

**4. COUNCIL SUBMISSION ON MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT:
“BIOWHAT?: ADDRESSING THE EFFECTS OF PRIVATE LAND MANAGEMENT
ON INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY”**

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| Corporate Plan Output: Conservation Policy Advice | |

The purpose of this report is to inform Committee members of Council’s recent submission to the Ministry for the Environment on the document “Biowhat?: Addressing the Effects of Private Land Management on Indigenous Biodiversity”.

INTRODUCTION

New Zealand’s first Biodiversity Strategy (NZBS), “Our Chance to Turn the Tide”, was released in March of this year. This document looks at issues relating to biodiversity across the whole landscape, including the public estate, private land, freshwater, coastal and marine areas. The associated document “Biowhat?” is, in part, a response to the draft version of the NZBS, as it is recognised that protecting indigenous biodiversity on private land was an important component in ‘halting the decline’ of New Zealand’s biodiversity.

The document ‘Biowhat?’ sets out to investigate ways to promote effective and sustainable management of biodiversity outside of the conservation estate. The document investigates ways in which we can better care for our indigenous flora and fauna and their habitats on private land, and recognises the challenges posed by that goal. More specifically, it serves to stimulate discussion about the need for and scope of a national policy statement under the Resource Management Act and of potential mechanisms for ‘halting the decline in New Zealand’s Biodiversity’.

KEY PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are seven key principles that underpin the approach proposed:

- That sustaining biodiversity on private land relies on the individual commitment of land owners and managers;
- That Maori have a distinct relationship to biodiversity;
- That sustaining biodiversity requires a strategic approach;
- That effectively sustaining biodiversity requires co-ordination and collaboration;
- That there is a need for active management;
- That those with responsibilities for biodiversity have variable capacity to respond;
- That we need to take a learning approach.

Recommendations made include:

- Formation of a National Policy Statement under the RMA 1991;
- Negotiation of two National Biodiversity Accords – one general and one specifically for Maori landowners;
- A range of non-statutory guidance to assist with implementation of biodiversity aspects of the Resource Management Act;

- The need for increased government assistance with a national biodiversity information system/inventory, and education and incentive schemes for landowners;
- Assistance to local communities with the development of local accords.

SUBMISSION

The Environmental Policy and Planning Unit, in conjunction with other units with an interest in biodiversity issues, have jointly prepared a submission on behalf of the Christchurch City Council on 'Biowhat?'. The main points of the submission include:

- Support for the concept of protecting and enhancing a comprehensive and representative range of New Zealand's biodiversity on private land.
- Support for the development of a National Policy Statement, national and local accords, and non-statutory guidance and 'best practice' examples.
- Emphasis on the urgent need for a clarification of roles and responsibilities in respect to managing and protecting New Zealand's biodiversity. While everyone has a role to play in 'halting the decline', city and district councils should play a lead role in managing the effects on areas with significant biodiversity.
- Recognition of the importance of continued central government funding for initiatives such as the QE II National Trust, Nature Heritage Fund and Nga Whenua Rahui; and greater funding of the Department of Conservation to more effectively manage our conservation/public estate.
- Encouragement for greater education and consultation, as this is critical to progressing biodiversity objectives.

A copy of "Biowhat?", along with a full version of the submission, is available from Adele Scoon, Graduate Planner, Conservation, EPPU, on request.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above information be received and the action taken be approved.