



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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Submission to Landcare Research on Pest Management for biodiversity protection

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 42 nationally organised societies and national members. It has 26 Branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies and some 150 other societies as well as individual members. The Council's function is to serve women, the family and the community at local, national and international levels through research, study, discussion and action.

These suggestions were collected from members of the Environment Standing Committee. There was not time to collect responses from the whole of the NCWNZ.

1. There is a lack of sound research available to lay people into what improves and what reduces biodiversity. For example, reducing possums usually leads to increases in the rat population. Reduction of the rat population can increase the number of mice. There is a need to understand thoroughly the most effective approaches.
2. The Department of Conservation (DoC) is underfunded, and other statutory bodies charged with pest control also find their programmes are circumscribed by available funds such as rates.

An increase in government allocation to DOC, of at least 25% annually for 10 years, to deal with the increasing weed and pest infestations on DOC land is needed. Wilding pines, kauri dieback, weeds, possums, pigs, etc are not being controlled over most of the DOC estate. DOC land is losing biodiversity due to pests, and the land is serving as nurseries for pests spreading onto private land.

The number of community volunteers could be increased. If they are supported with education, traps and baits, volunteers can regularly check trap lines. This takes place in some areas, such as Pukawa, and could be extended.

Support for landowners by regional councils should continue and be increased. Landowners could then be more effective in eliminating pests and noxious weeds.

3. Border control must be a number 1 priority, since most challenges to diversity are from unwanted pests that have either been deliberately brought into the country, or have arrived illegally. There is a lack of an effective national bio security surveillance strategy (MAFBNZ has a document but there are no accountabilities or operational aspects). New pests and



diseases are entering NZ and becoming established so we have little or no ability to eradicate many of them. The commercial forestry industry is well prepared (assisted by MAFBNZ), so the pasture, horticulture, conservation and other sectors should similarly be included.

There is a lack of national policy and preparedness for dealing with new biosecurity incursions, particularly diseases and plant pathogens.

4. Damage from possums is especially serious in some areas, and 1080 is supported for control, although research is supported to find alternatives. It is likely that possum culling programmes could be carried out more effectively if more workers were employed.

Public awareness of the facts and realities concerning pesticide use in NZ: Most people are not aware of the true impacts of use of pesticides (eg 1080): the environmental monitoring that is being done; biodiversity improvements occurring as a result of pesticide use; lack of soil and water contamination/residues etc; lack of alternative control tools; and the inevitable impacts of pests should pesticide use be discontinued. Reporting by the media is generally lacking in depth and objectivity, so little or nothing is learned by the public after media coverage of issues.

5. Care should be taken in the siting of new exotic forests to prevent weed seed spreading to mountain or special areas. Broom, wilding pine and Douglas Fir are serious problems.
6. Kauri dieback: this is possibly the worst single organism threatening the survival of a species in entirety. MAFBNZ and ARC leadership has been excellent but some other organisations have been slow to respond. The key issue is research into the pathogen origins, ecology and control.
7. Wasps are also an increasing problem, often found on popular tramping routes.

There is need for the following actions:

- Need for improved pest and disease detection tools, to assist with prevention of spread and establishment of pests
- Need for much greater government funding of research into pest control tools, detection methodologies and prevention mechanisms.
- Need for additional control tools for vertebrate and invertebrate pests (particularly possums, ants, wasps, rodents, birds). These tools may include new toxins but also new application methodologies (eg selective lures, long-life formulations).
- Greater control over development and release of new garden plant species by the ornamental horticulture industry. Approximately 6-10 species are found to be invasive each year, all are garden escapes. Research into inducing plant sterility (eg genetically induced) needs to commence.



- A national biodiversity monitoring strategy needs to be developed and implemented, to better measure trends in biodiversity losses/gains. Most losses are due to pests, and most gains are due to pest management efforts.
- Independent national audit of performance of national agencies (eg DOC, MAFBNZ) and regional councils regarding biosecurity programmes and resultant biodiversity condition.
- Greater central government support for biodiversity programmes on private land eg covenants, major landcare programmes.

Conclusion:

From the previous submissions on the subject of possums and 1080, and other noxious pests, the above represents a fair summary of the beliefs of NCWNZ members. The suggestion that DoC is underfunded has been made repeatedly.

Elizabeth Bang
National President

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Environment Standing Committee