

BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL APPOINTED BY THE CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL

UNDER

the Biosecurity Act 1993

IN THE MATTER

of the Canterbury
Regional Council Proposal
for the Canterbury
Regional Pest
Management Plan 2017-
2037

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SHERMAN SMITH FOR THE MINISTRY FOR PRIMARY
INDUSTRIES**

1 September 2017

Introduction

1. My name is Sherman Chadwick Smith. I am employed by the Ministry for Primary Industries as the Programme Manager for the joint agency National Wilding Conifer Programme. I hold a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Ecology and Zoology from Massey University.
2. I have 19 years' experience in biosecurity and pest management across central and local government, having worked for the Department of Conservation, Environment Southland and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). For the past 8 years I have worked for MPI with a focus on leading nationally coordinated pest management programmes. I have represented MPI on the National Pest Control Agencies (NPCA) and New Zealand on the Australasian Invasive Plants and Animals Committee (IPAC).
3. Over the last 7 years I have led the collaborative national process to improve wilding conifer management in New Zealand. This work led to the development of a status report by Pacific Eco-Logic in 2011 and the New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Strategy in 2014. I also led the cross-government business case to government for Phase 1 of the National Wilding Conifer Programme. I currently work with a small team and partner organisations to implement the National Wilding Conifer Programme.
4. I provide the following statement in support of the submission lodged by MPI on the Canterbury Regional Council Proposal for the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Plan 2017-2037 (the PRPMP).
5. I will also call Tamsin Page to present her expert evidence prepared on behalf of MPI in support of its submission, and in response to points raised by other submitters and staff in relation to pest agents and the management of wilding conifer spread from planted conifers.

Good Neighbour Rules

6. MPI supports the staff recommendations to accept its submission points relating to Good Neighbour Rules. Noting that Good Neighbour Rules can be used even in the absence of Crown land.

Wilding Conifers

7. MPI's submission to the PRPMP included 14 submission points relating to the proposed wilding conifer pest programme. In the Staff Recommendations Report, Appendix 1: Summary of Submissions and Staff Recommendations Report (Appendix 1), it is recommended that 9 of MPI's submission points be accepted, 2 be accepted in part, and 3 be rejected.
8. Many of MPI's submission points express support for the Council's uptake of and consistency with, relevant parts of guidance material released by MPI in 2016 in relation to wilding conifers in RPMPs. That guidance material arose out of the Wilding Conifer RPMP Rule Development Project, which was initiated as part of the Implementation Programme for the NZ Wilding Conifer Management Strategy 2015-2030. A key objective of the Project was to improve regulatory consistency and effectiveness in wilding conifer management, and to support other components of the Strategy Implementation Programme. A multi-stakeholder advisory group

was involved in the process to develop a suite of provisions and associated guidance that make up a potential regulatory framework for use in RPMP wilding conifer pest programmes.

9. MPI supports the staff recommendations to accept its submission points relating to wilding conifers. I will expand on one of the submission points recommended to be accepted in part below, while Ms Page will address the other “accepted in part” and “rejected” submission points in her evidence.

Submission point 82.9

10. The first part of this submission point was recommended to be accepted, and MPI supports this and the recommended amendment.
11. The second part of the submission point encourages the Council to explore and consider potential different options (both regulatory and non-regulatory) for managing the risk of wilding conifer spread from future new plantings of spread-prone conifer species. This point was not recommended to be accepted on the basis that this matter is sufficiently addressed by the existing statement at page 31 of the PRPMP, relating to the development of a management framework for plantation forests that contributes to the control of the spread of wilding conifers.
12. The issue of wilding conifer spread from future new conifer plantings extends beyond just plantation forests, and includes future plantings of shelterbelts, amenity trees, and potentially, new ‘carbon forests’. This is an important, although complex, issue, and MPI encourages the Council to consider it further. It is particularly pertinent to managing the risk of re-infestation of areas cleared of wilding conifers, and in terms of protecting the significant investment in wilding conifer control that has been made to date by the Council and its partners, and that is being made through the National Wilding Conifer Programme.
13. A map of the South Island Management Units receiving control in Phase 1 of the National Programme is appended as Attachment 1 to provide an indication of the scale of the work to be carried out in Canterbury.
14. I note that the issue of wilding conifer spread from planted conifers has been raised by several submitters in the context of specifying some spread-prone but commercially valuable conifer species as pest agents. The Staff Recommendations Report notes that staff would benefit from further evidence on this matter. MPI recognises that a mixture of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches will likely be required to address this issue, however in terms of regulatory options under the Biosecurity Act, MPI has engaged Tamsin Page to undertake some analysis of the issues and options. Tamsin addresses this issue in her statement of evidence, outlining some of the key points arising from this analysis, which will hopefully assist the Panel in its consideration of this matter.

SHERMAN SMITH

1st September 2017

ATTACHMENT 1

