
**Decision Report of Council
in respect of submissions to the
Proposed Regional Pest Management Plan and
Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy**

Taranaki Regional Council
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31 October 2017

Document number: 1952447

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Part One: Introduction

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report (the Decision Report) is to present the Taranaki Regional Council's (the Council):

- decisions on the **Regional Pest Management Plan for Taranaki** ('the Plan'), and the **Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy 2017-2037** ('the Strategy'); and
- reasons for accepting or rejecting the submissions..

2. Format of this report

This report is divided into two parts. This part of the report – Part One – introduces the report including its purpose, format, background, an overview of submissions and decisions and a brief outline of the approach taken in the reports on submissions contained in Part Two.

Part Two, which constitutes the main body of the report, addresses, for each submission made on the Plan and Strategy:

- the relief sought by submitters;
- the Council's response to the relief sought, including reasons for accepting or rejecting the relief sought; and
- the Council's decisions on the Plan and Strategy.

3. Background

Under the Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act), the principal means for undertaking and obtaining funding for future pest management is through the preparation and implementation of pest management plans.

The Regional Pest Management Plan

The *Regional Pest Management Plan for Taranaki* (the Plan) is the fourth Plan to be prepared by the Council. Once operative, the Plan empowers the Council to exercise the relevant enforcement and funding provisions available under the Act.

Pursuant to the 2012 amendments to the Act (via the *Biosecurity Law Reform Act 2012*), the Council was not legally required to publicly notify the Plan (Section 72). However, given

the wide public interest in such matters, Council agreed to the public notification of the proposal to test its proposals against community expectations and address any feedback received. This process involved the receipt of public submissions and a hearing of submissions prior to Council making its final determinations.

The Plan builds on the success of the current strategies. It identifies and sets out management programmes with respect to the 16 pest species that the Council believes warrant regional intervention and therefore the imposition of obligations and costs on individuals and the regional community (other harmful species will be managed under the Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy – refer below). Based upon its section 71 analysis under the Act, the Council is satisfied that:

- the candidate animal and plant species are capable of having adverse effects of regional significance,
- the benefits of their control outweigh the costs, and
- the benefits accrue principally to the region.

Some prioritising has necessarily been required to identify those harmful species of most concern and which meet the 'tests' required of the Biosecurity Act. In its prioritising, the Council recognised that other harmful animals or plants may still be addressed by other forms of intervention, including non regulatory methods, voluntary control, small-scale management programmes (as provided for under section 100V of the Act), or by other parties pursuant to the Biosecurity Act or other relevant legislation (such as the Department of Conservation).

The Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy 2017–2037

As part of the regional pest management review process the Council decided to include the preparation of a non-statutory biosecurity strategy. The Council is not required by law to have such a document. However, it does support and complement the Council's Plan (which only represents a small part of Council activities in relation to 'pest' management). The *Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy 2017–2037* (the Strategy) covers all of the Council's biosecurity activities and programmes, whether statutory or non-

statutory. Most activities undertaken by the Council are discretionary and regulation is only a small part of the Council's overall pest management response.

The Strategy relates to that part of the biosecurity system for which the Council has a mandate to be involved. Other agencies, such as the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Department of Conservation, have separate roles and responsibilities.

The Strategy addresses not only the 16 species for which rules and regulation are deemed appropriate, but also the thousands of other harmful species that warrant different forms of intervention (ranging from advice, biological control, regulation, to the Council itself undertaking direct control).

The Strategy represents a change in business for the Council. Over time, the Council has committed significant resources to the management of legacy (widespread and established) pests impacting on production and biodiversity values. However, through the Strategy, the Council is also seeking to develop initiatives and actions that target harmful organisms before they become a problem (recognising that other agencies also have responsibilities) and to better target Council responses to sites and places where they threaten particular values. The document's overall aim is to identify Council actions that should help the region to become more resilient to pest impacts.

4. The submissions process

The Proposed Plan and draft Strategy were publicly notified for submissions on 20 May 2017. A total of 10 submissions were received. The closing date for submissions was 30 June 2017.

Of the 10 submissions received, four were from persons or organisations in the region. Three of the four submissions received from persons or organisations in the region were from organisations representing industry or environmental interests (Federated Farmers, North Taranaki Forest and Bird, and Fish and Game New Zealand). One submission came from a local individual.

Of the six submissions received from outside the region, the Council received submissions from Waikato Regional Council, Taranaki

Mounga Project Limited, Predator Free New Zealand Trust, the Morgan Foundation, the Department of Conservation, and KiwiRail Holdings Limited.

In general, the submissions received were positive. Most indicated support for the Plan and Strategy, as well as the overall vision, and the management approach used to achieve objectives set out in both documents. The main issues raised by submitters related to:

- the species identified as pests and their inclusion in the Plan (or otherwise)
- support or opposition for Good Neighbour Rules
- new or additional programmes, methods, or rules, or changes to certain rules, and/or wording in the Plan and Strategy.

Prior to holding a hearing, officers met with or contacted submitters to discuss their submissions, clarify information and discuss preliminary responses to the relief sought.

5. Hearing of submissions

On 17 October 2017, a Hearing Committee was convened by the Council to hear submitters on the Plan and Strategy who wished to be heard orally. Submissions that had previously been provided in writing were taken as read by the Hearing Committee.

Two of the submitters (Taranaki Mounga Project Ltd and Department of Conservation) wished to be heard orally. Each submitter was provided with 10 minutes to speak to their submission and five minutes was set aside for any questions from Members of the Hearing Committee.

Key points raised orally by the submitters were as follows:

- **Taranaki Mounga Project Limited (TMPL)**: largely supportive of the Officers' report, however, considered that a regulatory "back-stop" will eventually be necessary to address the risk of goats immigrating into the Egmont National Park. Noted the Council's commitment to continuing discussion on the matter of appropriate regulatory mechanisms and sought the inclusion of an additional action confirming this commitment in the

section of the Strategy that refers to their work.

- **Department of Conservation (DOC):**
DOC re-iterated its comments on proposed wording changes and its request for further information on unwanted organisms and noxious fish to be inserted into the Plan. Requests for the inclusion of Brown Bull-headed catfish, Darwin's barberry, and Climbing asparagus as eradication pests were also reiterated. The Department spoke of their concerns relating to Good Neighbour Rules and their view that they did not meet the tests imposed by the NPD. DOC disagreed with the approach taken in the Officer's Report in respect of Giant gunnera and Pampas. DOC noted its overall support for the biosecurity approach contained in the Strategy and added some suggestions for potential improvements, including the removal of the word "feral" in respect of deer, pigs, and goats and its replacement with the word "wild".

Papers tabled at the hearing by Taranaki Mounga Project Limited and the Department of Conservation are attached to this report as Appendices II and III.

At the Hearing, members of the Hearing Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the Officers' Report subject to minor amendments.

The Hearing Committee presented its report and recommendations, including the amended Plan and Strategy, to the Council's 31 October 2017 Ordinary meeting for its consideration.

6. Decision Report of Council

As previously noted, at its 31 October 2017 meeting, the Council considered and adopted the Hearing Committee's report and recommendations.

Pursuant to section 75 of the Act, when the Council is satisfied that it has complied with all the matters in sections 71-74 of the process to make a plan, it must prepare a written report on the Plan. This report gives effect to that requirement.

Part Two of this document contains a report on each of the submissions received.

In some submissions, submitters did not explicitly state the decision that they wished the Council to make. In such cases, the intent of the submission was considered or inferred from the available information. There were opportunities for submitters to clarify their submissions (if necessary) at pre-hearing meetings or at the Hearing.

Council decisions in response to the relief sought, including reasons for accepting or rejecting the relief sought, and the Council's decisions on the Plan and Strategy are also included in respect of each submitter.

Changes of a minor nature or to correct errors have been made and included in the re-drafted versions of both the Plan and Strategy. These include grammatical and typographical errors, and information changes of minor effect. No specific recommendations regarding these changes have been made.

Part Two: Report on submissions

Submission No. 1

Murray Hancock
4c Antonio Street
Stratford

Decision sought

Section 4 of Plan: Organisms declared as pests

- (a) Include Sycamore tree as a pest plant.

Council response

The submitter's comment is noted. The Council agrees that Sycamore trees have potential 'pest' characteristics, particularly in relation to biodiversity values. However, the application of rules requiring land occupiers across the region to control the species is considered unnecessarily onerous.

Notwithstanding that, an alternative approach is recommended whereby the Council provides support and assistance to land occupiers to control Sycamore, particularly in those sites and places identified as regionally significant for their indigenous biodiversity values. Of note, Section 7 of the Strategy includes a suite of non-regulatory measures involving the management of harmful species such as Sycamores, on a site-led basis. Further changes to the Strategy are recommended to explicitly identify Sycamore trees as a harmful species in Appendix 2 (Table 4) of the Strategy for which site-led management programmes are proposed.

Council decision

Grant the relief in part by amending the Strategy to identify Sycamore trees as a harmful species.

Decision sought

Section 6.10 of Plan: Old man's beard

- (b) Control Old man's beard promptly in urban as well as rural areas.

Council response

The submitter's comment is noted. Submitter's comments have been referred to the Council's Environmental Services Department for action.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Question: Increased focus on eradicating certain named pests

- (c) Support Council increasing its focus on the proposed eradication programme. The submitter further notes that an involved and better informed public could help with eradication.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Question: Rules requiring land occupiers to maintain low predator numbers

- (d) Supports extending the scope of the Self-Help Possum Control Programme to address other predators such as rats and mustelids and more involvement of urban as well as rural land occupiers.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Submission No. 2

Waikato Regional Council

Private Bag 3038

Hamilton 3240

Decision sought

General:

- (a) Supports the approach and intent of both Plan and Strategy.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General:

- (b) Supports the division of current and future biosecurity policy matters into 10-year duration regulatory and 20-year non-regulatory documents. The submitter suggested that the Council's streamlined approach *"has set the benchmark for clear-cut and concise splits of the various biosecurity policies and matters in both documents."*

Council response

The submitter's comments and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General:

- (c) Endorses Council's approach to good neighbour rules and states that, in its opinion, the Plan's good neighbour rules comply with the National Policy Direction.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General:

- (d) Notes differences in alignment between the Waikato and Taranaki plans in respect of Pampas management and good neighbour rule boundary clearance (buffer) distances.

Council response

The submitter notes that boundary clearance distances adopted in the Waikato Plan are different from those proposed in the Taranaki Plan. The submitter notes that the issues are a historical legacy that the Waikato Regional Council will work through in its impending review.

The submitter further suggested amending Pampas from a sustained control management programme in the Plan to making it site-led programme in the Strategy. The submitter noted Waikato Regional Council is looking to change its management programme approach for Pampas during their next review.

The submitter's comments are noted. The Council notes that the situation regarding Pampas will be dealt with later on in section (o) of this report.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 3.1: The Management Agency

- (e) Seeks amendment to section 3.1 of the Plan to add references to section 5.3 (Principal Measures to Manage Pests), Part 3 (Procedures), and to the Council's Operational Plan.

Council response

The submitter supports this section in part but suggests amending section 3.1 of the Plan to reference section 5.3 (Principal Measures to Manage Pests), Part 3 (Procedures), and the Council's Operational Plan.

The Council agrees to amend the references as submitted.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending section 3.1 of the Plan to reference section 5.3 (Principal Measures to Manage Pests), Part 3 (Procedures), and the Council's Operational Plan.

Decision sought

Section 4: Organisms declared as Pests

- (f) Seeks following minor amendments to section 4 of the Plan:
1. Expand text box in Section 4 by adding third bullet point referring to the application of Exemptions under section 78 of the Act.
 2. For each sustained control pest, after the words "*Contravention of this rule ... of the Biosecurity Act*" add reference to application of Exemptions as outlined elsewhere in the Plan."

Council response

The submitter supports this section in part but suggests minor amendments to section 4 of the Plan for the purposes of certainty and clarity.

The Council agrees to grant the submitter's relief in part. It is recommended that the text box is amended to refer to exemptions to rules however the Council does not recommend adding references to exemptions in the explanation of every rule as they consider this would be unnecessary detail (given such references are already adequately provided for elsewhere in the Plan) and would be repetitive.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought in part by amending the text box in section 4 of the Plan to refer to exemptions to rules.

Decision sought

Section 4.1: Other Harmful Organisms

- (g) Supports Council's management approach to Yellow bristle grass.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 5.3.3: Service delivery

- (h) Seeks a clearer link age statement in section 5.3.3 of the Plan in relation to the Plan and the Strategy.

Council response

The submitter supports this section 5.3.3 of the Plan in part but suggests a clearer link could be made between the Plan and the Strategy by addition of a sentence.

The submitter's comment is noted. The Council agrees to add additional wording as follows:

"For further information on surveillance, monitoring, and direct control actions to be taken and eradication targets, refer to section [5] of the *Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy 2017–2037*."

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending section 5.3.3 of the Plan to read "*For further information on surveillance, monitoring, and direct control actions to be taken and eradication targets, refer to section [5] of the Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy 2017–2037.*"

Decision sought

Section 6.1: Climbing spindleberry

- (i) Supports Council's management approach to Climbing spindleberry.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6.2: Giant reed

- (j) Supports Council's management approach to Giant reed.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6.3: Madeira vine

- (k) Supports Council's management approach to Madeira vine despite difficulty in achieving eradication objective.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6.5: Senegal tea

- (l) Supports Council's management approach to Senegal tea.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6.6.1: Possums

- (m) Seeks minor amendments in section 6.6.1 of the Plan to clarify wording and add linkage to Predator Free 2050 Limited and Strategy.

Council response

The submitter supports section 6.6.1 of the Plan in part but suggests more clarity is needed in the wording. Suggests amend text box to clarify wording and add linkage to Predator Free 2050 Limited and Strategy.

The Council agrees to the relief sought and recommend amendments in the text box that delete the final sentence in the second paragraph and the addition of new wording suggested by the submitter.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending section 6.6.1 of the Plan to clarify wording and add linkage to Predator Free 2050 Limited and Strategy.

Decision sought

Section 6.7.3: Giant buttercup

- (n) The submitter supports this section in part. Submitter suggests alignment of wording of heading with other similar sub-sections.

Council response

The submitter's comment is noted and agreed to. The heading for Giant buttercup now reads "Plan rules requiring land occupiers and other persons to act".

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending heading in section 6.7.3 of the Plan to read "*Plan rules requiring land occupiers and other persons to act*".

Decision sought

Section 6.11: Pampas

- (o) Seeks amendments to section 6.11 of the Plan to:
1. delete Pampas as a sustained control management programme in the Plan and include as a site-led programme in the Strategy; or
 2. in the event that relief to the above is not granted, delete reference to bird spread from the Good Neighbour rule.

Council response

It is the submitter contention that it may not be possible to achieve sustained control of Pampas in the Taranaki region by relying on a Good Neighbour rule. The submitter notes that Pampas seed can blow for up to 25km and therefore the 2km buffer proposed by the Council may not be a realistic way to reduce or minimise adverse impacts. The submitter notes that Pampas continues to thrive in the Waikato region, despite progressive containment management and total control rules in southern areas, including adjacent to the Council's boundary.

The submitter suggests that the site-led (protecting values in places) category in the Strategy is the more appropriate intervention and supports the Council's service delivery programmes in relation to Key Native Ecosystems. The submitter is opposed to the specified buffer distance and notes that the Waikato Regional Council is looking to change their management programme approach for Pampas during their next review.

The submitter's comments are noted. The Council notes that other submitters (these being Submission numbers 3 and 6) have sought alternative management programmes for Pampas given concerns around the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed compliance programme.

The Council agrees that the current Pampas rules impose compliance cost on land occupiers with Pampas on their land. Historically these compliance costs have principally fallen on farmers using Pampas for hedging and shelter belts. Of note farmers are not significantly affected by Pampas because their land is vegetated and Pampas does not grow well on vegetated or modified land. Pampas does not grow well in sub-alpine, or alpine areas either, so it has little impact on the Egmont National Park.

The Council recommends that Pampas is removed from sustained control management under the Plan and instead be addressed under the Biosecurity Strategy through site-led programmes and activities including pathway management, advice and education, liaison and advocacy, and biological control. The Council

would still monitor and control Pampas on Key Native Ecosystem sites.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by removing Pampas from sustained control management under the Plan and including it as a "harmful organism" to be managed under the Strategy.

Decision sought

General: Linkage of Plan and Biosecurity Strategy

- (p) Supports the linkages between the two documents and notes that the Biosecurity Strategy complements the Plan well.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Strategy: Sections 1.4 and 3.3 – Five key priority areas

- (q) Supports the five key priority areas identified in Section 3.3 of the Strategy, which are well aligned with the Waikato Regional Council's own philosophy on pest management.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Strategy: Section 2.3.4 – Management of pest pathways

- (r) Strongly supports both the regulatory and non-regulatory approaches adopted in the Strategy to enable better management of pest pathways.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Strategy: Section 2.4.2 – Department of Conservation

- (s) Seeks amendment to section 2.4.2 of the Strategy to correct a typo in the first line of the first bullet point by replacing "off" with "of".

Council response

The submitter's comment is noted and the typo has been amended.

Council decision

Grant relief sought by amending section 2.4.2 of the Strategy to correct a typo in the first line of the first bullet point by replacing "off" with "of".

Decision sought

Strategy: Section 3.1 – Vision for biosecurity in Taranaki

- (t) Strongly supports the vision proposed in the Strategy.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Strategy: Section 4 – Pathways and exclusion

- (u) Seeks amendment to the Plan to include a specific Exclusion category of pests to cover, for instance, rooks and wallabies.

Council response

The submitter suggests the benefits of including a specific Exclusion category of pests in the Plan to cover, for instance, rooks and wallabies. The submitter suggests that including them in the Plan allows Council officers to access powers under the Act to intervene on private land in case these pests are discovered in Taranaki. The submitter suggests that the risk may be low but a cautionary approach would align better with other North Island councils.

The submitter's comments are noted. The Council notes section 4 of the Strategy already includes pathway and exclusion programmes that address the plethora of harmful species, including rooks and wallabies, not yet present in Taranaki. Pursuant to that Strategy the proposed exclusion and pathway programmes focus on the Council undertaking risk assessments, contingency planning and surveillance activities to avoid the introduction or establishment of harmful organisms present in New Zealand but not yet present in the region.

The Council notes that access to Part 6 regulatory powers to undertake planning and surveillance activities is not necessary to achieve the objectives of the Strategy in relation to exclusion and pathway programmes. As noted in the Strategy, in the event that a new harmful organism is identified in the region and access to regulatory powers is considered appropriate Council would be able to initiate small-scale management programmes under section 100V of the Act without needing to initiate a Plan review. This is the preferred course of action and provides greater pest resilience to the region rather than trying to accurately predict which harmful species might emerge in Taranaki over the life of the Plan.

Council decision

Decline the relief sought.

Decision sought

Strategy: Section 4.3 and 2.3.4 – Pathway and exclusion targets

- (v) Supports active surveillance for high risk pathways and seeks inclusion of one additional pathway – that of cartage contractors (machinery, stock and equipment) – particularly agricultural contractors who travel between the 3-4 central North Island regions.

Council response

The submitter's comments are noted. The Council suggests amendments to sections 4 and 4.2.2 of the Strategy to highlight pathway risks associated with cartage/agricultural contractors and activities that address those risks.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending sections 4 and 4.2.2 of the Strategy to highlight pathway risks associated with cartage/agricultural contractors and activities that address those risks.

Decision sought

Question 10 – Community and site-led targets

- (w) Suggests a cautionary approach in the Strategy to extending self-help predator control to rodents or mustelids in line with predator control of possums.

Council response

The submitter suggests a cautionary approach in the Strategy to extending self-help predator control to rodents or mustelids in line with predator control of possums. The submitter notes that the characteristics of rodents and mustelids make it difficult to enforce rules for these species. However, the submitter supports the ideas underpinning the Predator Free 2050 concept and hopes to work with the Council on mutually beneficial projects.

The submitter's comments and support are noted. No change to the Strategy is required. The Council notes that pursuant to section 7.2.2 of the Strategy, any predator control rules are subject to public support and technical feasibility, which would be considered as part of a review or variation to the Plan in accordance with the Act.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Submission No. 3

Federated Farmers – Taranaki Province

PO Box 422
15 Young Street
New Plymouth

Decision sought

General:

- (a) Notes support for:
 - a. combination and the addition of a non-regulatory Strategy document
 - b. the development of a detailed cost benefit analysis
 - c. the rigorous nature of the process used to identify pests that should be eradicated.

Council response

The submitter's comments and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General:

- (b) Notes strong support for the good neighbour rules contained in the Plan and their application to Crown and private land.

Council response

The submitter's comments and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Pampas grass

- (c) Seeks the removal of Pampas from sustained control list and inclusion in Strategy instead.

Council response

The submitter is opposed to a sustained control management programme for Pampas and recommends that Pampas be removed from the Plan and instead be addressed by targeted site-led programmes in the Strategy alongside other harmful environmental plants. The submitter highlighted that the plant was not a problem in most areas (and has beneficial attributes) yet the two kilometre buffer distance in the good neighbour rule captures most properties in Taranaki. The submitter suggests that the education of landowners on the best way to manage Pampas will likely be all that is required going forward.

The submitter's comments and concerns are noted. The Council notes that other submitters (these being Submission numbers 2 and 6) have also sought alternative management programmes for Pampas given concerns around the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed compliance programme.

The Council agrees that current Pampas rules create significant compliance cost on land occupiers with Pampas on their land. Historically these compliance costs have principally fallen on farmers using Pampas for hedging and shelter belts. Of note farmers are not significantly affected by Pampas because their land is vegetated and Pampas does not grow well on vegetated or modified land. Pampas does not grow well in sub-alpine, or alpine areas either, so it has little impact on the Egmont National Park.

The Council recommends that Pampas is removed from sustained control management under the Plan and instead be addressed under the Biosecurity Strategy through site-led programmes and activities including pathway management, advice and education, liaison and advocacy, and biological control. The Council would still monitor and control Pampas on Key Native Ecosystem sites.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by removing Pampas from sustained control management under the Plan and including it as a 'harmful organism' to be managed under the Biosecurity Strategy.

Decision sought

General: Extension of Self-help Possum Control Programme

- (d) Supports proposals in the Plan and Strategy to expand the Self-help Possum Control Programme to urban areas and to target rats and mustelids. The submitter further supports Council's intention to seek co-funding for Wild for Taranaki and Taranaki Mouna projects.

Council response

The submitter's comments are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Old man's beard

- (e) Supports extension of self-help programme principles to Old man's beard along Kaupokonui Stream and Waingongoro River. Notes this is an excellent example of the partnership approach that the Council is recognised for in the farming community and thanks the Council for their proactive engagement on the issue.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Yellow bristle grass

- (f) Seeks support that the Council either:
 - a. Make Yellow bristle grass (YBG) a sustained control management pest in the Plan; OR
 - b. Accept its inclusion in the Strategy, in the list of 'other harmful organisms', for which regulatory control is not deemed appropriate.

Council response

The submitter notes that YBG is a serious concern to many Taranaki farmers. Although the submitter recognises that eradication is no longer feasible, it considers that there is opportunity to prevent the further spread of YBG, particularly into the eastern hill country. This area is of particular concern because the usual control options of spraying out and re-grassing are much harder or impossible in the hill country.

The submitter acknowledges the financial implications, both to Council and farmers, if rules (via the Plan) were to apply. The submitter suggests an alternative to including YBG in the Plan would be to place YBG in the Strategy. However, the submitter is seeking an intensification of efforts on controlling the spread of YBG into new areas noting that they need to be confident that such an approach is not simply a monitoring response or a continuation of previous (so-far largely ineffective) measures. The submitter notes that the current list of actions mentioned in the Strategy may be a useful starting point.

The submitter's comments and concerns are noted. The Council agrees with the submitter that not all effective pest plant management needs to be subject to regulatory management. The inclusion of YBG and the application of rules to control the plant would indeed impose significant costs on farmers and others despite limited effective control options being available to land occupiers. The Council therefore prefers the submitter's alternative option of addressing YBG via the Strategy with a suite of programmes and actions that intensify efforts of working with others to prevent its further spread.

The Council recommends the inclusion of a new section 8.2.5 of the Strategy (and other consequential changes) that explicitly addresses managing the spread of YBG through a suite of dedicated programmes and activities that represent an intensification of efforts to prevent the further spread of YBG in the region.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending the Strategy to include a new section on programmes and activities explicitly targeting YBG.

Decision sought

General: Strategy Vision, principles and priority areas

- (g) Supports the Strategy's vision, principles and priority areas and the Council's cooperative, integrated, scientific and socially-mandated approach..

Council response

The submitter's comments and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General: Strategy: Wider biosecurity framework outside Council

- (h) Supports the Council's approach of not duplicating work of other agencies and adding value where appropriate.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General: Strategy: Risk assessments and contingency planning

- (i) Agrees in principle with the Strategy's increased focus on surveillance and pathway management. Supports proactive work on potential invasive pests as long as there are existing resources to do this without compromising effective management of important pests already in Taranaki.

Council response

The submitter's comments are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General: Strategy: Other leadership responses

- (j) Supports the Council's promotion of alignment of regional pest management.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General: Plan section 3.3.4: Road reserves

- (k) Supports Council's approach of making roading authorities responsible for formed roads and land occupiers responsible for any paper roads on their land.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Submission No. 4

Morgan Foundation

PO Box 19218
Wellington 6149

Decision sought

General:

- (a) Commends Council on a comprehensive and detailed Plan.

Council response

The submitter's comment is noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6: Feral cats: Pest descriptions and programmes

- (b) Supports inclusion of feral cats in the Plan (Appendix 2 of the Proposed Plan) as a site-led pest and agrees that there are sensitive wildlife areas where it is essential for cats to be managed to achieve biodiversity outcomes.
- (c) Seeks changes to Table in Appendix 2 of the Plan to define 'feral cat' and would like to see a clearer definition of feral cat so that cats can be managed in sensitive wildlife areas near populated areas. Noted that an appropriate definition would define a feral cat as any cat without a microchip, collar, or harness.
- (d) Seeks mention of toxoplasmosis in the description of the problem for feral cats.

Council response

The submitter's comments are noted.

The Council recognises the submitter's concerns relating to feral cat management and in response to submissions are recommending changes to the Strategy to ensure site-led and landscape predator control programmes target feral cats. Cats will also be controlled directly by the Council, through the Strategy, in Key Native Ecosystems. However as a result of the pest management review undertaken since 2013, the Council does not recommend the imposition of rules for feral cats in the Plan due to their widespread dispersal, the unenforceability of rules pertaining to

abandonment, release, and control, and their assessment that land occupiers and other interested parties are better placed to make decisions on whether or not it is necessary to undertake control.

The Council notes that in accordance with section 100G(4) of the Act, inconsequential amendments have been made to the revised Proposed Plan to focus more clearly on only those species declared to be pests and for which a regulatory approach has been adopted. Accordingly material in the Table relating to other harmful organisms including feral cats has been transferred and inserted into Appendix 2 of the Strategy. In response to the submitter's comments, officers have enhanced that material to include reference to toxoplasmosis.

Officers have further inserted a definition of 'feral cat' into the Biosecurity Strategy based upon that proposed in the *National Cat Management Strategy* (2017), which reads as follows:

Feral cats: these cats are unowned, unsocialised, and have no relationship with or dependence on humans.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought in part by amending the Strategy to insert a definition of 'feral cat' that reads as follows "*Feral cats: these cats are unowned, unsocialised, and have no relationship with or dependence on humans.*"

Decision sought

Section 6: Feral cats: Pest descriptions and programmes

- (e) Notes that there is no mention about the creation or support of cat colonies, or cat abandonment, in the Plan or Strategy and that "*there are a number of other regions that are considering making rules to prevent the establishment or maintenance of cat colonies.*"

Council response

The submitter's comments are noted. No changes to the Plan are considered necessary.

The Council shares the submitter's concerns around the risks posed by cat colonies to nearby biodiversity values. It is suggested that section 8.2.4 of the Strategy be amended to provide for this Council to support local government advocacy for extra powers to protect wildlife from cats. The Council recommends, where the opportunity arises, that Council submit to central government to support initiatives to develop national cat management legislation.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought in part by amending section 8.2.4 of the Strategy to support local government advocacy for extra powers to protect wildlife from cats plus national initiatives to develop national cat management legislation.

Decision sought

General: Expansion of predator control

- (f) Seeks expansion of the Self-Help Possum Control Programme to include feral cats.

Council response

The submitter supports expansion of the Self-Help Possum Control Programme to include other predators however it notes feral cats are not included. The submitter questions this given "*... the devastating effect they have on our native species and the disease risk they bring to primary production*". The submitter suggests that feral cats will undermine the biodiversity outcomes of any predator control work if they are not included.

The submitter's comment is noted. The Council recommends that section 7.2.2 of the Strategy be amended to identify and include feral cats within Council programmes related to landscape predator control on the ring plain.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending section 7.2.2 of the Strategy to identify and include feral cats within Council programmes related to landscape predator control on the ring plain.

Submission No. 5

Predator Free New Zealand Trust

C/- Rebecca Bell

Level 1, 190 Taranaki Street

Wellington 6011

Decision sought

General:

- (a) Commends Council on a comprehensive and detailed Plan.

Council response

The submitter's comments are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6: Feral cats: Pest descriptions and programmes

- (b) Supports inclusion of feral cats as a site-led pest in the Plan (Appendix 2 of the Plan)
- (c) Seeks management of feral cats near populated areas
- (d) Seeks a clearer definition of feral cat to include one without a microchip or with a microchip that is caught more than once.
- (e) Seeks mention of toxoplasmosis in the description of the problem.

Council response

Submitter supports inclusion of feral cats in the Plan as a site-led pest and seeks management of feral cats near populated areas as *"there is currently no easy way to manage unowned cats in areas of ecological significance that are near populated areas."*

Submitter further seeks a clearer definition of feral cat to include one without a microchip or with a microchip that is caught more than once. The submitter also wants mention of toxoplasmosis in the description of the problem.

The Council recognises the submitter's concerns relating to feral cat management and in response to submissions are recommending changes to the Strategy to ensure site led and landscape predator control programmes target feral cats. Cats will also be

controlled directly by the Council, through the Strategy, in Key Native Ecosystems. However as a result of the pest management review undertaken since 2013, the Council does not recommend the imposition of rules for feral cats in the Plan due to their widespread dispersal, the unenforceability of rules pertaining to abandonment, release, and control, and their assessment that land occupiers and other interested parties are better placed to make decisions on whether or not it is necessary to undertake control.

The Council notes that in accordance with section 100G(4) of the Act, inconsequential amendments have been made to the revised Proposed Plan to focus more clearly on only those species declared to be pests and for which a regulatory approach has been adopted. Accordingly material in the Table relating to other harmful organisms including feral cats has been transferred and inserted into Appendix 2 of the Strategy. In response to the submitter's comments, officers have enhanced that material to include reference to toxoplasmosis.

Officers have further inserted a definition of 'feral cat' into the Biosecurity Strategy based upon that proposed in the *National Cat Management Strategy* (2017), which reads as follows:

Feral cats: these cats are unowned, unsocialised, and have no relationship with or dependence on humans.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought in part by amending the Strategy to insert a definition of 'feral cat' that reads as follows *"Feral cats: these cats are unowned, unsocialised, and have no relationship with or dependence on humans."*

Decision sought

Section 6: Feral cats

- (f) Seeks that ecologically sensitive areas be defined as such so that cats can be managed in and around those areas.

Council response

The submitter suggests that ecologically sensitive areas need to be defined as such in the Plan so that cats can be managed in and around those areas.

In relation to the Plan or Strategy defining ecologically sensitive areas the Council recommends declining the relief sought. A definition may have been necessary for the purposes of legal certainty and clarity if linked to a rule in a Plan. However as noted in the response to submission point (g) below, the Council does not recommend the imposition of rules for feral cats. For the purposes of the Strategy (in which rules do not apply) a legal definition of ecologically sensitive areas

is also not necessary or appropriate. The Strategy refers to Council programmes and activities that will address the protection of 'ecologically sensitive areas', (which includes Key Native Ecosystems, wetlands, dunelands, native forests and scrublands) not just at a site level but at a landscape level. This provides for more comprehensive feral cat control and it would not be useful to limit feral cat control to a small finite number of legally defined areas.

Council decision

Decline the relief sought.

Decision sought

General:

- (g) Seek the inclusion of rules in the Plan preventing the establishment or maintenance of cat colonies and for the abandonment of unwanted cats.

Council response

The submitter would like to see rules in the Plan preventing the establishment or maintenance of cat colonies. It is stated that other councils (Tasman and Greater Wellington) are proposing to include cat colonies in their plans. The submitter seeks additional rules about abandoning unwanted cats.

The Council does not recommend the inclusion of rules in the Plan to prevent the establishment or maintenance of cat colonies. It is the Council view that such rules could be more appropriately addressed by district councils through bylaws and would be difficult to enforce under the BSA.

The Council notes that in respect of the current rule in Greater Wellington's Plan, the ability to protect biodiversity values is dependant upon the land occupier's preferences: *"No person shall support or encourage feral and/or unwanted cat colonies on private land without the landowners/occupier's express permission.* If a land occupier is 'sympathetic' to supporting or encouraging a cat colony there is no ability to enforce this rule. If a land occupier does not support or encourage the cat colony the rule is redundant. In Taranaki, land occupiers who wish to control cats can do so at any time and the Council already provides support, including traps and advice and information.

Notwithstanding the above, the Council shares the submitter's concerns around the risks posed by cat colonies to nearby biodiversity values and recommend alternative actions to discourage the establishment or maintenance of cat colonies and allow more effective feral cat control. It is suggested that section 8.2.4 of the Strategy be amended to provide for this Council to

support local government advocacy for extra powers to protect wildlife from cats. The Council recommends, where the opportunity arises, that Council submit to central government to support initiatives to develop national cat management legislation. The Council further recommends that section 7.2.2 of the Strategy be amended to identify and include feral cats within Council programmes related to landscape predator control on the ring plain.

Council decision

Decline the relief.

Decision sought

General: Strategy: Expansion of self-help possum control to other predators

- (h) Seeks expansion of predator control programmes to target feral cats at a landscape scale.

Council response

The submitter support expansion of the Self-help Possum Control Programme to include predator control but would also seek the targeting of feral cats given their devastating effect on biodiversity. The submitter notes that in similar programmes undertaken in the Hawke's Bay area they are catching many more feral cats than mustelids.

The submitter recognises that farmers are busy and may not have time to do the feral cat control work sought. They suggest a funding option might be to charge an additional levy on rateable land and use the funds to pay contractors to maintain predator levels. They note other councils (Hawke's Bay and Northland regional councils) have done this.

The submitter's comments and support are noted. As noted above, The Council recommends that section 7.2.2 of the Strategy be amended to identify and include feral cats within Council programmes related to landscape predator control on the ring plain.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending section 7.2.2 of the Strategy to identify and include feral cats within Council programmes related to landscape predator control on the ring plain.

Decision sought

Strategy: 7.2.3 – Urban projects

- (i) Seeks that the Urban Possum Control Programme be expanded to include rats, mustelids and feral cats in urban areas.

Council response

The submitter seeks Council support for urban communities to control a range of predators rather than the current focus in section 7.2.3 of the Strategy on possums.

The submitter's comments are noted. Sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 of the draft Strategy currently address landscape predator control (which includes rats, mustelids and now feral cats) and urban possum control. The Council recommends minor changes to these sections to clarify that predator control is proposed across both rural and urban landscapes.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 of the Strategy to clarify that predator control is proposed across both rural and urban landscapes.

Decision sought

Strategy: 7.2.5 – Community and Site-led biodiversity programmes

- (j) Supports Council's work with community groups and individuals to control predators on private land and agrees that Council has a key role to play in providing education and advice and potentially access to equipment.
- (k) Seeks that where Council is funding conservation groups, that it takes the recent comments of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE) into account (in the report *Taonga of an Island Nation*), which states that "*funding organisations should give priority to groups that have already made significant conservation gains to ensure the gains are not lost.*" Also comments that funding should be secure over a number of years and that "targeted support for, and better coordination of, community groups would make this great collective effort more effective and more rewarding for those involved."

Council response

The submitter's comments and support are noted.

With respect to funding, the Council notes the Council's record of working with other groups to promote biodiversity outcomes across that region as

demonstrated by the development, review and implementation of its Biodiversity Strategy (2008 and 2017), the establishment and support for the Taranaki Biodiversity Accord and Wild for Taranaki, and through its funding and provision of other support to groups undertaking biodiversity work and projects of regional significance. It is the Council's long and established practice to fund groups that have already made significant conservation gains. Such examples include the Taranaki Tree Trust, the Rapanui Petrel Trust, Rotokare Trust and East Taranaki Environment Trust. In effect this Council has been implementing the PCE's recommendation for sometime. Council will continue to explore any opportunities to enhance the coordination of community groups involved in this work.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Strategy General: Riparian planting benefits

- (l) Seeks the inclusion of riparian planting initiatives to provide bird corridors for safe migration of bird species in Council's plans.

Council response

The submitter notes that PCE report referred to above also discusses the potential for riparian planting to provide bird corridors for safe migration of bird species and seeks inclusion of this in Council's plans and encourages the Council to consider this in their plans.

The submitter's comment is noted. The Council notes that the Council has, for some time, been implementing the Taranaki Riparian Management Programme. This non regulatory programme is international in scale involving 2687 properties and 14,921 kilometres of streambanks. To date the programme has resulted in 4,650 kilometres of additional fencing and 2,554 kilometres of riparian planting. The Programme is already identified and supported in the Council's Long Term Plan, Regional Policy Statement, Regional Freshwater Plan, Soil Plan and Biodiversity Strategy.

Of note, the potential for riparian planting to provide bird corridors for safe migration of bird species is explicitly recognised in the Council's Biodiversity Strategy 2017.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Strategy: Appendix 1: Summary of the means for achieving individual pest management objectives

- (m) Seeks inclusion of rats and hedgehogs in list of harmful species for site-led programmes set out in Appendix 1 of the Strategy.

Council response

The submitter's comment is noted. The Council notes that Appendix 1 of the Strategy has been supplemented by a more comprehensive table of material transferred from the Plan. This list includes rats and hedgehogs.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought.

Decision sought

Strategy General:

- (n) Seeks that Council approach Government to develop national cat management legislation that, at a minimum, would include compulsory de-sexing, microchipping, limits on cat ownership, breeder registration, rules on cat abandonment and establishment and maintenance of cat colonies.

Council response

The Council agrees to the submitter's relief. The Council suggests that section 8.2.4 of the Strategy be amended to provide for this Council to support local government advocacy for extra powers to protect wildlife from cats. The Council also recommends, where the opportunity arises, that Council submit to central government to support initiatives to develop national cat management legislation.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought in part by amending section 8.2.4 of the Strategy to support local government advocacy for extra powers to protect wildlife from cats plus national initiatives to develop national cat management legislation.

Submission No. 6

Department of Conservation

55A Rimu Street
New Plymouth 4312

Decision sought

Section 1.2: Plan Establishment:

Purpose

- (a) Seek amendment to paragraph 2 of section 1.2 of the Plan to state:
"Many organisms in the Taranaki region, or which could infest the Taranaki region, are considered undesirable or a nuisance. For some of those organisms it is considered that a pest management plan will add significant value to the region by providing for their eradication or effective management, and that value will exceed the value derived from uncoordinated individual actions (or inaction)."

Council response

The submitter considers that the following statement misrepresents the purpose of having a plan: *"There are many organisms in the Taranaki region considered undesirable or a nuisance. However, it is only where an individual's pest management actions or inaction impose undue effects upon others that regional management is warranted."* The submitter's contention is that the wording misrepresents the legislation and seeks the following wording:

"Many organisms in the Taranaki region, or which could infest the Taranaki region, are considered undesirable or a nuisance. For some of those organisms it is considered that a pest management plan will add significant value to the region by providing for their eradication or effective management, and that value will exceed the value derived from uncoordinated individual actions (or inaction)."

The wording sought to be replaced by the submitter was developed as part of a sector approach to promote alignment in the content matter of Plan across New Zealand. There is a risk that too many minor wording changes across Plan processes across New Zealand may ultimately undermine that alignment. Notwithstanding that the word changes sought by the submitter are minor so it is recommended that the relief be granted.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending paragraph 2 of section 1.2 of the Plan to read: *"...Many organisms in the Taranaki region, or which could infest the Taranaki*

region, are considered undesirable or a nuisance. For some of those organisms it is considered that a pest management plan will add significant value to the region by providing for their eradication or effective management, and that value will exceed the value derived from uncoordinated individual actions (or inaction)."

Decision sought

Section 2.1: Strategic background

- (b) Seek amendments to section 2.1 of the Plan to more clearly describe the regional economic, biodiversity and cultural planning instruments that provide the rationale for pest management.

Council response

The submitter considers that the place of the Plan in the strategic landscape for Taranaki could be enlarged upon.

The submitter further considers that the following statement is an incorrect representation of the relationship between values and pest management planning: *"Several planning or operational activities contribute to the overall efficiency in reducing pest impacts on the region's economic, environmental, social and cultural values."* The submitter suggests the paragraph need to be reviewed to more clearly describe the regional economic, biodiversity and cultural planning instruments that provide the rationale for pest management.

The Council suggests that the more appropriate place for describing the strategic landscape for Taranaki is in the Strategy, which includes such a description. Section 2.1 of the Plan is a high level overview, rather than a detailed description of the strategic pest/biosecurity framework.

The Council notes that they have reviewed the relevant section and, as a result, amendments have been made to remove unnecessary detail in this section of the Plan (noting that the additional material sought by the submitter is covered in the Strategy). This is consistent with changes elsewhere for the final Plan to align with the content requirements of a Plan as set out in section 73 of the Act.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 2: Planning and statutory background

- (c) Seeks amendment to Section 2 of the Plan to identify the wider Taranaki pest management “landscape” and to include a textural or pictorial link to the full picture of pest management undertaken or contributed to by publicly-funded agencies in Taranaki.

Council response

The submitter suggests identifying the wider Taranaki pest management “landscape”, in the Plan and submits that the Plan could be enhanced by providing a textural or pictorial link to the full picture of pest management undertaken or contributed to by publicly-funded agencies in Taranaki. The submitter offers to supply spatial data relating to its programmes if the submission is accepted.

The Council suggests that material similar to that sought by the submitter is already included in the Strategy and do not believe it is necessary to replicate it in the Plan. Refer to previous discussion in (b) above.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 2.2.1 – Biosecurity Act 1993

- (d) Seeks expanded commentary in section 2.2.1 of the Plan on “Unwanted Organisms” including a description on additional layers of pest management provided by National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) and noxious fish status, powers of TRC staff to access, and a summary of occupier obligations with respect to unwanted organisms and noxious fish.

Council response

The submitter seeks expanded commentary in section 2.2.1 of the Plan on “Unwanted Organisms” including a description on additional layers of pest management provided by National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) and noxious fish status, powers of Council staff to access, and a summary of occupier obligations with respect to unwanted organisms and noxious fish.

The submitter contends that a description of the linkages between the classifications would enhance the linkages between the Plan and these other mechanisms for managing harmful organisms. Such descriptions would highlight to occupiers the limitations that are

imposed upon them by national pest management decisions / policies.

The Council suggests that additional commentary sought by the submitter has already been separately provided for in sections 2.3.5 (Small-scale management programme), 2.4.1 (Ministry for Primary Industries), and 2.4.2 (Department of Conservation) of the Strategy, which includes linkages to further information. The Council does not believe it is necessary to replicate it in the Plan. Refer to previous discussions in (b) and (c) above.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 2.2.4: Wild Animal Control Act 1977 and the Wildlife Act 1953

- (e) Seeks correction of clause 2.2.4(b) of the Plan to delete reference to ferrets being able to be kept and bred in captivity even if they are declared a pest.

Council response

The submitter seeks amendment to section 2.2.4 of the Plan to recognise that as ferrets are classified as unwanted organisms, they cannot be kept in captivity and bred without specific authority. The Council agrees and will delete reference to ferrets in this sub-section.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending section 2.2.4 of the Plan to delete reference to ferrets.

Decision sought

Section 2.3: Relationship with other pest management plans

- (f) Seeks the addition of the word “collaboration” after “consultation” in the second paragraph of section 2.3 of the Plan.

Council response

The submitter seeks the addition of the word “collaboration” after “consultation” in the second paragraph of section 2.3 of the Plan to read “... *will be achieved through a process based on consultation, collaboration, and communication between the Taranaki Regional Council and the relevant agency.*” The submitter contended that “collaboration” would add

strength to the suite of actions proposed to ensure coordination in pest management matters in Taranaki.

The wording sought by the submitter to be amended was developed as part of a sector approach to promote alignment in the content matter of Plan across New Zealand. There is a risk that too many minor wording changes across Plan processes across New Zealand may ultimately undermine that alignment. Notwithstanding that the word changes sought by the submitter are minor so it is recommended that the relief be granted.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending the second paragraph of section 2.3 of the Plan to refer to "collaboration".

Decision sought

Section 3.3: Crown agencies

- (g) Seeks amendment to the description of a good neighbour rule set out in section 3.3 of the Plan.

Council response

The submitter suggests that the description of a good neighbour rule contained in this section is incorrect and suggests amended wording as follows: "*A good neighbour rule responds to the issues caused when a land occupier imposes unreasonable costs on an adjacent land occupier who is actively managing a certain pest, by not undertaking management, or sufficient management, of that pest.*" It is the submitter's contention that the rewording more accurately reflects the Act and the *National Policy Direction 2015*.

The wording sought by the submitter to be replaced was developed as part of a sector approach to promote alignment in the content matter of Plan across New Zealand. There is a risk of too many minor wording changes across Plan processes across New Zealand may ultimately undermine that alignment. Notwithstanding that the word changes sought by the submitter are minor and do not change the Council's intent so it is recommended that the relief be granted.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending the description of 'good neighbour rules' in section 3.3 of the Plan to read: "*...A good neighbour rule responds to the issues caused when a land occupier imposes unreasonable costs on an adjacent land occupier who is actively managing a certain pest, by not undertaking management, or sufficient management, of that pest.*"

Decision sought

Section 3.3.1: Department of Conservation

- (h) Seeks amendment to the second paragraph of section 3.3.1 of the Plan to include a description of restrictions on spreading or holding particular pest fish.

Council response

Item 8 of the submission relates to the treatment of pest fish previously covered in the current Plan. The submitter suggests that the second paragraph of this section needs to be reviewed and amended to include a description of restrictions on spreading or holding particular pest fish.

The Council has reviewed the section and as a result suggests minor amendments to include a description of restrictions on spreading or holding particular pest fish of concern to the Department of Conservation. The Council also notes that Council programmes and activities relevant to pest fish management are addressed in the Strategy

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending section 3.3.1 of the Plan to include a description of restrictions on spreading or holding particular pest fish of concern to the Department of Conservation.

Decision sought

Section 3.3.1: Department of Conservation

- (i) Seeks that the current pest status and rules for Brown bull-headed catfish be retained.

Council response

Item 9 of the submission relates to the treatment of pest fish previously covered in the current Plan. The submitter submits that Council should consider maintaining the current pest status and rules for Brown bull-headed catfish, recognising that the species could be deliberately spread to waterways from adjacent regions, and that Council manage the pest by way of an 'exclusion' management programme.

At the hearing, the submitter subsequently sought changes to the Plan or Strategy that clarified Council authorities and powers relating to the propagation or spread of unwanted organisms and noxious fish. As outlined in section 3.3.1 of the Plan the Department of Conservation has statutory responsibilities for managing freshwater fisheries. Lead responsibility for

pest fish incursions more appropriately lies with the Department rather than the Council. The Council does not therefore recommend making changes to the Plan. Notwithstanding that, pathway and exclusion management are one of five priority areas included in the Strategy.

The Council notes that this Council has regularly supported and assisted the Department of Conservation with respect to pest fish surveillance and eradication activities in Taranaki and proposes to continue to do so through exclusion and pathway programmes outlined in section 4 of the Strategy.

The Council recommends amending section 2.4.2 and Appendix 2 of the Strategy to refer to legislative authorities and powers relating to the propagation or spread of unwanted organisms and noxious fish (plus other harmful species). The Council further recommends amending section 4.2.2 of the Strategy to include a new action that states this Council will work with relevant biosecurity agencies such as the Department of Conservation on surveillance and exclusion of harmful species not yet present in Taranaki, including Brown bull-headed catfish. If the Department is interested, it is proposed that Council work with the Department to carry out a risk assessment, including the identification of appropriate management responses pursuant to section 4.2.1 of the Strategy.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought in kind by amending sections 2.4.2, 4.2.2 and Appendix 2 of the Strategy to include a new action stating that Council will work with relevant biosecurity agencies on surveillance and exclusion of harmful species not yet present in Taranaki, including Brown bull-headed catfish, and to outline legislative authorities and powers relating to the propagation or spread of unwanted organisms and noxious fish.

Decision sought

Section 3.3.1: Department of Conservation

- (j) Seeks that Council exclude pest fish species in conjunction with the Department of Conservation from the region, if it is not present, or to eradicate it from the region if it is present and it is feasible to do so, or otherwise contain the species.

Council response

The submitter submits that either former section 3.3.2.1 or section 7 of the Plan be amended to include an undertaking that Council will support the management of pest fish species in conjunction with Department of

Conservation to either exclude a species from the region, if it is not present, or to eradicate it from the region if it is present and it is feasible to do so, or otherwise contain the species.

As per comments in (h) and (i) above, the Council recommends making minor amendment to section 4.2.2 of the Strategy to include a new action that states this Council will work with relevant biosecurity agencies such as the Department of Conservation on surveillance and exclusion of harmful species not present yet in Taranaki, including Brown bull-headed catfish. If the Department is interested it is further proposed that Council work with the Department to carry out a risk assessment, including the identification of appropriate management responses by the relevant parties pursuant to section 4.2.1 of the Strategy. This may include the development of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought in kind by amending section 4.2 of the Strategy to include a new action stating that Council will work with relevant biosecurity agencies on surveillance and exclusion of harmful species not present yet in Taranaki, including Brown bull-headed catfish.

Decision sought

Section 4: Organisms declared as pests – Brown bull-headed catfish

- (k) Seeks that Brown bull-headed catfish be included as a pest in the Plan.

Council response

The submitter's comment is noted. As per the comments in (h), (i) and (j) above, the Council does not recommend changes to the Plan and suggest that such matters are more appropriately addressed in the Strategy. The Council recommends minor amendment to section 4.2 of the Strategy to include a new action that states this Council will work with relevant biosecurity agencies such as the Department of Conservation on surveillance and exclusion of harmful species not present yet in Taranaki, including Brown bull-headed catfish.

Council decision

Decline the relief sought.

Decision sought

Section 4: Organisms declared as pests – Darwin's barberry

- (l) Seeks that Darwin's barberry be included as an eradication pest in the Plan, at least to the west of the pest management line.

Council response

No change to the Plan is recommended. The Council does not believe the eradication objective sought for Darwin's barberry is technically achievable given the species is well established in the region (unlike the other proposed eradication species). Also of note is that many infestations are in difficult to access locations and control is costly.

The Council notes that there are a plethora of issues and intervention options for managing the thousands of potentially harmful species. Eradication type objectives and/or the regulatory approaches are not always appropriate and any decisions must be balanced against other priorities. As part of this Plan review the Council assessed future management and funding options for Darwin's barberry. It is the view of the Council that Darwin's barberry is better addressed through site-led programmes as part of the Strategy.

Council decision

Decline the relief sought.

Decision sought

Section 4: Organisms declared as pests – Climbing asparagus

- (m) Seeks that Climbing asparagus be included as an eradication pest in the Plan, west of State Highway 3.

Council response

The submitter suggests that considerable progress has been made to eradicate Climbing asparagus in the Kaitake Ranges and that by declaring the plant to be an eradication pest it would encourage nearby private land occupiers to undertake proactive control.

No change to the Plan is recommended. The Council does not believe that the programme as outlined by the submitter is likely to achieve any eradication objective. Climbing asparagus is already too widespread in the region to support an eradication objective and reliance on advocacy (and/or private land occupiers to undertake the control to the level required) is unlikely to be effective.

Of note under section 7.2.5 of the Strategy Council has set out a suite of programmes and actions where this Council is willing to work with relevant biosecurity agencies such as the Department of Conservation on the control of harmful species, including Climbing asparagus.

Council decision

Decline the relief sought.

Decision sought

Section 4.1: Other Harmful Organisms – Feral cats

- (n) Supports the site management or pathway approach for species not otherwise classified as pests, including feral cats.
- (o) Seek amendments to section 4.1 of the Plan to include more detail identifying the likely pest management approach to be taken for other harmful organisms and by noting any existing restrictions on ownership or spread of these pests that may exist as a consequence of them being classified as Noxious Fish or Unwanted Organisms.

Council response

The submitter supports for the site management or pathway approach for species not otherwise classified as pests, including feral cats (notwithstanding their advocacy for inclusion of pest fish, Darwin's barberry, and Climbing asparagus as pests) is noted.

The submitter suggests that section 4.1 of the Plan could be enhanced by the inclusion of more detail identifying the likely pest management approach to be taken – i.e. whether pathway or site-led – and by noting any existing restrictions on ownership or spread of these pests that may exist as a consequence of them being classified as Noxious Fish or Unwanted Organisms. The Council notes that Table 4 has been removed to keep the Plan solely regulatory, and transferred to the Strategy, as Appendix 2. The Strategy provides the detail sought by the submitter in terms of likely management approaches.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 5: Pest management framework

- (p) Supports the structure and content of section 5 of the Plan, particularly provisions 5.3.4 and 5.4.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6.1: Eradication species: Climbing spindleberry

- (q) Supports the eradication approach towards Climbing spindleberry.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6.3: Eradication species: Madeira vine

- (r) Supports the eradication approach towards Madeira (mignonette) vine.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6.5: Eradication species: Senegal tea

- (s) Supports the eradication approach towards Senegal tea.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6.6: Sustained Control species: Possums

- (t) Seeks that the extent of the Self-help Possum Control Programme be confined to the boundary as it stands at present.

Council response

The submitter provides qualified support for the sustained control programme for possums as described in section 6.6 of the Plan and the Council's ongoing commitment to the restoration programme for Taranaki Mounga. The submitter's qualification relates to concerns that the boundaries of the Self-help Possum Control Programme may expand over time and there is insufficient certainty to land occupiers as to whether a rule applies to them.

The submitter's qualified support is noted. In relation to confining the boundaries of the Self-help Possum Control Programme, which may expand over time, the Council recommends declining the relief. The Council notes that this Plan is the fourth plan of its type. The current extent of the Self-help Possum Control Programme provides effective and sustained possum control over much of the ring plain and coastal terraces. This was achieved over the life of four plans whereby Council has been able to incrementally increase the extent of the area covered by the Programme over time. To date there have been no issues with land occupiers not being clear as to whether possum control rules apply to them and/or uncertainty as to where the Programme boundary lies.

The Council notes that it is Council practice, as set out in section 6.3.3 of the Plan that any new areas included in the Programme are contingent upon 75% of private land occupiers covering 75% of the land area targeted agreeing to be in the Programme.

As part of that land occupier engagement all private occupiers are individually contacted and consulted with, in relation to being in the programme and the application of rules, with this contact being maintained on an ongoing basis. The submitter may be concerned that additional good neighbour responsibilities may be applied to them through the potential expansion of the Programme. However, the implications of any obligations on the submitter arising from any Programme expansion are likely to be very minor given that the ring plain is already covered by the Programme and that the rule specifically excludes properties east of the Programme.

The Council states that DOC submissions tabled at the hearing noted that Officers' clarification that future extensions to the self-help programme will be confined to the ring plain and coastal terraces had removed the need for their support for the Programme to be qualified. Therefore no relief is necessary.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6.7: Sustained control species: Giant buttercup

- (u) Seeks the removal of the Good Neighbour Rule for Giant buttercup.

Council response

It is the submitter's contention that the good neighbour rule for Giant buttercup is inappropriate and inconsistent with legislation and the National Policy Direction.

The Council disagrees with the submitter's views and does not recommend granting the relief. Council's impact evaluation and cost benefit analysis, including assumptions, underpinning the proposed good neighbour rule are documented in the report *Pest Management Plan for Taranaki – Impact Assessments and Cost-benefit Analyses (2017)*. The submitter has not provided any additional information to demonstrate that the underpinning assumptions were wrong or incorrect.

Of note, in order to ensure costs are indeed reasonable, the Council on behalf of all regional councils commissioned *Landcare Research* to provide advice on the appropriate boundary distance to manage pest plant species, having regard to their biological characteristics and dispersal distances. The 5m buffer distance proposed for Giant buttercup is consistent with that advice.

The submitter's comments that the spread of Giant buttercup is principally due to seed distribution in hay or hay balers, does not mean that other forms of dispersal do not apply, or preclude the application of Good Neighbour Rules.

Good Neighbour Rules are intended to prevent a land occupier imposing unreasonable pest management costs on their neighbour where they are managing the relevant pest. The submitter questions the reasonableness of having Good Neighbour Rules for a number of production pests but does not challenge the reasonableness of having Good Neighbour Rules for environmental pests. It is important to note that the Plan is a regional plan that should address a broad range of values of importance to this community, including economic.

Council decision

Decline the relief sought.

Decision sought

Section 6.8: Sustained control species: Giant gunnera

- (v) Seeks that rules relating to Giant gunnera not apply to coastal sites.

Council response

The submitter notes qualified support for the management approach adopted for Giant gunnera but suggests that the requirement imposed on land occupiers to destroy all gunnera present on their land may have unintended consequences on the coastal cliffs of the region. The submitter seeks that these sites be excluded from the Plan and that Council and the Department of Conservation develop a joint management plan/strategy for the plants in these areas.

The Council notes the submitter's concerns and recommends an alternative relief. As suggested by the submitter, the Council and Department of Conservation could investigate developing a joint management plan for the management of Giant gunnera along and below coastal cliffs. Where that plan identifies sites and localities where the control of the plant would be inappropriate there is an opportunity to grant exemptions to the rule under section 78 of the Act.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought in part by investigating the application of exemptions to the rule subject to an agreed management plan.

Decision sought

Section 6.9: Sustained control species: Gorse

- (w) Seeks the removal of the Good Neighbour Rule for Gorse.

Council response

It is the submitter's contention that the good neighbour rule for Giant buttercup is inappropriate and inconsistent with legislation and the National Policy Direction.

The submitter does not support the sustained control programme or Good Neighbour Rule for Gorse and submits that it be removed from the Plan. The submitter notes that Gorse seeds are extremely long-lasting in the soil and it is not possible to distinguish if infestations on neighbouring properties are from pest spread or germination from the seed bank.

The Council disagrees with the submitter's views and do not recommend granting the relief. Council's impact evaluation and cost benefit analysis, including assumptions, underpinning the proposed good neighbour rule are documented in the report *Pest Management Plan for Taranaki – Impact Assessments and Cost-benefit Analyses (2017)*. The submitter has not provided any additional information to demonstrate that the underpinning assumptions were wrong or incorrect.

Of note, in order to ensure costs are indeed reasonable, the Council on behalf of all regional councils commissioned *Landcare Research* to provide advice on the appropriate boundary distance to manage pest plant species, having regard to their biological characteristics and dispersal distances. The 10m buffer distance proposed for Gorse is consistent with that advice.

The submitter's comments relating to seedbank do not preclude the application of Good Neighbour Rules. The Council recognises that Gorse can act as a nursery for native plant species and there will be occasion when the control of Gorse would be undesirable for conservation reasons. The Council notes that under such circumstances there is an opportunity to grant an exemption to the rule under section 78 of the Act. Of further note the proposed 10m buffer distance is a reduction from the current rule which involves a 25m buffer.

Good Neighbour Rules are intended to prevent a land occupier imposing unreasonable pest management costs on their neighbour where they are managing the relevant pest. The submitter questions the reasonableness of having Good Neighbour Rules for a number of production pests but does not challenge

the reasonableness of having Good Neighbour Rules for environmental pests. It is important to note that the Plan is a regional plan that should address a broad range of values of importance to this community, including economic.

Council decision

Decline the relief sought.

Decision sought

Section 6.11: Sustained control species: Old man's beard

- (x) Supports the inclusion of Old Man's beard in the Plan.
- (y) Seeks the addition of biological control to the suite of listed "Service delivery" activities.

Council response

The submitter's comment and support are noted. The Council agrees to minor amendments to section 6.11.3 of the Plan to include biological control programmes in the suite of measures for controlling Old man's beard.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending section 6.11.3 of the Plan to include reference to biological control programmes.

Decision sought

Section 6: Sustained control species: Pampas

- (z) Seeks amendment to the rules for Pampas in the Plan whereby Good Neighbour rules apply only west of the pest management line and only require the occupier to prevent seeding.

Council response

The submitter notes that Pampas seed is prolific and may be wind dispersed for 10-25km. Given this spread the submitter questions the reasonableness of a Good Neighbour Rule to control Pampas. The submitter proposes an alternative management programme whereby Good Neighbour rules apply only west of the pest management line and only require the occupier to prevent seeding.

The submitter's comments are noted. The Council notes that other submitters (these being Submission

numbers 2 and 3) have raised similar concerns but have sought that Pampas be deleted from the Plan.

The Council agrees that the prolific seeding of Pampas and seed dispersal distances is likely to impose significant compliance cost on land occupiers with Pampas on their land. Historically these compliance costs have principally fallen on farmers using Pampas for hedging and shelter belts. Of note farmers are not significantly affected by Pampas because their land is vegetated and Pampas does not grow well on vegetated or modified land. Pampas does not grow well in sub-alpine, or alpine areas either, so it has little impact on the Egmont National Park.

The Council recommends that Pampas is removed from sustained control management under the Plan and instead be addressed under the Biosecurity Strategy through site-led programmes and activities including pathway management, advice and education, liaison and advocacy, and biological control. The Council would still monitor and control Pampas on Key Native Ecosystem sites.

The Council notes that while DOC submissions tabled at the hearing supported the inclusion of Pampas as a harmful organism in the Strategy, DOC considers that key points of their submission were missed. DOC suggested confining rules for Pampas to the area west of the Pest Management Line and to the removal of seed heads. The Council has considered this point but does not recommend any change to its initial recommendation.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought in part by removing Pampas from sustained control management under the Plan and including it as a “harmful organism” to be managed under the Biosecurity Strategy.

Decision sought

Section 6.12: Sustained control species: Wild broom

(aa) Seeks the removal of the Good Neighbour Rule for Wild broom.

Council response

The submitter does not support the sustained control programme or Good Neighbour Rule for Wild broom and submits that it be removed from the Plan. The submitter notes that Wild broom seeds are extremely long-lasting in the soil and it is not possible to distinguish if infestations on neighbouring properties are from pest spread or germination from the seed bank.

The Council disagrees with the submitter’s views and do not recommend granting the relief. Council’s impact evaluation and cost benefit analysis, including assumptions, underpinning the proposed good neighbour rule are documented in the report *Pest Management Plan for Taranaki – Impact Assessments and Cost-benefit Analyses (2017)*. The submitter has not provided any additional information to demonstrate that the underpinning assumptions were wrong or incorrect.

Of note, in order to ensure costs are indeed reasonable, the Council on behalf of all regional councils commissioned *Landcare Research* to provide advice on the appropriate boundary distance to manage pest plant species, having regard to their biological characteristics and dispersal distances. The 10m buffer distance proposed for Wild broom is consistent with that advice.

The submitter’s comments relating to seedbank do not preclude the application of Good Neighbour Rules. The Council is aware that Wild broom can act as a nursery for native plant species and there will be occasion when the control of the plant might be undesirable for conservation reasons. The Council notes that under such circumstances there is an opportunity to grant an exemption to the rule under section 78 of the Act. Of further note the proposed 10m buffer distance is a reduction from the current rule which involves the whole property.

Good Neighbour Rules are intended to prevent a land occupier imposing unreasonable pest management costs on their neighbour where they managing the relevant pest. The submitter questions the reasonableness of having Good Neighbour Rules for a number of production pests but does not challenge the reasonableness of having Good Neighbour Rules for environmental pests. It is important to note that the Plan is a regional plan that should address a broad range of values of importance to this community, including economic.

Council decision

Decline the relief sought.

Decision sought

Section 6.13: Sustained control species: Wild ginger

(bb) Supports the sustained control objective for Wild ginger.

Council response

The submitter’s comment and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6.14: Sustained control species: Yellow ragwort

(cc) Seeks the removal of the Good Neighbour Rule for Yellow ragwort.

Council response

It is the submitter's contention that the good neighbour rule for Yellow ragwort is inappropriate and inconsistent with legislation and the National Policy Direction. The submitter believes that a regulatory approach that meets the section 71(e) tests could only apply where it is "*to prevent spread onto land that has never had the species present.*" The submitter further believes recent advances in biological control for this plant has significantly reduced its "*pestiness*".

The Council disagrees with the submitter's views and do not recommend granting the relief. Council's impact evaluation and cost benefit analysis, including assumptions, underpinning the proposed good neighbour rule are documented in the report *Pest Management Plan for Taranaki – Impact Assessments and Cost-benefit Analyses (2017)*. The submitter has not provided any additional information to demonstrate that the underpinning assumptions were wrong or incorrect.

Of note, in order to ensure costs are indeed reasonable, the Council on behalf of all regional councils commissioned *Landcare Research* to provide advice on the appropriate boundary distance to manage pest plant species, having regard to their biological characteristics and dispersal distances. The 20m buffer distance proposed for Yellow Ragwort is consistent with that advice.

The submitter suggests that the "*pestiness*" of Yellow ragwort has significantly reduced in recent times. However, it is Officer's contention that the reduction in the "*pestiness*" of the plant in Taranaki is more to do with a strong regulatory regime than biological control. Notwithstanding that the Council already undertakes biological control of Yellow ragwort and will continue to do so.

Good Neighbour Rules are intended to prevent a land occupier imposing unreasonable pest management costs on their neighbour where they managing the relevant pest. The submitter questions the reasonableness of having Good Neighbour Rules for a number of production pests but does not challenge the reasonableness of having Good Neighbour Rules

for environmental pests. It is important to note that the Plan is a regional plan that should address a broad range of values of importance to this community, including economic.

Council decision

Decline the relief sought.

Decision sought

Section 7.1: Other harmful organisms

(dd) Seeks the clarification of existing rules and regulations on ownership, dispersal, or sale of harmful organisms.

Council response

The submitter seeks the clarification of existing rules and regulations on ownership, dispersal, or sale of harmful organisms identified in section 7.1 of the Plan and suggests a reconsideration of objectives for some species. The submitter further suggests the addition of "*cooperation*" as a measure to support achievement of the objectives.

The Council recommends granting the relief in part by minor amendments to the Strategy, which is the preferred policy instrument for dealing with such matters.

The Council notes that in accordance with section 100G(4) of the Act, inconsequential amendments have been made and incorporated into the revised Proposed Plan to focus more clearly on only those species declared to be pests, and for which a regulatory approach has been adopted. Accordingly material in the Table relating to other harmful organisms has been transferred and inserted into Appendix 2 of the Biosecurity Strategy. The Table now includes an indication of the Management response in relation to each organism.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought in part by amending the Biosecurity Strategy to include a new Appendix 2 that includes a table identifying the management response in relation to each organism.

Decision sought

Section 7.2: Management of other harmful organisms - Goats

- (ee) Supports the inclusion of goats in section 7.2 of the Plan as harmful organisms.

Council response

The submitter notes that it is currently supporting a programme to eradicate goats from Egmont National Park and the eradication goal is likely to involve proactive removal of goats from land surrounding the park where those goats are wild animals and are jeopardising the achievement of eradication. The Department is aware of other submissions that goats should be categorised as pests in the Plan and encourages such mechanisms to the extent that policies and rules in the Plan can assist in achieving and sustaining a goat-free Egmont National Park through control of wild and non-farmed goats.

The submitter's comments and support are noted.

The Council notes that DOC submissions tabled at the hearing suggested amending the use of the term "feral" for deer, pigs, and goats to "wild", as the term "feral" has no legal definition and may exclude animals that have not escaped from domestic settings. The Council has considered this point and recommends changing its initial recommendation and granting the relief sought.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by removing the term "feral" as it applies to deer, pigs and goats in the Strategy and replacing it with "wild".

Decision sought

Section 7.2: Management of other harmful organisms – Feral cats

- (ff) Supports the management approach for feral cats in section 7.2 of the Plan (principal measures), including direct control in KNEs.

Council response

The submitter's support is noted. The Council notes further changes have been made to the Biosecurity Strategy to enhance the visibility of feral cat control.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Submission No. 7

Taranaki Mounga Project Limited

C/- The Business Advisory Group
Level 14, 34 Shortland Street
AUCKLAND 1010

Decision sought

Section 6 and goats

- (a) Seeks amendments to the Plan to:
- define goats as a pest in a 'halo' around the Mounga involving land west of the SH3/3A; and
 - include rules that control goats within the halo area.

Council response

The submitter notes that Taranaki Mounga Project Limited is an ambitious conservation project seeking to transform the mountain, ranges and islands of Taranaki through a large-scale ecological restoration project.

The submitter notes that one of its initial objectives is to eradicate goats from Egmont National Park and make the Park the first national park in New Zealand to be ungulate free. Eradication activities are likely to commence in 2019 or early 2020. The submitter notes that one of the key risks to the feasibility of goat eradication is that goats might reinvade the Park from the surrounding ring plain. The risk includes not just feral goats but also semi-domesticated goats (often of feral origin) tethered on the roadside outside of the farm gates.

The submitter suggests that while the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 provides for the hunting and killing of feral goats, there is uncertainty around the legal status of these semi-domesticated and tethered goats which are often kept as pets. The submitter is therefore seeking amendments to the Plan to establish a regulatory 'halo' area around the boundary of the park to exclude farmed or domesticated goats.

The submitter is currently assessing the feasibility of achieving its goat eradication objective and has submitted on the Plan because it considers the BSA may be the appropriate legislative and management vehicle to provide ongoing assistance and support.

There are a range of issues being raised by the submitter and a range of interventions relevant to goat management. Officers were in pre-hearing discussions with the submitter to canvas the regulatory and non-regulatory options for excluding farmed or domesticated goats in support of their goat eradication objectives. Non-regulatory options exist. With respect to regulatory options there are a number of options involving different players to address the risks. They

include not only the Biosecurity Act but also potentially the Resource Management Act 1991, the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, and the Local Government Act 2002. For example all three District Councils have bylaws that restrict goats in halo or buffer zones of different sizes around the Mounga.

In the Council's initial opinion it is highly unlikely that the BSA is the appropriate mechanism for managing the control of farmed or tethered goats owned by private individuals and treated as pets. The Council suggests further discussions and investigations are required, which precludes making immediate changes to the Plan at this time. Notwithstanding that, the Council recommends amendment to the Strategy to include a new section that identifies a suite of Council activities and programmes in support of the Taranaki Mounga Project. This includes Council support of, and assistance to, the submitter's development of a goat eradication programme which may include Council undertaking joint advocacy and communication activities with the submitter to inform key stakeholders and agencies of the goal and methods.

If at a later date the requirement for rules in respect of goats on the ring plain has been sufficiently demonstrated, it is recommended that the matter be brought back to the Council for its consideration. Of note, recent changes to the BSA provide for partial reviews of a Plan, and such a review should be a relatively simple exercise.

Of note the submitter, at the hearing, noted the Officer's recommendation for Council to consider rules at a later date should they be demonstrated to be appropriate and sought the inclusion of a new action in the Strategy to that effect. The Council agreed to that relief.

Council decision

Decline the relief sought in relation to the Plan but

- (a) **note** amendments to the Strategy to include a new section identifying Council programmes and activities in support of the Taranaki Mounga Project; and
- (b) **grant the relief** sought in relation to identifying a new action in the Biosecurity Strategy to read:
- "TRC will convene Taranaki Mounga, territorial authorities and relevant government agencies to jointly investigate:*
- if regulatory mechanism(s) are required to address the risk of goats immigrating into Egmont national Park: and*
 - in the event regulatory mechanism(s) are required, determine what mechanism(s) are most appropriate to address this risk within the timeframes required and by no later than 2020."*

Decision sought

General:

- (b) Supports the Council's intention to support Community and Site-led biodiversity programmes in the Plan.

Council response

The submitter's support is noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General: Vision

- (c) Supports Council's vision for biosecurity as set out in the Strategy.

Council response

The submitter's support is noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General: Focus on surveillance and pathways

- (d) Supports the Council's pathway approach noting that this is likely to be more economically efficient to prevent the establishment of new pests.

Council response

The submitter's comment is noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General: Increased focus on eradication of named pests

- (e) Supports eradication of four named species in Plan.

Council response

The submitter's support is noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General: Extension of Self-Help programme to rats and mustelids

- (f) Supports proposal for a self-help programme that targets a wider range of predators.

Council response

The submitter notes support for Strategy proposal for a self-help programme that targets a wider range of predators. The submitter notes that the measure would reduce the number of predators that currently affect the biodiversity of the region and would provide positive social and ecological benefits to Taranaki.

The submitter's support is noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General: Support for Community and Site-Led Biodiversity Projects

- (g) Seeks amendment to the Strategy to identify the Taranaki Mounga Project as a key biodiversity programme that the Council supports.

Council response

The submitter's comment is noted. The Council recommends amending the Strategy to include a new section (section 7.2.6 of the revised Strategy) setting out Council programmes and activities in support of the Taranaki Mounga Project. Of note this new section would include a Council commitment to work with the submitter to develop appropriate advisory and extension programmes in support of their objectives,

including investigating regulatory and non regulatory options relating to the control and exclusion of goats in and around the Mounga (refer to previous comments in (a) above).

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by including a new section in the Strategy identifying the Taranaki Mounga Project as a key biodiversity programme that the Council supports.

Decision sought

General:

- (h) Seeks amendment to the Strategy to include a specific programme of actions to support the implementation of the Taranaki Mounga Project.

Council response

The submitter's comment is noted. Refer to comments in (g) above.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by including a new section in the Strategy identifying the Taranaki Mounga Project as a key biodiversity programme that the Council supports.

Submission No. 8

KiwiRail Holdings Limited (KiwiRail)

Pam Butler
Senior RMA Advisor
PO Box 593
Wellington 6140

Decision sought

General:

- (a) Notes interest in developing workable and pragmatic approaches to pest management peculiar to its operational limits and circumstances.

Council response

The submitter notes that it is keen to work with the Council and develop workable and pragmatic approaches to pest management peculiar to its operational limits and circumstances. This includes seeking an alternate management approach (such as a Specific Management Plan) as an agreed method of compliance with the Plan.

The submitter's comments are noted and the Council refers to changes made in response to submissions on the whole plan development process and memoranda of understanding.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General: Whole plan development process

- (b) Seeks alteration of the Plan to include provisions which will allow the development of alternative management approaches, including Management Plans, as a method of compliance with the Plan.

Council response

The submitter's comments are noted. The Council recommends minor changes to the Plan to recognise alternative management approaches (such as a Specific Management Plan), as an agreed method of compliance with the Plan, and agree that the submitter and the Council will work together to target priorities and to adapt management activities to its unique operational limits and circumstances.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought.

Decision sought

Section 3.3.3: KiwiRail

- (c) Supports section 3.3.3 of the Plan (formerly clause 3.3.2.3).

Council response

The submitter notes support for section 3.3.3 of the Plan (formerly clause 3.3.2.3). The submitter notes there are unusual practical challenges associated with managing pests along the rail corridor such as physical accessibility due to terrain, limited access points, difficulty identifying pest plants from the track, the need for specialist equipment and in planning and staging work between operational train activities.

The submitter's comments and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 5.4: Memoranda of Understanding

- (d) Supports section 5.4 of the Plan provided it is altered to allow alternative management arrangements as well as memoranda of understanding.

Council response

The submitter's comments are noted. The Council has altered the heading to read "Alternative Pest Management Arrangements" and amended the section to reflect the changed wording.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought.

Decision sought

Section 5.5: Rules

- (e) Supports the use of Good Neighbour Rules for all stakeholders and occupiers.

Council response

The submitter supports the use of Good Neighbour Rules for all stakeholders and occupiers as a pragmatic approach to the management of pest plants. The submitter considers that pests should be controlled to a level that is acceptable between adjoining landowners but reasonable, and where certain criteria are met. The rules should provide for both 'neighbours' to actively manage pests.

The submitter's comments and support for Good Neighbour Rules are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Section 6: Pest Management framework for Gorse, thistles and Wild broom

- (f) Supports the use of biological control for Gorse, all forms of thistle, and seeks that biological control be applied for Wild broom.

Council response

The submitter's comments and support are noted. The Council agrees that biological control is available for Wild broom and reference to this has been added in the appropriate section of the Plan (6.12.3).

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending section 6.12.3 of the Plan to reference biological control for Wild broom.

Decision sought

Part 3 (Procedures) – Powers conferred

- (g) Seeks alteration for section 8.3 of the Plan (formerly 10.3) to provide for exemptions in relation to any agreed Management Plans.

Council response

The submitter notes broad support for section 8.3 of the Plan (formerly 10.3), however seeks alteration of the clause to provide for exemptions in relation to any agreed Management Plans, already referred to in respect of section 5.4.

The submitter's comments and support are noted. The Council agrees to alter the clause in line with the changes already made to section 5.4.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by amending section 8.3 of the Plan (formerly 10.3) to provide for exemptions in relation to any agreed Management Plans.

Submission No. 9

Fish and Game New Zealand, Taranaki Region

PO Box 4152
Whanganui 4541

Decision sought

General:

- (a) Supports intention to combine rules for animal and plant pests into a single document, the list of species included, and the proposed Objectives, Principal Measures and Rules.

Council response

The submitter's comments and support are noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Old man's beard: 6.10.3 and 7.2.4 in Strategy

- (b) Supports objectives and intention for Old man's beard as set out in section 6.10.3 of the Plan and section 7.2.4 of the Strategy.

Council response

The submitter supports objectives and intention for Old man's beard as set out in section 6.10.3 of the Plan and section 7.2.4 of the Strategy however notes inclusion of Kaupokonui Stream catchment reference in Strategy but not in Plan. The submitter suggests this is an oversight and Plan should be amended to align with Strategy.

The Council notes that the Plan is silent on Kaupokonui Stream because the initial control has already been completed in that area and there is therefore no need to refer to it in the rule.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Management regime for other harmful organisms

- (c) Support proposed management regime for other harmful organisms.

Council response

The submitter's support is noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Management regime for other harmful organisms

- (d) Supports the management regime for other harmful organisms.

Council response

The submitter's support is noted. The Council notes that the section on 'Other Harmful Organisms' initially included in the Plan has been removed to keep the Plan solely regulatory, and transferred to the Strategy, as Appendix 2. The Strategy provides the detail sought by the submitter in terms of likely management approaches.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

General and other support

- (e) Supports Vision, Priorities and Outcomes of Strategy. Also supports expansion of predator control for mustelids, feral cats, and rats.

Council response

The submitter's support is noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Decision sought

Action 2: Section 7.2.2, and Action 5 - points 46-48

- (f) Supports Action 2 and proposed Action 5(a) (Community and site-led biodiversity programmes) and 5(b) (Other support and Assistance Services) of the Strategy.

Council response

The submitter's support is noted.

Council decision

No relief necessary.

Submission No. 10

**Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society
(North Taranaki Branch)**

C/- Janet Hunt
11 Tawa Street
Inglewood 4330

Decision sought

Section 6 – Pest Descriptions & Programmes

- (a) Seeks addition of Moth plant (*Araujia sericifera*) to list of eradication pest species as it has recently appeared in the New Plymouth urban area.

Council response

The submitter's comments are noted. Officers have undertaken an impact evaluation and cost benefit analysis in accordance with requirements set out in the Act and the National Policy Direction (refer Appendix I) and recommend that Moth plant be added to the list of eradication plants to be managed under the Plan.

Council decision

Grant the relief sought by including Moth plant (*Araujia sericifera*) as an eradication pest in the Plan.

Appendix I: Impact assessment and cost benefit analysis for Moth Plant

Moth Plant (*Araujia sericifera* syn. *A. hortorum*)

a. Pest attributes and distribution

Relevant biology

Attribute	Description
Form	Moth plant is a rampant evergreen, climbing vine growing up to 10m high with smelly, milky sap and twining flexible stems that are covered in down and woody near the base. Dark green leaves are hairless and dull on the top, greyish-downy underneath, and alternate on the stems. Clusters of 2-4 bell-shaped white flowers, occasionally with pink streaks, appear from December to May, followed by distinctive thick, leathery, pear-shaped choke-like pods containing kapok-like pulp, which splits open to disperse many black, thistledown-like seeds
Habitat	Moth plant prefers loose, fertile soils, in warmer climates with moderate to high rainfall. Plants establish freely in semi-shade and grow up onto the canopy of shrubs and trees. Moth plant grows in a range of habitats, including forest margins, disturbed forest, hedges, wasteland, coastal sites and urban gardens. It can become a dominant species in urban environments.
Regional distribution	Limited distribution, confined to areas near the coast (18 known sites). Most sites located in urban areas.
Competitive ability	Rapid growth to canopy, forming large, heavy, long-lived masses. Tolerant of shade, very tolerant of drought or damp, wind, salt and many soil types. Poisonous and irritant-inducing. Germinates in light wells or semi-shade inside established forest, often long distance from seed source, and smothers and kills plants up into the canopy, preventing the establishment of native plant species.
Reproductive ability	Produces masses of viable seeds that can drift long distances on air currents.
Dispersal methods	Wind spreads seed from gardens, roadsides, orchards, hedges, plantations, vacant and industrial land.
Resistance to control	Poisonous, causes dermatitis, protect skill against contact with sap. Destroy ripe pods first to minimise seeding. Options for control include pull up seedlings (all year round), stump swab (best in summer-autumn), remove all pods and dispose of at refuse transfer state, burn or bury deeply, leave remains cut material on site to rot down, or spray (Summer-autumn).
Benefits	No benefits

Where is it a problem?

Land use type	Current land use infested*	Potential land use infested*	Pest significant problem on this land type**
Dairy	-	-	False
Sheep and beef (intensive)	-	-	False
Hill country (sheep)	-	-	False
Forestry	-	Low	False
Horticulture	-	-	False
Native / conservation	Low	High	True
Urban / Non productive	High	High	True

* High = Most infested/preferred land use(s), Low = Less infested/preferred land use(s), - = Unsuitable land use. Source: Wildlands 2017

** True = Most 'at risk' or impacted land use(s), False = Less 'at risk' or impacted land use(s) based upon impact assessment overleaf.

b. Impact evaluation

How is it a problem?

Category	Current	Potential	Comment	Source
Production				
Dairy	-	L	Negligible at a regional level although property impacts on farm riparian margins is possible	
Sheep and beef	-	-		
Forestry	-	M	Smother trees in plantation forests.	
Horticulture	-	-		
Other	-	-		
International trade	-	-		
Environment				
Soil resources	-	-		
Water quality	-	-		
Species diversity	M	H	Stems strangle host, overtop most canopies and cause collapse. Heavy infestations can alter successional patterns and prevent native regeneration, thus modifying the structure of the ecosystem.	
Threatened species	L	H	Could invade open habitats occupied by threatened species and spread into nesting areas of sand dune fauna	
Social/Cultural				
Human health	-	-		
Recreation	-	L	Layering stems can become very dense and obstruct access	
Maori culture	-	-		

L – 'low' impact (1–4% reduction in the economic value per ha per annum); M – 'moderate' impact (5–9% reduction in the economic value per ha per annum); H – 'high' impact (10–50% reduction in the economic value per ha per annum)

How much does it cost?

For the purposes of this report, the monetarised impacts of Moth Plant are calculated as the current or anticipated proportional impact on environmental (native / conservation), production and social and cultural values across the region. However, this is a conservative estimate. The potential impacts are likely to be much higher with significant additional non-monetised costs being incurred where habitat degradation impacts on nationally threatened or regionally distinctive native species (and given the 'value' of these species).

Land use type	Current impact per ha	Potential impact per ha
Production		
Dairy	\$0	\$0.45 – \$1.96
Sheep and beef	\$0	\$0
Forestry	\$0	\$0.45 – \$1.96
Horticulture	\$0	\$0
Native / conservation	\$4.43 – \$7.81	\$46.95 – \$284.20
Social/Cultural	\$0.07 – \$0.29	\$0.16 – \$1.67

c. Cost-benefit analysis

CBA assumptions and inputs

Pest assumptions	Values	Programme assumptions	Values
Current area infested:	0.5 ha	Proposed Programme:	Eradication
Maximum potential area infested: ^o	45,760 ha	Proposed annual expenditure by Council:	\$15,000
Time to reach maximum extent: [†]	75 years	Repeated inspections and works required:	Annually
Current impacts (\$): [*]	\$6.30 / ha (\$4.50 – \$8.09 / ha)	Discount rate:	4%

^o The potential extent the pest is predicted to achieve in the absence of regional management based upon LCDB

[†] The time a pest is predicted to take between first going wild in the region and reaching 90% of its potential maximum extent (in the absence of regional intervention)

^{*} Current impact is for the current area of the pest, averaged across the impacts on all land uses within this area.

CBA assessment

The Council has calculated a cost-benefit scenario over 50 years for Moth plant.

The CBA shows that regional intervention in the form of an eradication programme is cost beneficial through the avoidance of pest impacts that would otherwise occur for forestry and conservation land uses/values as Moth plant spreads across its full potential extent. Potential habitat includes coastline/cliffs, scrublands, and inshore and offshore islands, forest margins, disturbed forest, hedges, wasteland, coastal sites and urban gardens. The net monetarised benefit of regional intervention over 50 years is estimated to be **\$10,823,041**. However, this does not take into account the non-monetarised 'value' of protecting biodiversity values, including some nationally threatened or regionally distinctive native species in Taranaki that would otherwise be impacted upon by this plant.

Scenario	Pest impacts [*]	Benefits	Council costs ^o	Compliance costs [†]	Net benefit
No regional intervention	\$10,954,230 min: \$1,873,933 max: \$56,193,115	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Eradication (preferred option)	\$45 min: -\$34 max: -\$61	\$10,954,185 min: \$1,873,967 max: \$56,193,176	\$131,144	\$0	\$10,823,041 min: \$1,742,823 max: \$56,062,032

^{*} Includes economic costs and conservatively valued environmental, social and cultural costs

^o Council costs refer to the administration and implementation costs incurred by the Council through the programme

[†] Compliance costs refer to any costs of control imposed on land occupiers through the programme

d. CBA statement and risks to success

If Moth plant were to become established it could seriously affect plantation forests, farm shelterbelts, riparian margins, and indigenous biodiversity. Eradication is technically feasible. The species has a very confined habitat range and occurs at very low densities in the region, and there is a high probability that infestation levels can be reduced to zero densities in the short to medium term.

The CBA for Moth plant suggests that the eradication programme will be net beneficial over the long term. There are public good benefits in preventing Moth plant from becoming established and avoiding the possibility of more significant costs for the region in the future.

Risks of the programme being unsuccessful in achieving objectives

Risk	Level of risk	Explanation
Technical risk	Low to Medium	Increased focus is required on surveillance and public awareness to identify sites of interest. There is a risk of previously unknown infestation sites being discovered over the life of the Plan and that the distribution and abundance of the species precludes eradication.
Operational risk	Low	The eradication of known Moth plant is technically feasible and cost-effective over a 50-year timeframe. Public intervention (whereby land occupiers do not incur the cost of control) should encourage the public reporting of infestation and the application of control techniques that will result in the effective control of the species.
Legal risk	Low	
Socio-political risk	Low	To be tested through the remainder of the Plan review process.
Other risks	Low	

e. Who should pay?

Beneficiaries and exacerbators

Group	Beneficiary	Exacerbator	Change behaviour	Assess costs & benefits	Control cost effectively
Forestry sector	Minor	Minor	No	Yes	Yes
Anyone intentionally dumping or incorrectly disposing the plant		Major	Yes	No	No
Regional community†	Major		No	Yes	Yes

Who should pay for the proposed management approach?

Moth Plant is a major threat to conservation values. Given the benefits of an eradication objective and the protection of indigenous biodiversity values are a public good rather than a private good, it is appropriate that the costs are paid for directly by the Council on behalf of the regional community. The regional community is able to assess the cost and benefits and effectiveness of the programme through the annual planning and reporting processes under the Local Government Act 2002 and through the review of future pest management plans.

Appendix II: Further submission of Taranaki Mounga Project Limited tabled at Hearing, 17 October 2017

BEFORE THE TARANAKI REGIONAL COUNCIL HEARING COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER of the Biosecurity Act 1993
AND

IN THE MATTER of the Taranaki Regional Pest
Management Strategy /
Regional Pest Management
Plan.

STATEMENT OF PLANNING EVIDENCE FROM SEAN PETER ZIELTJES ON BEHALF OF TARANAKI MOUNGA PROJECT LIMITED

17 October 2017

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE TO BE PRESENTED

1. My name is Sean Peter Zieltjes. I am the Project Manager for the Taranaki Mounga Project. Taranaki Mounga is a landscape scale, ecological restoration project of the mounga, ranges and islands of Taranaki. The success of the project relies upon the collaborative effort of agencies, iwi and community to achieve project objectives.
2. I hold a Masters of Legal Studies (Environmental Law) (Honours) from the University of Auckland, and a Bachelor of Environment and Resource Management Planning (Ecology) (Honours) from Massey University. I am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI), and am a member of the Resource Management Law Association (RMLA). I have experience with resource management matters and strategic planning processes within Taranaki.
3. The background to this process has been well traversed in the evidence of others, and in the Officer's Report. Accordingly, I do not propose to repeat that information.
4. In my evidence I will discuss;
 - Assurance;
 - Project timeframes; and
 - Confirm a commitment from the project to continue to work collaboratively with Officers towards an appropriate regulatory solution to manage goat immigration risk.
5. My evidence will draw upon the submission lodged with the Taranaki Regional Council, as well as:

- (a) The information contained within the Council Planner's Officer's Report ('Officer's Report').
 - (b) The recommendations of a report prepared for Taranaki Mounga Project by Rob Dragten of Dragten Consulting.
6. Where relevant I will reference the Officer's Report, as this is a very comprehensive document that was pre-circulated to all parties on 11 October 2017.
7. I confirm that I have read the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses (Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2014) and I agree to comply with that Code. This evidence I am presenting is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person. To the best of my knowledge I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

REGULATORY ASSURANCE

8. Taranaki Mounga is the first collaborative project of its kind and size in the country. It is at the forefront of the development of tools and programmes to protect large habitats, in turn protecting large populations of our unique biodiversity, with the ultimate goal of securing the biodiversity of New Zealand against a multitude of threats. The project has numerous benefits for the broader Taranaki community alongside biodiversity outcomes.
9. Taranaki Mounga is making a substantial investment into a goat eradication programme on the mountain, alongside a host of other biodiversity related initiatives.
10. However, there is a risk that goat immigration from the ring plain back into the park will put the sustained long-term goat eradication objectives of the project at risk. Potential sources for immigration include feral goats, commercially farmed goats, and tethered semi-domesticated ex-feral goats. The risk of immigration undermines the investment certainty for funders that eradication can be maintained in the long term.
11. TMP recognises that preventing goat immigration will require a wide range of stakeholders to work collaboratively to realise the vision of a restored Mounga. Feral goats can be controlled using DOC's powers under the Wild Animal Control Act. Commercially farmed goats are already managed to a degree through District Plans developed under the Resource Management Act. However, the management of the risk posed by tethered or otherwise poorly constrained semi-domesticated ex-feral goats remains problematic. TMP considers this problem will ultimately require a regulatory solution.
12. TMP has commissioned advice which indicates that the Biosecurity Act appears to provide the most appropriate mechanism for managing the semi-domesticated ex-feral goats. It is noted that this advice is contradictory to the view expressed in the officer's report that the Biosecurity Act is highly unlikely to

provide an appropriate mechanism. TMP supports the officer's recommendation that TRC engage in further discussions and advice to resolve this difference of opinion.

13. TMP believes that TRC, as experts in implementing the Biosecurity Act, is uniquely placed to assist the restoration of the Mouna by overseeing a regime to manage the small numbers of semi-domesticated ex-feral goats. The Council has an extensive track record working with the Taranaki community on environmental issues, and if required has the regulatory skills and experience at its disposal which provide the necessary assurance for protecting biodiversity gains in the long term. Expertise working with landowners is considered fundamental to achieving a solution to this issue that will work in practise, and within the required project timeframes.
14. TMP has sought changes to the Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) and Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) to recognize and allow for the role that the Council can play in supporting the restoration of the Mouna. The Officer's report alludes to a non-regulatory, advocacy approach. We support this, but stress TMP's view that in time a regulatory "back-stop" will be necessary as a part of the management strategy addressing the immigration risk from goats. TMP's advice is that the establishment of rules in an RPMP is one key mechanism.
15. Through discussions with Officers we have been advised that introducing rules related to goats into the RPMP at this stage would require significant additional work including a detailed Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA), and appropriate community consultation. This work would delay making the remaining provisions of the RPMP operative. We acknowledge that the RPMP contains important provisions that need to be made operative, and that these provisions should not be held up pending investigations into any regulatory response to the immigration risk posed by goats. In that regard, we support the Officer's recommendation to decline the relief regarding the inclusion of a goat exclusion zone in the RPMP for the time being, but ask that the Council include some additional matters in the RPMS.

PROJECT TIMEFRAMES

16. The timeframe to commence eradication proper within ENP is likely to be in 2019 or 2020 (at the latest). A range of novel techniques and industry best practice is informing the development of the eradication plan. The reality is that while there remains risk of immigration of goats into ENP, eradication will not be possible. A regulatory solution to the immigration risk is therefore required within this timeframe to support eradication objectives.
17. We note in the Officer's report and the RMPS there is a commitment to continue to work with Taranaki Mouna on this issue. We consider having a pathway towards a regulatory mechanism(s) in place that meets this timeframe is a key to the success of eradicating goats within ENP. I agree with the statement in the Officer's report, that *"if at a later date the requirement for rules in respect of goats on the ring plain has been sufficiently demonstrated, it is recommended*

that the matter be brought back to the Council for its consideration", but request that this is translated through into an action in the RPMS.

18. This action could read as follows:

**Action 62(f): TRC will convene Taranaki Mounga, Local Authorities and government agencies to determine a) if regulatory mechanism(s) are required to address the immigration risk posed by goats into the ENP; and if regulatory mechanism(s) are required b) what mechanism or mechanisms are most appropriate to be in place to address this risk within the timeframes required (i.e. by 2020 at the latest).*

CONCLUSION

19. To sum up, thank you for the opportunity to present this submission today. TMP acknowledges and appreciates the commitment from the Council to support the implementation of the Mounga restoration. We have appreciated the open dialogue with Council staff to date, and look forward to working collaboratively with the Council and its staff to find a solution to the goat immigration risk that threatens the viability of the goat eradication phase of the restoration project.

Appendix III: Further submission of Department of Conservation tabled at Hearing, 17 October 2017

Department of Conservation submission on proposed RPMP

17.10.2017

Comments on Officers' Report to the Taranaki Regional Council's Hearing Committee on submissions on the Proposed RPMP

Points to present to TRC. (Speaking points highlighted.)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment today and for the consideration given to the Department's submission. We congratulate TRC on the ambitious goals outlined in the strategy and plan and the comprehensive nature of the documents made available for comment.

Our comments follow the numbering sequence employed in the Officers report preceded by a letter to allow rapid reference for any questions of clarification. The points are intended to be read in association with the Officer's report.

I have chosen to highlight a few key points of emphasis rather than to attempt to speak to all our points.

a. S. 1.2. Plan Establishment: Purpose

The Department supports the Officer's recommendation with respect to our requested amendment to the wording of section 1.2. The Officer is concerned about "too many minor wording changes" to the sectoral approach. However, we have suggested similar amendments to plans proposed by other Regional Councils to seek better alignment with the legislation. This may address the Officer's concern with respect to national alignment/consistency.

b. S. 2.1. Strategic background

The Department notes the Officer's contention that strategic background to RPMP is more appropriately located in the proposed Biosecurity Strategy document however that link is not described in the proposed RPMP. For completeness and lack of ambiguity we suggest that S.2.1. could include a statement such as "The strategic background for pest management in Taranaki is described in detail in "Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy 2017-2037".

c. S.2 Enhancement by providing spatial representation of pest management by public agencies in Taranaki

The Department notes the Officer's contention that the enhancement we proposed is already contained in the Biosecurity Strategy document. However, while the work of agencies such as DOC are described in the strategy (s.2.4) there is no spatial representation of that work that would allow the ordinary reader to identify the linkages and synergies. DOC reiterates that it is willing to share suitable spatial data.

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d. S.2.2.1 Unwanted Organisms and Noxious Fish

The Department notes the Officer's contention that the enhancement we proposed is already contained in the Biosecurity Strategy document. However, it is our view that currently neither the proposed plan nor the biosecurity strategy make it clear that restrictions, outside the TRC document, exist on the propagation or spread of certain organisms. It is not made clear that TRC officers have authority and powers, with respect to those organisms, that are not derived from the TRC strategy or plan.

e. S.2.2.4 Ferrets

The Department supports the Officer's recommendation.

f. S.2.3 Relationship with other pest management plans

The Department supports the Officer's recommendation. We note that this change is germane to points 'c' & 'd' above.

g. S.3.3.2 Description of Good Neighbour rule

The Department supports the Officer's recommendation with respect to our requested amendment to the wording of section 1.2. We note that we have suggested similar amendments to plans proposed by other Regional Councils which may address the Officer's concern with respect to national alignment but note that our submission was to seek better alignment with the legislation.

h. S.3.3.1 Pest Fish. DOC submission points 8, 9, 10.

The Department notes and supports the Officer's recommendations with respect to general pest fish management within the region and is grateful for the reaffirmation of support for the Department's actions in this field.

i. S.4. Inclusion of Brown Bull-headed Catfish as an exclusion pest.

The Department notes and supports the Officer's recommendation with respect to the Biosecurity strategy but we contend that inclusion of this species as a pest in the plan would eliminate potential barriers to rapid response to an identified incursion of this species. We note that, because the species is not classified as an unwanted organism the provisions of S.100.V. of the Biosecurity Act (small scale response) could not be applied. Also, as it is not a noxious fish, there are few restrictions on introduction of this species to Taranaki waterways and the Department has few powers applicable to the elimination of a new population. Pest status could also see priority given to necessary consent from TRC for use of substances such as Rotenone for eradication of this species.

j. S.4. Inclusion of Darwin's barberry

The Department notes the Officer's recommendation with respect to Darwin's barberry but contends that, at least for the "ring plain" the species could be eradicated to the benefit of the environment and the economy. As noted in our submission we are surprised that this species is considered by Council to have become so widely established in recent years that it can no longer be considered as 'eradicable' (previous strategy).

k. S.4. Inclusion of Climbing Asparagus

The Department notes the Officer's recommendation with respect to Climbing Asparagus and welcomes the suggested intent of the Council to work with DOC to control this species. However, we do not resile from our contention that pest status within a limited area of the Region to reduce the spread of this plant to valuable natural areas would have merit. We consider that this species has a similar 'pestiness' to rats and mustelids for which officers are comfortable in proposing a self- help response and their inclusion as pests within limited areas.

l. S.4.1. Other Harmful Organisms

The Department notes and accepts the Officer's recommendations.

m. S.6.6. Sustained control species: Possums

The Department notes the Officer's clarification that future extensions to the self-help programme will be confined to the ring plain and coastal terraces. This eliminates the qualification to our support for this plan.

n. S.6.7. Good neighbour rules (GNRs) for Giant buttercup

The Department notes the Officer's commentary but maintains that the proposed principal measures and good neighbour rule will be ineffective to achieve the objective. If the principal measures are ineffective then additive costs imposed by direct seed spread from neighbouring properties will not be significant/unreasonable meaning the proposed GNR fails the tests of the National Policy Direction (NPD).

Officers suggest that the Department has selectively opposed GNRs for production pests but not challenged those for environmental pests. That assertion is incorrect, Council will note that the Department's submissions on GNRs have been based on our concerns that the proposed GNRs should meet the tests imposed by the NPD.

Further, the Officers suggest that the Department should provide information to demonstrate that underpinning assumptions in the Section 71 report were wrong but we note that no supporting documentation for the assumptions used in the analysis were provided therefore it is difficult to advance alternatives.

o. S.6.8. Giant Gunnera

The Department notes the Officer's suggested relief and agree that this approach is feasible. However, we contend that it is inefficient to impose an obligation on all affected occupiers that requires them to seek an exemption, that is desired by both TRC and DOC, to limit potential impact on threatened species. In our view, limiting the obligation to all land other than coastal cliffs removes the inefficiency and risks.

p. S.6.9. Gorse

The Department notes the Officer's commentary but maintains that the proposed GNR is inconsistent with the National Policy Direction (except in the circumstance described in our submission). Seed spread from one property to another will not contribute significant or unreasonable costs to the affected occupier because that occupier will largely be managing new plants of this pest arising from the existing seedbank on their property.

Our comments in response to the Officer's criticism of our submission with respect to Giant Buttercup are equally applicable to those comments made about our submission on the GNR for gorse.

q. S.6. Pampas

The Department notes the recommended relief in response to our submission and those of Waikato Regional Council and Federated Farmers. While we support the inclusion of pampas as a harmful organism in the strategy, we submit that the recommended relief has missed the key points of our submission. Confining rules for pampas to the area west of the pest management line and limiting "rule actions" to the removal of seed heads are supported by the cost benefit analysis and we note that these points are also largely consistent with the other two submissions.

r. S6.12. Wild Broom

Refer to our comments with respect to Gorse. (Point p. above).

s. S6.14. Yellow ragwort

Refer to our comments with respect to Gorse. (Point p. above).

t. S.7.1. Other harmful organisms

The Department notes, and is largely supportive of the recommended relief. However, we remain convinced that incorporating a description of the existing legal restrictions on ownership, dispersal and sale of harmful organisms would be helpful. The strategy will become a major source of pest management information for Taranaki and inclusion of those existing controls would reduce risks.

Biosecurity Strategy

The Department notes and supports the Council's collation of its overarching biosecurity approach into the Biosecurity Strategy.

We support the vision and principles described in the document.

We support the pathway and exclusion targets (S.4.3)

We offer the following suggestions as potential improvements.

- a. 2.3.5. Add note on how organisms may be added to the Unwanted Organism register to allow Council to act under S.100V of the Biosecurity Act if required.
- b. S.6. & S.7. (Sustained control and working with others). We suggest that these sections could benefit by the inclusion of some measurable indicators of the successful implementation of control especially with respect to the impact of the identified targets on environmental targets.
- c. S.7.2.2. (Landscape predator control on the ring plain). While we strongly support the concept, we suggest that the "initial control knockdown by council/maintenance by occupiers" model may require some reconsideration. While applicable to possums because of their relatively confined home ranges and slow breeding rates the rapid breeding rates and/or very large home ranges may make such a strategy difficult to implement for predators.
- d. Appendix 2. As per point "t" above we suggest inclusion of a code noting any existing legal designation of these organisms and a text key outlining what restrictions that designation impose.
- e. Appendix 2. Consider removing "feral" definition for deer, pigs and goats because that nomenclature has no legal definition and may exclude animals that have not escaped from domestic settings. We suggest using "wild" in place of "feral" for these species.