

04.09.17

Environment Canterbury
P.O. Box 345
Christchurch 8140

Dear Lochiel McKellar

Re Proposal for rgw Canterbury Pest Management Plan 2017 - 2037

Please find enclosed further comments and evidence to my earlier submission, dated 03.06.17, for presentation at the Hearing in Timaru, on 13.09.17.

Yours

Fraser B Ross

**Re PROPOSALS FOR THE CANTERBURY REGIONAL PEST
MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017 to 2037**

**Further comments to my submission, for presentation at the Hearing, 13.09.17
Fraser B Ross**

Formal submission: this was made, dated 03.06.17, and I refer you to that for fuller comments that I have made on plant and animal pests.

In that submission I gave some conditional support for the proposals on animal pests and weeds and their control. But asked, firmly, that the Council adopt a much more pro-active approach as the impacts on biodiversity are, or becoming very significant indeed. Much more focus is needed on the need to protect biodiversity especially that which is under considerable impacts by many pests. As this is seen a most important role and function of Environment Canterbury which it should be undertaking to a much greater extent than indicated in the Proposals.

Further brief comments: in my submission I referred to a range of animal pests and weeds which are causing significant harm to biodiversity and our natural environment. Some of which include:

Bennett's wallaby: while this animal is recognised as a significant pest and there are proposed rules for its control, however much greater sustained effort is needed to prevent its spread into areas outside the containment area. As well as controlling, drastically, the numbers within its existing feral range. Recent past efforts at controlling numbers have been largely unsuccessful. That situation must change for the good of farming, forestry and biodiversity.

Possums: also cause major impacts on farming from TB infected animals, and on biodiversity. Where possums have been targeted for animal health benefits, the numbers of native birds appear to have increased significantly. At Gunns and Kelceys Bush many more tomtits were seen there after possum control had taken place.. So, ask that possums be controlled overall in addition to those areas covered by the Animal Health Board operations.

Wilding trees: the impact of ever spreading conifer species on the overall environment can be great, especially on farming, biodiversity and iconic landscapes.

Old Mans Beard: this weed is a significant problem in many places especially on unmanaged riverbed margins. Where it provides a seed source which can and does spread into nearby stands of native bush and forests. Old mans beard, I ask, be a targeted species and greater efforts be made to controlled this rampant weed.

Sycamore: (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) is now wide-spread throughout South Canterbury and has, or is, invading natural bush areas in many places. Where it may become the dominant species and suppressing or eliminating the growth of native species. There are at least eighteen sites that I know of and there will several more no doubt. Volunteer groups do control sycamore in some areas, such as at Conways Bush, where

a twice yearly effort is made to remove seedlings of sycamore and other species. The number removed during each visit has been recorded and are: 25.04.14 - 585; 18.04.15 - 130+; 19.11.16 - 2351; and 22.04.17 - 1557; all approximate numbers. The seed source for these seedlings come from outside the area and, pleasingly, an E Can funded control effort has been just undertaken to eliminate the seed source trees nearby.

But there is a limit to what volunteers can do and we cannot be expected to do more and more as some agencies expect us to do. The time period for this Pest Management Plan is for 20 years, which is far too long to wait and watch for another review of this escalating environmental problem. Urgency is needed now and Environment Canterbury must front up and lead the efforts to confront the problem of sycamore spread and that of other weeds. Which are now affecting our natural biodiversity to a significant extent and will continue to do so unless action is taken.

So, ask that this Proposed Pest Management Plan provide provisions to implement site led control programmes for sycamore and other significant weed pests.

Other Pest Weeds: there are several other serious pest weeds which also need to be included in the Proposed Pest Management Plan and to be actively controlled. Some of those other pest weeds are, **Hawthorn, Cotoneaster, Darwins Barberry, Privet, Chilean Flame Creeper,** and also include the Department of Conservation 'Dirty Dozen'. Which are:

Wilding conifers (10 species), woolly nightshade, buddleia, wild ginger, English ivy, wandering willie, Darwin's Barberry, climbing asparagus, old man's beard, Moth plant, banana passionfruit (four species) Japanese honeysuckle and spartina (two species).

Conclusion: sustained control or site led programmes are needed for many of these plant pests starting with provisions contained within this Proposed Pest Management Plan. New Zealand has a long history of introducing plants and animals without much consideration for their impact on biodiversity or our unique natural environment. Efforts to control pests have often been left until the situation becomes dire for many of the indigenous species. Costly efforts are now being made, in some instances, to reduce the severe impact of animal and plant pests on threatened species. So, ask here that agencies, such as Environment Canterbury, front up and deal rigorously with the problem pests that have been outlined in my submission for this hearing. And not leave it for another Plan Review, in twenty years time, to look at these plant pests at that distant time, when the problem could be much greater.

Yours
Fraser Ross