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Submission by	Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group (Dr David Miller - 77452)
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Whole Plan Support/Oppose	

Please select one of the following: I generally agree with the activity proposed for the Long-Term Plan.

Whole Plan Comments

Please provide any comments.

Environment Canterbury

Consultation on the Long-Term Plan 2018 – 2028 and the Revenue and Financing Policy

Feedback Form

March 2018

Submission by: Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group

Contact details: David Miller

Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group

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We wish to be heard in support of this submission.

Summary of Submission

The Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group supports the activities relating to pest control to protect biodiversity that contribute to the vision of a pest free Banks Peninsula proposed in the ECAN Long-Term Plan 2018 – 2028. We congratulate ECAN on prioritising biodiversity protection and support the intended step change in effort to achieve this. Specifically, we encourage ECAN to implement the following:

- 1 A long term commitment to supporting a community-driven partnership approach to all pest control work on Banks Peninsula realised through the Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills Partnership (PFBPP) (draft MOU attached).
- 2 Financial support of a minimum of \$50k in year one available to the PFBPP to develop an over-arching strategy for Pest Free Banks Peninsula & collaborative operational work programme.
- 3 A sustainable revenue stream to fund the expanded pest control work programme comprising a general rate allocation and targeted rate. We suggest:
 - 1 50% contribution from the general rate take, recognising the public good provided by Pest Free Banks Peninsula to the region.
 - 2 50% contribution from the expansion of the current Banks Peninsula Community Initiative Programme to include all properties in the entire Banks Peninsula Ecological Region, and the targeting of more pest species.
- 4 A commitment to all ECAN pest control policy decisions and operational work being in alignment with the PFBPP over-arching strategy and work programme.
- 5 An increase in funding to \$40k in year one to support the goals of the ongoing Goat Eradication Project.

2050 Ecological Vision for Banks Peninsula (including the Port Hills)

In 2017, the Banks Peninsula/Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū (including the Port Hills) Ecological Vision 2050 was launched by the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust. A range of organisations and agencies (including ECAN), and the Banks Peninsula community support the eight Ecological Goals set out in this Vision. The eight Goals are aspirational but achievable, and are being used to guide conservation management work to result in a substantial improvement in the state of indigenous biodiversity on Banks Peninsula/Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū by 2050. The Goals build on and seek to implement Environment Canterbury's Regional Biodiversity Strategy (2008), the Christchurch City Council's Biodiversity Strategy 2008 – 2035, the Mahaanui Iwi Management Plan 2013, and the Banks Peninsula Zone Implementation Plan (2013).

All 8 Goals are interrelated. Goal 8 of the Ecological Vision is that Banks Peninsula/Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū is effectively free of pest animals. The 'Predator Free New Zealand 2050' project announced by the Government in 2016 has the ambitious goal of trying to remove possums, rodents and mustelids progressively from large areas of mainland New Zealand. Banks Peninsula/Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū is the largest true Peninsula in New Zealand (ca. 100,000 ha) and could be one of the first large areas of New Zealand to become effectively free of these pest predators. Other introduced mammals are also key biodiversity predators (both as herbivores and carnivores) and in the case of Banks Peninsula/Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū include feral deer (red and fallow), goats, pigs, rabbits, hares, feral cats and hedgehogs.

'Effectively free of pest animals' means that all the pest animals listed above have been reduced to numbers that do not threaten biodiversity values. This is a pragmatic definition and accepts that while

it may be possible to eliminate some pest animal species from the Peninsula (e.g. goats or deer), it may not be possible to eliminate them all (e.g. rodents). The intent is to reduce all pest animals to zero or as close to zero as possible across the Peninsula.

The removal of pest animals from Banks Peninsula will ensure indigenous species become more abundant and widespread across the Peninsula and into Christchurch City. This includes the common species that characterise the Peninsula today (birds, invertebrates, lizards), as well as currently rare or endemic species (e.g., penguins, falcon, titi, jewelled gecko, ruru, long-tail bats, lamprey, fragrant tree daisy, Akaroa daisy). Success will be demonstrated by robust scientific evidence that shows species are increasing in abundance and diversity, as well as anecdotal evidence, such as bird song, reported by the community.

To achieve Goal 8 of the Ecological Vision, the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust invited representatives from a range of organisations to form the Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group.

Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills Partnership

The Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group has been established as a collaborative partnership between Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, Christchurch City Council, Department of Conservation, Environment Canterbury, Koukourārata Rūnanga, Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust, and the Summit Road Society. The group is currently in the process of formalising their relationship through a MoU and will become known as the Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills Partnership. Membership to this Partnership will also include Selwyn District Council and be open to a wide range of community groups, schools, and businesses.

Significant work on pest control is already being undertaken by members of this collaboration and long-standing community predator control efforts are undertaken by groups and landowners across Banks Peninsula. The Banks Peninsula community has a track record for community-driven leadership which brings together landowner and multi-agency collaborations to achieve conservation outcomes, e.g., the Goat Eradication Group and Wildside Project.

The PFBP Working Group/PFBPP believes that this partnership model that emphasises a community-driven approach with agency support is the most effective way to achieve the Pest Free vision.

The specific provisions of the Long Term Plan 2018 – 2028 that our submission relates to:

1 Biodiversity and Biosecurity

1 Feral Goat Eradication

We seek an increased commitment of \$40k funding allocation in year one of the Long Term Plan for the continued support of the Goat Eradication Project on Banks Peninsula.

Feral goats pose one of the most significant threats to biodiversity on the Peninsula. Over the past decade more than 5000 feral goats have been removed as part of the Goat Eradication Project with in excess of \$300,000 being invested by project partners to date. However, five goat 'hot spots' still remain. The Goat Eradication Group are confident that eradication can be achieved over the next five years with further investment from the partners. Unless, this is done, the community risks losing the benefits of the work done to date as well as having to continue to have to spend money on goat control.

The Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust has joined the group as an investment partner, but their support is contingent on additional funding being made available from agencies to ensure the ultimate success of the project. To this end, the Goat Eradication Group/PFBPP will also be seeking a comparative level of funding support from CCC and DoC. If successful, this additional funding will allow the Goat Eradication Group to make the step change in effort ECAN is seeking to restore biodiversity on Banks Peninsula.

We congratulate ECAN on their recognition of feral goats as a pest on Banks Peninsula in the recently released Regional Pest Management Plan and encourage you to match this policy decision with an increased funding allocation of \$40k in year one of the Long Term Plan.

1 Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills Partnership

We believe that achieving the Pest Free vision requires the active support and involvement of the communities and landowners who will be required to contribute to, and who will benefit from, the realisation of the vision. A partnership model that emphasises a community-led approach with strong agency support is the most appropriate way to achieve the sort of step change the Council wants. To achieve this, we seek ECAN's long-term commitment to supporting an innovative community-driven partnership approach to all pest control work on Banks Peninsula realised through the Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills Partnership.

Success will require that all members of the Partnership are committed to implementing an over-arching strategy for Pest Free and a collaborative work programme. We welcome ECAN's support for the development of this work with a \$50k funding allocation to PFBPP in year one.

1 Role of Pest Liaison Committees

It will be critical that agencies and organisations examine their existing pest related functions and decision-making bodies to ensure strategic alignment with the PFBPP over-arching strategy. We seek that ECAN considers this when reviewing the functions and structure of the Pest Liaison Committee with respect to Banks Peninsula.

1 Revenue and Financing Policy

Realising the Pest Free Banks Peninsula Vision and a step change in biodiversity protection will require a collaborative strategy and work programme that is underpinned by a sustainable revenue stream. We seek that ECAN commits to a significant funding allocation from year two onwards in the Long-Term Plan, comprised of a general rate allocation (50%) and a targeted rate (50%).

Pest control is of national biodiversity importance and achieving Pest Free Banks Peninsula provides a public good for the whole region. In principle, we believe biodiversity protection should be funded entirely from general rates. However, we recognise that general rate funding may be constrained and a pragmatic solution to extend the available funding to support the Pest Free Vision is a combination of general rates and a targeted rate. We consider it appropriate that a contribution from the general rate take makes up 50% of the funding allocated to the PFBPP work programme.

The Banks Peninsula community has a history of undertaking pest control work to protect and enhance biodiversity. The Banks Peninsula Community Initiative Programme (CIP) for possums is an excellent example of community-led/agency supported pest control work. We consider that expanding the existing level of rating for the CIP to cover additional pest species and including all households from the entire Banks Peninsula Ecological Region (which includes the Port Hills) would be well received by a community that is motivated to do more for biodiversity protection.

1 Regional Leadership

We seek that ECAN commits to the collaborative community-led/agency supported model described above and in doing so: provides PFBPP financial and administrative support to develop the over-arching strategy and collaborative work programme; and ensures that all internal ECAN policy and strategies regarding pest control on Banks Peninsula are aligned to this collaborative approach.

The Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group encourages ECAN to extend an invitation to the BPCT to become a member of the Citizens Panel.

Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group including representatives from:

Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust

Christchurch City Council

Department of Conservation

Koukourārata Rūnanga

Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust

Summit Road Society

Note: Due to a conflict of interest the ECAN representative to the working group abstained from endorsing this submission.

C/- Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust

PO Box 146, Tai Tapu 7645

March 2018