

Hon Tama Potaka

Minister of Conservation
Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti
Minister for Māori Development
Minister for Whānau Ora
Associate Minister of Housing (Social Housing)



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6 March 2024

Daran Ponter
Chairperson
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
Manners Street, Wellington 6142

Tēnā koe Daran

Thank you for your letter and briefing dated 6 December 2023 outlining the Greater Wellington Regional Council's (Greater Wellington) priorities and identifying areas in which we could potentially work together to achieve these. I was encouraged to hear from the Department of Conservation about the work you have already progressed together and your successes.

Harmonising Feral Ungulate Control in Legislation:

A review or amendment of the Wild Animal Control Act is not currently proposed. However, the Department advises me that developing regional collaborative plans is one of the goals in its *Te Ara ki Mua* framework for the management of wild animals. The Department is keen to work with Greater Wellington to develop a strategic regional approach.

I am advised that feral ungulates are legally defined as wild animals as opposed to pests in legislation. Greater Wellington is therefore able to include wild animals in its regional pest management plans.

Control feral ungulates on public conservation land bordering Greater Wellington water collection areas:

I was pleased to hear from the Department that the Kāpiti Wellington and Wairarapa district offices already collaborate with the Greater Wellington ungulate team on eradication across the wider Tararua and Remutaka Forest Park areas. I understand that the Department's ungulate control in these districts is focussed on priority areas that include boundaries shared with Greater Wellington.

The Department has advised me that an authorisation has been provided to Greater Wellington to control ungulates into public conservation land along shared boundaries. Since this authorisation expires in December 2024, I would encourage your ungulate team to liaise with the Department's local district offices to renew this authorisation. The Department

suggests Greater Wellington jointly progress consultation with interested parties as this will enable the authorisation to be reissued on a long-term basis.

Nationwide monitoring and control of Canada geese populations:

The Department has advised me that in 2011 Canada geese were moved from the First Schedule (wildlife declared to be game) of the Wildlife Act 1953 to the Fifth Schedule (wildlife not protected). This means the Department has no mandate to manage or control Canada geese populations.

Unfortunately, Canada geese are not defined as pests in legislation. However, this does not limit Greater Wellington's ability to include them in its regional pest management plans.

The Department confirms that it would welcome being part of further discussions on the future management and control of Canada geese populations.

Fund and enable design of the proposed Wainuiomata fenced eco-sanctuary:

The Department has advised me it remains supportive of the Wainuiomata eco-sanctuary proposal and the positive conservation outcomes this would deliver for kākāpō, rowi and hihi recovery.

I would like to acknowledge the project leadership that has been shown by Greater Wellington with this promising initiative.

The Department will continue to provide in kind support to the project. However, it does not support the funding of the Wainuiomata eco-sanctuary from Vote Conservation. To do so would reduce the biodiversity gains of existing national programmes across ecosystem, species, and pest priorities.

Support Predator Free and expand Predator Free in Wellington:

The Department is supportive of Predator Free Initiatives as it is the lead agency for facilitating Predator Free 2050. It also contributes directly to the work through predator control on public conservation land, develops eradication science, funds research and development, and provides training and collaboration.

I was pleased to hear from the Department that Predator Free Wellington has received Crown funding via Predator Free 2050 Limited to support this work locally. I am also aware that the Kāpiti Wellington district office has a strong working relationship with Predator Free Wellington and continues to actively support its work through the predator control that is carried out on public conservation land.

Progress a Cat Management Act:

The Department advises me that it supports responsible cat ownership and supports, in principle, the mechanisms proposed in the National Cat Management Strategy, including the de-sexing and micro-chipping of domestic cats.

The Department's focus is on its legislated mandate to address the control of feral cats on public conservation land and at specific sites off public conservation land where feral cats may pose a threat to threatened or conservation dependant species.

I understand the Department may look to submit on the management of feral cats in relation to site specific programmes within regional pest management plans for ecological restoration purposes.

Support implementation of *Kaipupuri taonga te ao whānui*:

I was glad to hear about the support the Department has provided on the development of the *Kaipupuri taonga te ao whānui* framework. I understand that the Kāpiti Wellington and Wairarapa district offices have also been actively supporting the *Waikanae ki Uta ki Tae* project and *Wairarapa Moana* projects in conjunction with Greater Wellington and mana whenua. I have been advised these offices will continue to work collaboratively to support and implement this valuable framework and approach.

Fund iwi and hapū to respond to climate change risk:

The Department is committed to being an honourable treaty partner and to the climate change objectives of *Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy*.

The partnership between iwi and hapū underpin the Department's *Climate Change Adaptation Plan* which seeks to support and complement te ao Māori, and iwi and hapū led climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

Thank you for your offer of a meeting to discuss these priorities. Unfortunately, I am unable to accept your invitation to meet in the near-term. Should there be an opportunity for us to meet later in the year my office will be in touch.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Mauriora

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tama Potaka". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'T' and 'P'.

Hon Tama Potaka
Minister of Conservation