

**Submission:** Environment Canterbury Annual Plan 2019-20 and Revenue and Financing policy  
**From:** Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust  
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**Organisation role:** Conservation and recreation on Banks Peninsula

## Submission summary

The Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust was established by Christchurch City Council for the benefit of the present and future inhabitants of Banks Peninsula and its visitors.

The Trust has a vision to restore the environment of Banks Peninsula to its former rich biodiversity with local people prospering and passionately participating in conservation and outdoor recreation.

The Trust is working to realise its vision through projects built upon four key pillars: Access, Biodiversity, Knowledge and Partnerships. The Trust is taking a leadership role in promoting and facilitating public access on foot and bike on Banks Peninsula and a support role in projects supporting biodiversity recovery and enhancement. The Trust works in partnership with others, including the Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group, Department of Conservation, Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, tangata whenua, local communities, organisations and authorities, and the Christchurch City Council to achieve these aims.

The Trust has strategic goals to see

- Banks Peninsula become Pest Free;
- Increase in protection for areas with high biodiversity values;
- Public access on a network of well managed walking and biking tracks to connect people with the natural environment and build environmental stewards of the future.

The Trust supports the:

- Submission of the Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group in full;
- Proposed changes to the Revenue and Financing Policy to create a rating area (including the Port Hills) to support the vision for a pest-free Banks Peninsula.
- In addition, we ask that the Council programme provide an additional \$400,000 from year 3 (2020-21) onwards of the Long-Term Plan (LTP).

## 1 Biodiversity and Biosecurity

The Pest Free Banks Peninsula / Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū Initiative is a collaborative programme to protect and enhance biodiversity on the Peninsula through the widespread eradication of animal pests. In November 2018, it was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by 14 foundation signatories including the Council.

We congratulate the Canterbury Regional Council (the Council) on its commitment to the Pest Free Banks Peninsula (including Port Hills) / Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū Initiative. The Trust appreciates ECAN's desire to see a step-change in biodiversity enhancement, and specifically to extend the targeted rate to fund greater control of a wider range of pests on Banks Peninsula.



### **1.1 Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills partnership**

The Trust believes that a community-based partnership model will be essential to achieve the long-term goal of pest eradication and hence signed the Pest Free Banks Peninsula MOU along with other organisations including the Council. It will be essential that the work of this group and the methodology it develops are supported by the government agencies with funding and pest related strategies and work aligning with the PFBPP overarching strategy.

The Trust has supported the establishment work of the Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group. It has used its funding to kick-start operational work and the organisational development of the Pest-Free Banks Peninsula project. To this end, it underwrote the pilot goat eradication project in Little Akaroa and contributed \$56,000 toward costs, and has allocated a further \$25,000 in 2019 for the employment of a PFBP acting project manager to assist with the creation of a permanent operating structure, to lead stakeholder consultation and to ensure the completion of strategic and operational documents.

### **1.2 Revenue and Financing Policy change for Pest Free Banks Peninsula**

The primary outcome of the Pest Free Banks Peninsula Initiative is enhanced and protected biodiversity as Banks Peninsula is a biodiversity hotspot with both endemic and threatened species. Like most other biodiversity programmes, there will also be economic, social and cultural benefits. With the Peninsula being part of greater Christchurch, it provides opportunities for the urban population to be involved in protecting this unique biodiversity. The Council's support for this initiative is consistent with its pest management functions under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

The Council's funding will provide a foundation upon which other financial contributions can be leveraged. The use of a 50:50 targeted/general rate should enable over half a million dollars to be raised if it set at the proposed level. It is anticipated that with the proposed contribution from Council, the PFBP will be able to build up an annual work programme exceeding \$1.5M in the 2019/2020 year. The Council's contribution is critical to securing the additional funding from other partners, such as Predator Free 2050 Ltd, Department of Conservation, Christchurch City Council and large grant-funding bodies (e.g. Lotteries, Rata Foundation).

### **1.3 Additional funding from 2020/2021 onwards**

We ask that the Council programme in a further increase of \$400,000 from 2020/2021 onwards to bring the total financial support to \$1M per annum. This will enable PFBP to seek further funding from other partners and provide a solid foundation for achieving the long-term goal of Pest Free Banks Peninsula 2050. To maximise the external funding that can be leveraged from the Council's contribution, it is important to programme in the additional future funding now, rather than waiting until next year or the next LTP.

### **1.4 Specific comment on the Revenue and Financing Policy**

As this programme has a primary benefit of biodiversity, this initiative could be from general rates only. The programme, however, will also provide farming, lifestyle and amenity benefits for the rate payers in the targeted area. This proposal is building on the existing Community Initiated Programme (CIP) for possums that was introduced at the request of landowners on the Peninsula for both biodiversity and production benefits which were more pertinent at that time. We would like to see this initiative continued but expanded and integrated into the overall PFBP vision.

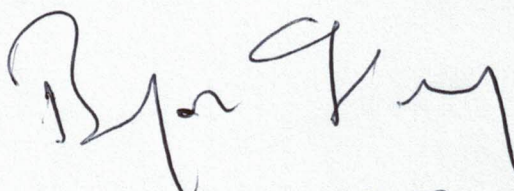
We want to ensure that it continues to be community lead and believe that having a targeted rate component provides a stronger basis for this. The proposed 50:50 split between general and



targeted rates is a pragmatic solution that allows local community aspirations to be met while also acknowledging the wider benefits of biodiversity.

The Trust agrees with the PFBP Working Group that at this stage control of plant pests on Banks Peninsula should be separately organised; as joining that with animal pest control on this large scale would lead to unjustifiable complexity of programme management. We also note and support the continuation of rabbit control rate as a separate programme. At this point we believe the Council is best placed to deliver this separately from the rest of the Pest Free programme.

***We wish to be heard in support of our submission.***



12-3-19

