

February 20, 2018

# Mackenzie Basin Agency Alignment Review Report

## Summary

### Background to the report, purpose

Significant changes in Mackenzie Basin land use have happened over the last 15 plus years. Many New Zealanders have a view of the Mackenzie Basin as a landscape of brown tussock grasslands and post glacial features with sweeping unobstructed views. The reality may be a little different.

The challenge is how to reconcile outstanding national landscape and biodiversity values with the need for landowners and communities to maintain and develop their livelihood.

The Mackenzie Basin has been subject to extensive land use change over the last 15 years. Not everyone is happy with this. The land tenure review process is viewed by some as contributing to the problem. The slow pace and the variable success at which agencies have attempted alignment may also have contributed.

Biosecurity challenges continue. Risks to water quality require 'front-foot' action. Consent processes are viewed by many as not being streamlined enough, and some parties believe there is a lack of balance between pastoral intensification (and associated private property gains) and protection of ecological and landscape values.

The key purpose of the report is to consider what more can be done to align land and water management decision-making.

### Scope of the report

#### *In scope*

Identify opportunities for greater agency alignment, applying best public sector practice to better achieve outcomes desired by the community.

#### *Out of scope*

Investigation of past statutory decisions, solutions involving legislative amendment.

## **Findings**

- The Mackenzie Country Trust's vision is strongly supported.
- The Trust needs more support and funding to improve effectiveness.
- A common understanding of the appropriate extent of pastoral intensification compared with landscape/ecological protection has yet to be achieved.
- A more strategic approach to land use decisions is needed. A spatial plan may help.
- Tenure review is a vital tool for achieving the Mackenzie Agreement Vision.
- Agencies would profit from more collaboration and alignment.
- Better use of existing tools and funding should be directed to a Dry-land Park.
- Collaborative effort is needed to better manage visitor sector pressures.

## **Recommendations**

Twenty-five actions are recommended, in three categories (see pages 49-51 of the report for details):

- How the five agencies can work together either collectively or in groups
- How the agencies work with others
- Larger policy and/or process challenges.

## **Conclusions**

The report is not intended to be an end statement about how the 'preferred future' for the Mackenzie Basin may be achieved, although it contains practical recommendations about the actions to be taken to achieve it.

To gain support for these recommended actions and to put them into effect, further discussions will be required with and between all affected parties.