB e.g. through existing impacts on the habitats ability to regenerate.
- We seek that 3.12 be amended to delete restrictions on the ability to undertake an existing activity in areas which have become SNA's.

### **3.13 General rules applying outside SNA's:**

- We support the intention of recognising areas around SNA's as important for protecting SNA's themselves and their values.
- We seek amendments to 3.13 to ensure that existing activities as outlined under 3.12 are provided for. We are concerned that 3.13 as proposed may result in areas of our farm around our SNA's being 'locked up' from pastoral based farming activities. This

could result in significant areas of our farm being impacted which ultimately would significantly impact our farm viability and resilience.

- We seek that 3.13 is amended to prioritise non regulatory, partnership, and landowner led approaches to managing areas around SNA's in order to protect the attributes that make a SNA significant. We seek that clause (2) is deleted.
- We seek that 3.13 is amended to prioritise engagement with the technical expert and landowner to co design management frameworks for the farm which ensures that indigenous biodiversity is provided for as an inherent and integral part of the farming business. These plans can be provided for through tailored Farm Plans bespoke to the biodiversity values and the farming business.

### **3.15 Highly Mobile Fauna:**

- We support with amendments.
- We support the intention to recognise and provide for highly mobile fauna through non regulatory/ partnership-based frameworks generally, and where required regulatory approaches in relation to new subdivision, and development.
- We oppose provisions which seek to mandate this protection through regulatory frameworks where this may impact on existing activities and land uses. Enduring and effecting conservation approaches to protect these species are best achieved through working with landowners, and in particular the role of the expert in working with landowners to build understanding of these species, their values, and any management which is required for these populations to be healthy and resilient.
- We seek that 3.15 is amended to prioritise non regulatory, partnership, and landowner led approaches to managing mobile species and their habitat and lifecycle requirements.
- We seek that 3.15 is amended to prioritise engagement with the technical expert and landowner to co design management frameworks for the farm which ensures that mobile species is provided for as an inherent and integral part of the farming business. These plans can be provided for through tailored Farm Plans bespoke to the biodiversity values and the farming business.

### **Other comments:**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss any of the points above with the Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Conservation, should you wish for more information.

For any inquires relating to this feedback please contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]