

SPOKEN STATEMENT – Greg Stanley

1. My name is Greg Stanley. I have worked at Environment Canterbury for 9.5 years as a Ranger, Biodiversity Officer and Regional lead in the rivers section.
2. I have shared information on alternative practices and changes that the Environment Canterbury River's Section are making to our vegetation and weed management practices. I have developed a range of techniques and performed several trials of new materials which I have provided details of in my evidence. These trials are ongoing and will be expanded as other tools come into the market and as operational experience continues to develop.
3. In my own experience, the appetite for change away from a reliance on herbicide as the sole-control mechanism of competing vegetation has been driven by the groups I work with, be it Papatipu Rūnanga, conservation groups or advocacy groups like forest and bird and river care groups. Though generally supportive of works to control weed species and accepting of the reality of herbicide efficacy, there has also been a desire to reduce the widespread/broadcast use of herbicide and to develop other tools to minimize its total volume.
4. In the first section of my evidence, I discussed the Berm Transition project which seeks to achieve a long-term transition to more stable berm vegetation in terms of increased vegetation density, increased presence of native evergreen species and the increased stratification of the berm vegetation. These factors serve to greatly reduce light availability in our berm spaces and reduces germination opportunity for many of the problem species Environment Canterbury are seeking to control. This project has been very successfully installed but still requires several years of attention to achieve a full establishment and function. The sites all rely on upkeep spray maintenance generally delivered by knapsack spraying of glyphosate and adjuvants.
5. **Note**, as an extension to point 21 in my evidence, one of our sites installed on the Opihi river at its confluence with the Te ana a wai, included the installation of 11,570 plants and in collaboration with the Department of Conservation approximately 25 repurposed telephone poles were erected and fitted with artificial pekapeka roosts. This work will achieve the goals of Berm transition in the short term, establishing layers of shade and reducing weed vigour. In the medium to long term, we hope to see an

increased plant and invertebrate diversity, improved habitat value and the adoption of the site by pekapeka as a feeding and roosting site.

6. I then detail the use of Terrafelt and geotextiles, their hydrophilic properties, success to date and environmental improvements to come. I reference the “Garto guard, a ‘spray-free’ plant guard which blocks all light in a fixed area around the installed plant. Environment Canterbury will be rolling out further trials in the coming season using both items.
7. I then detail some large-scale fairway and active-braid weed encroachment projects delivered in out-of-scheme areas. These projects, while still utilizing herbicide, have used much-lower volumes in some instances and coupled spraying with physical or mechanical removal. Costs of the control work are compared and presented for consideration. **Note** that the costs referred to are based on rounded estimates of “fairway spraying in the lower Ashley” in two recent seasons. These numbers are considered an average spend for clearing fairway areas in a “normal” (non-covid-affected) year.
8. Lastly, I detail the large-scale tractor mulching of an area on the Rakitata river at “Stoddard’s island”. Removal of flow-impeding vegetation here was designed to see significant relief of flooding pressure to the south, true right bank in coming years. This approach provided for the particular environmental sensitivities of the site, the main one being side-braid wetland and wet-area sensitivity.
9. Happy to answer any questions you may have. Ngā mihi ki a koutou.