

6 December 2023

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Hon Tama Potaka
Minister of Conservation
Minister of Māori Development
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Tēnā koe Minister

Briefing for Incoming Minister – protecting our environment, resourcing iwi/hapū Māori in the face of climate change

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Conservation and Minister of Māori Development. Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) shares your passion for safeguarding New Zealand's environment and enabling iwi/ hapū Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga. We look forward to working with you.

We would like to bring **eight** matters to your attention:

- 1. Harmonise treatment of feral ungulate (deer, pigs, goats) control in legislation:** We are keen to work with you to achieve a strategic approach to feral ungulate control that will meet the needs of hunters, assist landowners to prevent decimation of their land and crops, and protect our regional biodiversity. We would like to see that approach reflected in a review of the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, to address sections relating to powers of entry for control purposes, which undermine our control effectiveness and overall investment in biosecurity.

More broadly, because of feral ungulates' long-term impact on forest diversity and composition, Greater Wellington needs the ability to list them in our Regional Pest Management Plan.

- 2. Control feral ungulates on public conservation land (Remutaka and Tararua Forest Parks) bordering Greater Wellington Water Collection Areas:** Greater Wellington's Hutt and Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Areas share boundaries with the Tararua and Remutaka Forest Parks respectively. However, our investment of time and resource to control feral ungulates impacting the Water Collection Areas is continually undermined by their ongoing reinvasion from public conservation land. Pragmatic solutions are available to resolve this issue.

- 3. Nationwide monitoring and control of Canada geese populations:** Uncontrolled populations of Canada geese are now consuming large quantities of grass and fouling wetlands, paddocks, sports fields, parks, and amenity areas in our region and beyond. For Canada geese control to work effectively, Government needs to step up, resource it properly and lead it out.
- 4. Fund and enable design of the proposed Wainuiomata Fenced Eco-sanctuary:** Our critically endangered forest birds – kākāpo, rowi kiwi and hihi – have run out of space on NZ’s offshore islands, and there is nowhere else suitable on the mainland. Except there is somewhere – in Greater Wellington’s 3,313ha Wainuiomata Water Collection Area (WCA). Rich in the kakapo’s staple diet – large growth rimu forest – the WCA could enable long term viability of these taonga species.
- 5. Continue to support Predator Free and expand in Wellington:** Predator Free Wellington is on a mission to make the world’s first capital city predator free. Phase I (Miramar Peninsula) is now complete, resulting in 71% increase in native birdlife. The team is now moving into Island Bay to CBD (Phase 2). Through our wide-ranging partnership we are achieving world-first ecological outcomes through cost-effective control of possums, rats, and mustelids, and creating positive social impact. This amazing work merits our ongoing support.
- 6. Progress a Cat Management Act to protect NZ’s biodiversity and agriculture, and safeguard pet cats.** Cats are one of NZ’s favourite pets, but poor cat management is leading to armies of stray and feral cats ripping through our native wildlife. Feral cats decimate rare species of birds and lizards, and transmit toxoplasmosis to sheep, humans, and native wildlife. Compulsory microchipping and de-sexing will help limit cat populations, support education programmes, and enable feral cat control in designated locations.
- 7. Support a new vision of partnership in implementing *Kaipupuri taonga ki te ao whānui*** framework for Te Taiao (environment) in the Wellington region and beyond. To achieve the massive task of restoring our environment, everyone - local and central government, mana whenua iwi, NGOs, community groups and the public - needs to work “shoulder to shoulder”. Our new framework has painted a vision for us to achieve a flourishing, healthy taiao, now is the time to create the pathway to realise this vision. There is much to learn, and knowledge to gain, to apply in our region and across New Zealand.
- 8. Fund iwi and hapū Māori to undertake climate risk assessments, adaptation planning, emergency response and post-event trauma recovery:** In the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle in Hawkes Bay and Tairāwhiti, iwi leaders stepped up to respond at the “front line” and lead the recovery processes for their communities, Māori, and Pakeha alike. Across New Zealand it is vital for mana whenua to research and manage climate change risks in a manner that meets their respective circumstances, and this requires direct Government funding. Continued Government support for the development of a Māori Climate Platform, in partnership with mana whenua, will enable Māori-led climate action, planning, and solutions that build climate resilience and support community response and recovery nationwide.

Please find attached further information in the Appendix regarding our proposal for protecting our environment and resourcing iwi/ hapū Māori to lead community responses and recovery from the impacts of climate change,

We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss how we may work effectively together and with others for the benefit of our people and the environment.

Ngā mihi



Daran Ponter
Chair

CC: Leaders and Deputy Leaders of Government Coalition Partners, Wellington Constituency Members of Parliament, Wellington Region Mayors, Wellington Region Chairs, Mana Whenua Iwi, Wellington Region, Local Government New Zealand