Coalition Agreements, Commitments and Funding

The Government coalition and support agreements between Labour, NZ First and the Greens had many new commitments on the environment. This was made clear in the “Speech from the Throne”, which opened the new Parliament after the election.

The specific commitments included a target of zero carbon emissions by 2050, a package of low carbon investment, support for restoration and protection of our waterways, and increased funding for the Department of Conservation to reduce the extinction risk for 3000 threatened plants and wildlife species. Many of these commitments require funding in the Government’s budget cycle.

Government Budget and Spending plans
On 14 December, only a few weeks into the first term of the new government, the Treasury has “opened the books” and Finance Minister, Hon Grant Robertson has outlined some of the new Government’s spending intentions and expected revenue sources. Since the government is still working on its spending priorities and is reviewing the previous government’s spending commitments and contracts, it is too early to get a full picture.

Outlook
Government revenues usually depend on the amount of economic activity and the tax take, prices on the international markets for New Zealand products and exchange rates. Exchange rates influence the value of exports and the costs of imports, tourism numbers and the price to potential overseas students of education here. Governments never really know for sure what revenues will be available.

Tax cut cancellations and social spending
One of the first moves by the Prime Minister and Finance Minister has been to cancel the tax cuts promised by the previous government. That has left room for the government to provide those on many kinds of benefits with a bit of extra support, including more money for families with babies and children, and for several weeks of subsidy to many for extra energy costs during the winter. A hugely increased rate of house construction is also planned.
Coalition Agreements, Commitments and Funding (cont)

Transport
In the Finance Minister’s statement, Hon Grant Robertson said that “Recent transport investment has been overly focused on a handful of expensive roading projects selected for political reasons, rather than on improving the whole transport system as an integrated, multimode network.” Movement to less investment in roads will free up a lot of money for the government’s other priorities. Several light rail and other transport options are being investigated.

Climate Commission and Zero Emissions Bill
Robertson said that his Budget 2018 will provide funding on a wide range of priorities, including the establishment of an independent Climate Commission, and a process for setting a net zero carbon emissions goal. He stressed the need for transformation of government spending and investment to put more emphasis on the social and environmental priorities and thus to better support the economy, especially in a just transition to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Fairness and participation
Noting that there was a pressing need to move to a high wage, fairer, sustainable economic development track, he stressed the Coalition’s intention to pursue a fairer society, more training and participation and higher wages.

Green Investment Plan
Robertson noted the promised $100 million Green Investment Plan and aims to stimulate $1 billion of new investment in low-carbon industries by 2020. Just how this is to be done is unclear. If it is achieved, then he said, New Zealand will be better able to meet New Zealand’s climate commitments and the economy will become more sustainable.

Regional development
Regional development was flagged before the election as a major goal of Labour and New Zealand First. Robertson pointed to this and said “long-term under-investment and intergenerational poverty are undermining areas of the country that have enormous economic potential. The cornerstone of this Government’s response to this is the $1 billion per year Provincial Growth Fund agreed with the New Zealand First Party as part of the Coalition Agreement. This Fund will invest in regional rail, support the planting of a billion trees over the next 10 years, investigate the future of the upper North Island ports, and provide for investment in local, regional and large-scale capital projects.”

It has not been revealed what kind of trees are to be planted – whether native or pines or what species – nor where in the regions these are to be planted. The policies around this will lie with the Minister of Forests, Hon Shane Jones.

Improving living standards and wellbeing reporting
Well established international thinking and practices on using a range of indicators of well being, and sustainable development. We expect that the nature and health of social, environmental, cultural and economic and financial capital will finally to be instituted in New Zealand thinking and reporting thanks to work by the Treasury and to the Confidence and Supply Agreement between Labour and the Greens. ECO has long advocated this. Robertson said that the Treasury is doing “world leading work” on the Living Standards Framework.

ECO’s view is that the Treasury is not yet up with the best international thinking and practice on this, but it is good to see the move away from the heavy reliance on GDP (Gross Domestic Product) which is a flawed, muddled and very narrow measure which even those who developed it recognised was not adequate.

Investment:
Robertson is still using the rhetoric and thinking of economic growth but sees investment as transformative and designed to transform the economy and society. He said: “the Government will prioritise investments to address the long-term financial and sustainability challenges facing New Zealand.” He says that they will “invest in infrastructure to support our growing population, develop our regions and reduce the long-term fiscal and economic risks of climate change.”

The Provincial Growth Fund
Consistent with the Labour-NZ First agreement, the Minister announced that “the government will significantly increase the level of investment in regions to enable greater regional economic growth. Establishing a $1 billion per year Provincial Growth Fund (PGF)”

Investment criteria include:
• Investment for jobs and economic development;
• Social inclusion and participation – in work and society;
• Climate change [responses] and environmental sustainability – to achieve NZ’s climate commitments and to “encourage more sustainable and productive use of land, water and other resources”. This ambiguous language could prove problematic.
• Resilience – primarily of infrastructure and the growth and diversification of the economy.

Other Areas
For many areas on which the government has made
ECO Update: Office and Exec News

Grants
ECO has had increased success with grant applications this year with successful grants from the Methodist Church, the Pelorus Trust, the Lion Foundation, Pub Charities and the Greenwood Trust.

We are most grateful to all these agencies who have generously assisted ECO with printing our new brochure, making two banners with our logo, printing ECOlink and paying the rent on our offices.

Website
Barry Weeber and Michael Pringle have been working on a project to upgrade our website, alongside some IT volunteers from Wintec.

Interns and Volunteers
We bade farewell in early August to our intern from France, Valentin Grabet, who gave us much help with our conference in Nelson and many other tasks around the office. He also did some water quality analysis work for a water quality specialist in Wellington. His help was invaluable and his friendly support much appreciated by all at ECO. We currently have an intern as part of the HECUA programme, Elena Meth, helping us with some research before she finishes shortly.

ECO Conference and AGM
Thanks to all the speakers and those who attended the ECO Conference in August. The presentations and any papers will be placed on the ECO Website. A special thanks to the Nelson helpers, in particular Derek Shaw. Two new Exec members were elected at the AGM - Paul Bruce and Maiki Marks.

Tieke
Tieke continues to be well and widely read with new subscribers coming on board every week. We get great feedback about its usefulness to many in their work. Member groups are reminded to send us their notices or to send in information for wider sharing.

Exec Planning Weekend
The ECO executive held their annual planning weekend in part to discuss how to implement the goals and priorities agreed on at the last AGM. Cath Wallace and Barry Weeber were elected Co-Chairs and Betsan Martin and Paul Bruce were elected Vice-Chairs.

Information on New Exec Members
Paul Bruce (Wellington)
Paul Bruce worked at MetService NZ between 1973 and 2010 as a class 1 Meteorologist. Paul has been involved in past campaigns on native forests, French nuclear testing, and whaling.

He served three terms as Greater Wellington Regional Councillor 2007 to 2016, where his focus was on integrated transport solutions, retention of zero emission trolley buses, development of light rail, urban reform, climate protection, and improved waste management.

He is currently working as a consultant from home on sustainability issues. Paul is now an ECO Vice-Chair.

Maiki Marks (Paihia)
Currently Chairperson Paihia and Districts Ratepayer’s & Residents Association. Maiki’s responsibilities to attend all council meetings and report back to members, co-ordinator media campaign to require Far North District Council to perform their statutory duties. She undertakes ongoing communications/networking including: with lawyers and the all groups Treaty of Waitangi Claimants; and non complying industrial, commercial boatyard activities on public land, unabated with impunity.

Maiki has extensive education experience including past – Facilitator Education for Sustainability at Auckland College of Education/Education Faculty University of Auckland and was the Convenor for the Kororareka Marae.

Coalition Agreements, Commitments and Funding (continued)

promises, it is too early for the Minister and the Treasury to articulate the costs, since careful policy work to shape these up is either incomplete or not yet done. For instance there are promises to investigate a range of metropolitan rail or other rapid transit public transport options. Similarly there are commitments to investigate rail in several provincial areas, including for an expanded port and rail at Whangarei.

The preparation by departments of bids for the main May 2018 Budget are in process. January-February is the prime period for Ministers to make their cases and then pitches to the Finance Minister and Cabinet.

The May 2018 Budget will give more specifics both on project andprogrammes and their costs. We will then find out more about the shape of the promised extra spending on Conservation and other environmentally significant matters. Spending for the construction of houses and for other social purposes to alleviate poverty, help get people into work and training and for basic income support, and for setting up the Climate Commission are the clear first priorities.

ECO looks forward to the government revealing its policies, plans and budgetary allocations in the coming months.
ECO AGM Policy Resolutions

ECO AGM and Conference 2017 Policy Resolutions

The 2017 ECO AGM at the end of August worked through a range of policy remits, many of them reflective of the issues facing New Zealand and the planet as we moved towards a General Election. These picked up on the work done by ECO and others or needed to continue.

Policy and/or motions

Our Conference discussed our responsibilities to the environment and the future and democracy. Betsan Martin spoke on this. Sir Geoffrey Palmer presented work he and Andrew Cutler have done on a Constitution for New Zealand and matters of environmental law in New Zealand. Much of the proposed constitution is couched in a “Rights framework”. Betsan Martin’s discussion of our responsibilities meshed with and challenged aspects of this work, pushing to move beyond the environment as a human right to include the notions of Responsibility of humans, the environment’s own standing and a notion of Public Trusteeship for the environment.

The AGM passed this resolution:

a) Constitution for New Zealand:

ECO will engage in the dialogue on the development of a proposed written constitution for New Zealand to ensure that it has a strong environmental and ecological element consistent with a Treaty framework and that we submit on the proposals developed by Geoff Palmer and Andrew Butler.

(b) Public Trusteeship

That ECO welcomes and endorses approaches to the environment that recognise “personhood” and the principle of Public Trusteeship for the Future, consistent with the framework of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Climate change

There were several presentations on climate change responses, including from GenZero’s James Young-Drew on the Zero Carbon Bill, Sir Alan Mark on Wise Response, and Kennedy Graham on the work of Globe NZ in Parliament.

The AGM endorsed the following climate-related statements and declarations: the proposed Zero Carbon Act and Commission, Our Climate Declaration, a community led declaration, and the Wise Response led Climate Consensus Aotearoa.

Better environmental management and law: Picking up on the themes of the conference, and much of the discussion of environmental management and the losses of democracy and participation, the AGM Resolved:

“That ECO urges a reversal of the progressive limitations on: public notification and participation, due process, democratic engagement and open government in environmental management and law particularly but not only introduced by the Resource Legislation Amendment Act 2017”; and

“That ECO opposes the creation of Special Economic Zones and the attendant loss of the coherence of environmental law and other relevant laws such as labour protection. “

Fisheries and marine management in NZ and internationally:

Consistent with long-standing concerns about the New Zealand fisheries management system and practice, and marine management both in NZ waters and in the high seas, the AGM considered and adopted motions to improve fisheries and marine management:

i) “that New Zealand fisheries law be amended to include and give effect to the precautionary principle and its approach in favour of the environment, and the ecosystem-based management approach; and

(ii) That fisheries law and management in New Zealand be amended to implement better protection of the environment, including threatened species and benthic protection, and to include spatial management.”

(iii) Protection of diversity on the high seas:

Motion: That ECO welcomes the development of United Nations negotiations of an agreement to protect biodiversity and establish protected areas on the high seas in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

(iv) Marine protection in the New Zealand marine area including EEZ

(a) Motion: That ECO is disappointed at the lack of progress on marine reserves and other marine protected areas around New Zealand, and:
(b) Motion: That ECO calls on the next government to include the EEZ and continental shelf in any new legislation to establish marine reserves and wildlife based area protection; and

(c) Motion: that urgent steps are taken to swiftly establish the Kermadecs/Rangitāhua Ocean Sanctuary.

**EPA Processes & Resources including Hearings procedure**

Responding to the experience of submitters aired at the conference and AGM, ECO expressed concern about the recent Seabed Mining EEZ hearings including that:

(i) Submissions were not heard in any of the towns near the proposed site.

(ii) Some submissions seemed to be lost.

(iii) There was pressure of time put on these oral hearings and a time limit on each submission but the intended mining company got repeated requests for more information over periods of months.

(iv) The Chair took a different approach to ordinary submitters than to professionals.

(v) Some people had problems getting information through their emails and solutions to this seemed to be a long time in coming.

(vi) Most taking part in this process in good faith do not now feel it was a democratic one.

(vii) that ECO calls for an investigation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), its processes, independence, impartiality and resources.”

Members considered that based on their experience of the EPA in hearings under the EEZ Act and management of hazardous substances that an investigation into the EPA was an urgent matter for future Ministers.

**Water policy and land use:**

That ECO formally endorsed and supports the Freshwater Rescue Plan [www.freshwaterrescueplan.org] [see the last ECOLink for more details].

**Mining and Minerals:**

a) The ECO AGM endorsed proposals that the exclusion of minerals activity and mining in Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act be extended to include World Heritage Areas, ecological areas, and the area in the southern Coromandel to and including Te Aroha mountain.

b) ECO agreed to discuss extending Schedule 4 status to all conservation land.

c) Mining promotion removal

That ECO urges the removal of the provisions for the promotion of mining from the both the Crown Minerals Act and the Minerals Programmes.

**Conservation, Biosecurity and Biodiversity protection**

Concerns about biodiversity losses, incursions onto and losses of conservation areas for commercial purposes, biosecurity risks and significant underfunding of conservation were reflected in these resolutions adopted by the AGM:

“(a) That the incoming government double the funding for DoC and provide at least an extra $30m/pa to expand and extend biosecurity efforts for conservation purposes. “

“(b) Community based conservation

That the incoming government increase funding and other support by at least $30m per annum for land owner and community based conservation efforts in relation to conservation-related biodiversity protection including biosecurity, weed control, and predator control. “

“(c) Ruataniwha Supreme Court Decision:

(i) That ECO welcomes the decision of the Supreme Court on the Ruataniwha case to declare unlawful the swap of protected conservation land and its exchange for other land. “

“(ii) That ECO opposes any changes to conservation legislation that would permit the downgrading or revocation of the status of non-stewardship protected areas.”

“(iii) ECO calls on the government to follow the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment’s call for a systematic reclassification of stewardship land to protect its conservation values and to assign those areas that are of conservation significance protection designs commensurate with those values.”
Ministers and their portfolios in the Labour – NZFirst - Greens Government 2017

In announcing her government, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern noted that the Government would be transformative, aiming to shift New Zealand to a more sustainable path environmentally, to a fairer and less unequal and more caring society, while providing jobs and a decent income for worker.

The Ministers in Cabinet come from Labour and New Zealand First – since they are the Coalition. The Greens have four Ministers but all are outside Cabinet since the Greens chose a Confidence and Supply Agreement not a Coalition.

The new Executive line up – the Ministers, Associate Ministers and Parliamentary Undersecretaries are listed below, with their portfolios or areas of support for ministers, in the case of the Undersecretaries.

It is striking how the PM has woven the parties together in this process, and has selected people for the portfolios who have skills to match. That is unusual. Assignment of portfolios in previous governments has commonly been based on power and seniority, not fitness for the task.

In the list below, we have indicated the portfolio of particular relevance to the environment and conservation and sustainability.

Cabinet

- Jacinda Ardern: Prime Minister, Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage; National Security and Intelligence; Child Poverty Reduction
- Winston Peters (NZ First): Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs; State Owned Enterprises
- Kelvin Davis: Minister for Crown/Māori Relations; Corrections; Tourism; Assoc Minister of Education (Māori ed)
- Grant Robertson: Minister of Finance (incl regulatory reform); Sport and Recreation; Assoc Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Phil Twyford: Minister of Housing and Urban Development; Transport
- Megan Woods: Minister of Energy and Resources; Greater Christchurch Regeneration; Research, Science and Innovation;
- Chris Hipkins: Minister of Education; State Services; Leader of the House;
- Andrew Little: Minister of Justice; Courts; Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations; Minister Responsible for the GCSB; NZSIS; Pike River Re-entry
- Carmel Sepuloni: Minister for Social Development; Disability Issues. Assoc Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage; Pacific Peoples
- David Clark: Minister of Health; Assoc Minister of Finance
- David Parker: Attorney-General; Minister for Economic Development; Environment; Trade and Export Growth; Assoc Minister of Finance
- Nanaia Mahuta: Minister for Māori Development; Local Government; Assoc Minister for the Environment
- Stuart Nash: Minister of Police; Fisheries; Revenue; Small Business
- Iain Lees-Galloway: Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety; Immigration; ACC;
- Jenny Salesa: Minister for Building and Construction; Ethnic Communities; Assoc Minister of Education; Health; Housing and Urban Development
- Damien O’Connor: Minister of Agriculture; Biosecurity; Food Safety; Rural Communities; Associate Minister of Trade and Export Growth
- Clare Curran: Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media; Government Digital Services; Associate Minister for ACC; State Services (Open Government)
- Ron Mark (NZ First): Minister of Defence;
- Tracey Martin (NZ First): Minister for Children; Internal Affairs; Seniors; Assoc Minister of Education
- Willie Jackson: Minister of Employment; Assoc Minister for Māori Development
- Aupito William Sio: Minister for Pacific Peoples; Assoc Minister for Courts; Justice
- Meka Whaitiri: Minister of Customs; Assoc Minister of Agriculture; Assoc Minister for Crown/Māori Relations; Assoc Minister of Local Government

Ministers outside of Cabinet

- Kris Faafoi: Minister of Civil Defence; Commerce and Consumer Affairs; Assoc Minister of Immigration
- Peeni Henare: Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector; Whānau Ora; Youth; Assoc Minister for Social Development
- Andrew Little: Minister of Justice; Courts; Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations; Minister Responsible for the GCSB; NZSIS; Pike River Re-entry
- Carmel Sepuloni: Minister for Social Development; Disability Issues. Assoc Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage; Pacific Peoples

Support Party Ministers

- James Shaw (Greens): Minister for Climate Change; Statistics; Assoc Minister of Finance
ECO welcomes no new mining on conservation land

ECO has welcomed the Conservation and environmental announcements in the government’s agenda outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

“It is a full agenda and we are very glad that there is commitment to climate change action, more funding for conservation, and the announcement that there will be “no new mines” on Conservation land,” says Cath Wallace, ECO Co-Chairperson.

“These are issues ECO has worked on for decades and at last we have a government with a commitment to helping nature. Conservation Minister in Eugenie Sage, knows the issues in great depth and other new Ministers have strong backgrounds of thinking about the transition to a low carbon economy and a more environmentally sustainable economy.”

Conservation land throughout the country is threatened by mining, including areas in the Coromandel Peninsula. Karangahake Gorge conservation land is at risk from gold mining from the New Talisman mine proposal.

In 2014, New Talisman Gold Mines was granted a non-notified resource consent to bulk sample 20,000 cubic metres of ore per year from Mount Karangahake over a 2 year period. In June 2017 they started prospecting and site preparation activities, and they plan to begin the bulk sampling phase in early 2018.

Karangahake Gorge is an important tourism site with conservation values that should not be impacted by mining.

ECO wants changes to the Crown Minerals Act to remove the previous Government’s changes to undermine the role of the Minister of Conservation in making decisions about what minerals concessions are allowed on conservation land. We also want to see the removal of the requirement to maximise minerals extraction. Such a provision is nonsense and disregards both the costs and the qualities of the environment lost, and harm done to communities.

Energy and Resources Minister, Hon Megan Woods, will need to revise that, both for nature’s sake and for the climate and the future.

ECO looks forward to more details of the changes proposed, environmental and urban law changes, the tree planting programmes announced and other measures relating to primary industry.

The “no new mining on Conservation land” decision is exactly the sort of thing that could be challenged under the Trans Pacific Partnership Investor State Dispute Resolution chapter as occurred with Costa Rica under another trade agreement.

The Ministry for the Environment Brief to the Incoming Government includes the comment on the need for action on mercury mining. The brief states that:

“MfE has identified a number of amendments necessary to correct minor errors in the RMA as well as prohibiting primary mercury mining to meet NZ’s international obligations under the Minamata Convention on Mercury.”

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is a Treaty designed to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. The Convention came in to force in August after 50 countries ratified the convention.

Over 84 countries have ratified the convention so far including US and EU but New Zealand has yet to. ECO looks forward to the Early ratification of this agreement.

For more details on Project Karangahake see https://protectkarangahake.org.nz/

Parliamentary Under-Secretaries

- Julie Anne Genter (Greens): Minister for Women; Assoc Minister of Health; Transport
- Eugenie Sage (Greens): Minister of Conservation; Land Information; Assoc Minister for the Environment
- Michael Wood: Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister for Ethnic Communities
- Fletcher Tabuteau (NZ First): Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs; Regional Economic Development
- Jan Logie (Greens): Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Justice (Domestic and Sexual Violence Issues)

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BioSecurity2025: “It’s Everyone’s Gig”

By Cath Wallace

Good news! There is a new national initiative to prevent the arrival of pests and pathogens, and to control those that are already here.

Controlling or preventing invasive species is one thing that most New Zealanders agree on. This new initiative, called BioSecurity 2025, has been in the planning stage and is gradually emerging into action and action plans. Most (human) kiwis and (human) visitors agree on the need to protect the environment, society, health and the economy from invasive species introductions and spread within New Zealand and the marine environment. A few differ, but most of us care a lot about this.

The idea of BioSecurity 2025 is to overhaul aspects of our Biosecurity work, from governance to inclusiveness, the tools and information needed for prevention of imports, responses to incursions and decisions on eradication or control.

One impetus for the work has been the increasing challenges we face with more trade and many more travellers, changing risk profiles due to climate change and human behaviour, risks to native biodiversity, to farming and horticulture, apiculture and aquaculture, crops and cultural taonga.

The costs and harms of incursions also are an influence, with environmental and health harms already felt or likely, along with losses to the community and to commercial interests mounting. Since some of these harms are close to irreversible or very expensive to tackle, getting this right pre-border and post border is essential.

Another impetus is the many changes in knowledge, technology and information systems.

Biosecurity 2015 Directions

Launched in 2015 and consulted on, in 2016, a “BioSecurity 2015 Directions” statement, with aims, mission and Principles was released. Five streams of planning work really began in 2017 with a Planning Implementation Steering Group encouraging and coordinating the efforts of the people in the working groups. ECO’s Cath Wallace is on the Implementation Steering Group, along with officials (MPI, DoC, Health) Regional Council folks and various others, with key industries involved, and of course Māori, including from the Māori Biosecurity Network.

The five working groups are people drawn from a variety of backgrounds.

The Ministry of Primary Industries Biosecurity group has worked with others, such as DoC, industry reps, a
few predator and weed control groups, some Regional Councils, academics and practitioners and various others to get the BioSecurity programme underway. ECO was one of those who responded to a survey and call for volunteers to help the work and Cath Wallace was invited to join the steering group a few meetings into its life.

The BioSecurity 2025 team summarized points made in consultations as including these:

• Broadening participation and responsibility for biosecurity
• Awareness raising through education and a biosecurity brand
• Prioritisation within the system and across values
• Performance reporting
• Need for new and better tools
• Marine biosecurity
• Inclusive governance
• Clear leadership, especially post-border

A series of pest species invasions has set back the planning stages of the programme and its projects – Strategic Direction working groups and some commissioned work. This is coordinated by a BioSecurity 2025 Implementation Steering Group, to which Cath Wallace was appointed in about May 2017.

Significant recent biosecurity incursions or spreads have included, Velvet leaf, the cattle disease Mycoplasma bovis, the highly threatening Myrtle Rust, guava moth, and kauri die-back.

A Biosecurity 2025 Directions Statement was launched by the then Minister in November 2016. This began the implementation planning process, now underway.

The Biosecurity 2025 Directions statement includes these Aims, Mission and Principles.

Aims are to:

• future-proof New Zealand’s biosecurity system
• provide a shared sense of direction across the system.

**Collaboration is hard-wired into Biosecurity 2025**

• Collaborative development of the strategy – the strategy was developed by bringing together the collective insights of system participants to set the future direction that we can all contribute to.
• Collaborative implementation – all system participants will be taking responsibility for making it happen.

**Mission for the biosecurity system:**

“The biosecurity system protects New Zealanders, our way of life, our natural and productive resources and our biodiversity from the harmful effects of pests and diseases.”

**Principles:**

1 Everyone has a role to play in Biosecurity.
2 We learn and share learnings from experiences.
3 Collaborative approaches and wide participation and enabled and encouraged.
4 The role of tangata whenua as kaitiaki and Matauranga Maori are recognised and provided for.
Biosecurity 2025 (Cont)

The development of work plans got into its stride in 2017 with a huge amount of effort from five “Strategic Direction Working Groups”. People involved come from around the country and are by no means mainly officials, though MPI is resourcing the effort. People from a range of industries and interests and skills have been recruited to these working groups, along with the Ministry of Health, DoC, regional councils, Predator Free NZ and various of the larger weed and pest control groups.

The Working groups are these:

1 Building a biosecurity team of 4.7 million
2 A Toolbox for tomorrow
3 Smart, Free-flowing Information
4 Effective Leadership and Governance
5 Tomorrows skills and assets.

Implementation Steering Group

The Implementation Steering Group will report progress to the new Minister of BioSecurity, Hon Damien O’Connor. He is also the Minister of Agriculture. He told ECO that he is in principle, supportive of the programme, which is encouraging.

The work has proceeded apace, with a huge amount of work by the people in the working groups and the reference groups and networks that they have bounced ideas off.

Some key points about the work and the approach being designed, is that biosecurity work is not “top down” but inclusive of all, relying on networks and networks of networks and engagement at all levels in the effort.

The scope of the work on the biosecurity system includes pre-border biosecurity – such as setting up systems in countries that send goods, vessels or people here; detecting and preventing imports by air or sea; work at the border and inside NZ and controlling the spread of invasive species within NZ.

Geographically, the work includes land, freshwater and marine biosecurity though the latter is much less developed for many areas of work than for land. The port of Tauranga and some other marine biosecurity efforts are already setting standards, but much of the attention to biosecurity has been terrestrial or freshwater, with much less work on marine.

Building a biosecurity team of 4.7 million

The “Building a biosecurity team of 4.7 million” group is very clear on the need to engage with all participants and to make this a national effort, using the phrase, “it’s everyone’s gig” to get this across. For this group, terrestrial biosecurity is the first planning target with research on freshwater and marine biosecurity to get underway subsequently.
Throughout the work there is strong emphasis on Maori leadership and training. This includes Rangitahi training, engagement, and work; the Maori Biosecurity Network, Te Tira Whakamaataki, and hapu and marae based programmes and pilot biosecurity work all part of the mix. In many respects, plans for this area of work are more developed than some of the other planned work.

Inclusion of Matauranga Maori and protocols on rights to access and share Maori information and that on places of significance to Maori are also being planned.

The approach of the “Effective Leadership and Governance Group” is also very inclusive, with an emphasis on championing biosecurity efforts, trying to remove obstacles to people doing this work, trying to provide support and reporting while eschewing the idea that this “Leadership and Governance” is top down or directive. Their proposals are much more about networking networks and sharing and supporting work.

**Toolbox for Tomorrow**

The “Tool Box for tomorrow” group is working so that there are plans for more effective use of existing pest and pathogen avoidance and control. They have focused on the production and use of research, of Matauranga Maori (Maori knowledge and conceptions), on the applications of new technologies, social licence, tools for workers and for participation and monitoring, analysis and reporting.

The social licence element is about the use of different pest and pathogen control methods and will involve discussions in the community of both GE and the use of toxins.

The “Smart, Free-Flowing Information” group’s work relates to a wide range of information planning issues. These include surveillance and information about the potential and actual entry and spread of invasive species; identifying research priorities; providing guides to pests and pathogens and how to deal with these – something the Weed busters group has done a stellar job of in relation to weeds.

This group is also planning how to assemble, share or link datasets and what protocols for privacy and ownership and control of these and data in them are needed. They are also working out data standards and how to get the right information in the hands of those who are variously working on biosecurity, including of course, the public.

The final Working group, that of “Tomorrows Skills and Assets, is looking into planning to have institutions and policies, laws and regulations, guidance, standards and biosecurity systems and networks and skills and attitudes that will support biosecurity.

These include ensuring that biosecurity is incorporated into education and training and in local, regional and national policies and plans, a National Policy Statement on BioSecurity; supporting and expanding the National Biosecurity Capability Network, and many other initiatives.

This planning is taking shape, but some of the actions needed are also being launched and implemented already. In 2018, much more of this Biosecurity 2025 work will become visible – it will be important that we all engage.

It would be great if people in ECO or wanting to help with biosecurity work, expert or otherwise, could contact us to let us know what you are doing or to express your interest in this area.

The BioSecurity 2025 team is also inviting submissions of outlines of the work from people doing biosecurity already in all sectors and areas of biosecurity.

**Contacts and further information**


You can also contact the programme at: [biosecurity2025@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:biosecurity2025@mpi.govt.nz)

And ECO at [eco@eco.org.nz](mailto:eco@eco.org.nz) and put “Biosecurity” as the first word in your subject line.

**Thanks**

Our grateful thanks to the Methodist Church PAC Fund for its continued support for ECOlink
South Taranaki - more Shell mining - hearing in Taranaki

Shell Taranaki Ltd. (formerly Shell Todd Oil Services) has applied to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) for consents to use a jack-up rig for drilling at the Maui gas field and to discharge harmful chemicals at sea.

At the public hearings in New Plymouth, Climate Justice Taranaki (CJT), Te Korowai O Ngāruahine Trust and several other submitters asked that the applications be declined.

South Taranaki Bight is a global diversity hotspot for marine mammals, one of the two richest such places on earth. There are at least seven threatened marine mammal species in the Bight, six of which are endangered, including the Māui dolphin and blue whales. These are increasingly impacted by a wide array of human activities there, from fishing to maritime traffic, oil and gas seismic surveys, drilling and waste discharge. Almost the entire Bight is already under mining, exploration and prospecting permits for petroleum and minerals, and now EPA has also decided to allow seabed mining.

“All this is on top of the rapid changes to the ecosystem being driven by climate change, causing increasing sea temperatures, ocean acidification and related impacts on productivity. The science tells us that these will all get worse in coming decades, not better, and any additional impacts, including from what Shell proposes, could push these already threatened species over the edge. As a party to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, New Zealand has a clear international obligation to protect and promote the recovery of these species. Yet we are not treating the area with the respect it deserves, more like a sacrificial zone,” said Dr Lyndon DeVantier, marine scientist and member of CJT.

CJT’s submission pointed to the repeated failures in correct interpretation of the meaning of ‘cumulative effects’ in the assessment of different applications under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (EEZ-CS) Act. CJT stressed that cumulative effects must include the sum of all effects created by all the permitted and consented activities that occur in the area, and in conjunction with those arising from anthropogenic climate change, not just those of the application under consideration.

Shell has indicated that after the current applications, they would apply for an additional marine discharge consent, albeit non-notified. In addition, Schlumberger had applied for a prospecting license over 18,900 square kilometre in the Taranaki Basin. Its effects would not be assessed at all as seismic surveys is a ‘permitted’ activity requiring no marine consent under the EEZ-CS Act. Such classification of activities, non-notification and disjoint application and assessment process make proper cumulative assessment impossible.

Focussing on the current Shell applications, various Shell witnesses claimed that the impacts would be temporary, localised and/or add little to the effects from activities that have already been consented for. They are looking at the ‘incremental effects’ only, not the cumulative effects.

For the Critically Endangered Māui dolphin which takes 7-9 years before females have their first calf, produces just one calf every 2-4 years and lives only up to

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*Catherine Cheung, Climate Justice Taranaki*
20 years, the multiple disturbance from the jack-up rig plus six years of drilling and decades of contaminant discharges on top of all other stresses, will not promote recovery.

Submitter Emily Bailey made the point, “when we’re looking at the ecological significance and sensitive area, we often only look at European history. Or not even that, we look at 20 years of history. But if we go back to how the environment was in a stable situation, we’re looking at 83% biomass loss. It’s massive. This is a very sensitive area that’s already under great pressures.”

“So every time we have applications like Trans-Tasman Resources, like the Māui operation, it carves out pieces of our environment that can be used for our economic benefit. It impacts on the surrounding areas, and it doesn’t do that on a case-by-case basis. It does it on a cumulative basis. That impact is felt in the homes of our whanau and our communities and it restricts our ability to exercise what are the rights given or recognised under Te Tiriti,” said Ms Cassandra Cowley of Te Korowai O Ngāruahine Trust.

Submitter Urs Signer stressed, “there are principles, there is a Treaty that guarantees rights to those taonga, and I submit that the atmosphere is such a taonga and we need to stop interfering with the carbon cycle in the way that we are doing, by cutting down forests, by extracting fossil fuels, by turning fossil fuels into fertilisers that then grow grass, that then feed cows, that then emit, again, methane to the atmosphere. It has got to stop and it has got to stop now.”

We are at the tipping point of a major climate catastrophe, yet the EEZ Act and the RMA do not allow the consideration of climate change in decision making. This is absurd.

Not only that, the EEZ Act explicitly requires that ‘the economic benefit’ of allowing the application must be considered. Yet economic analyses on the fossil fuel industry have never been done fairly, as they ignore the substantial government subsidies and economic incentives offered to companies, already amounting to over $80 million a year, and not including an estimated $800 million for oil companies to decommission their aging offshore rigs and structure. They also fail to account for the huge environmental costs.

Two months ago, MBIE put out a call for tender for technical service, to assess the integrity and risks of old onshore wells, as there are no plugging and aban-
Oppose the Anti-Mangroves Bill

The Thames–Coromandel District Council and Hauraki District Council Mangrove Management Bill, a Local Bill, is promoted by two councils from the Coromandel–Hauraki area, is a thoroughly bad idea and we invite people to submit against it. The deadline is midnight Friday 23 February 2018 with the Governance and Administration Select Committee.

The Purpose of the Bill is primarily to remove mangroves and to protect the views of coastal residents and to enhance coastal access for boaters.

There is no apparent understanding behind the Bill of the benefits that these native mangroves provide, their ecological functions or that any spread is a symptom of poor land use which is not addressed by the Bill.

The Bill is obnoxious because of this but also that it seeks to exempt itself from all other laws, and its processes for decision making are very poor.

Clause 4 of the Bill says:

The purposes of this Act are—

(a) to facilitate the removal of mangrove vegetation in the coastal area of each council to achieve and maintain appropriate levels of that vegetation; and

(b) to restore, protect, and enhance any amenity values or ecosystems of the coastal area from which mangrove vegetation is removed.

What is “acceptable” and by what standard that should be judged is not said. Neither is how you can protect an ecosystem by removing mangroves which are part of the ecosystem. They are native to New Zealand.

The Bill provides for the Councils to prepare “management plans” for mangroves, but the definition of “management” is almost entirely about their removal and destruction.

“Mangrove management activity—

(a) means the removal, prevention, monitoring, detection, control, destruction, or disposal of mangrove vegetation; and

(b) includes—

(i) hand removal of mangrove vegetation:

(ii) mechanised removal of mangrove vegetation:

(iii) whole tree removal:

(iv) maintenance dredging

“Management” of mangroves is defined to be about their removal, destruction and prevention, but not protection.

There is no recognition or appreciation of the biodiversity, habitat, buffering, carbon sink and sediment control functions of mangroves. Since protection of mangroves is not a purpose of the Bill, decisions under it would not be allowed to consider the various environmental benefits from mangroves.

South Taranaki - more Shell mining - hearing in Taranaki (cont)

donment records for some of these wells. Who will pay for such risk assessments and remediation? Proper decommissioning is obviously critical, and will be more difficult and costly offshore. Shell should be saving up for the full cost of decommissioning now, rather than drilling more wells.

Major businesses like super funds and banks are ditching their carbon-intensive investments. Union organisers are calling for a just transition to protect workers’ jobs and livelihoods when economies are shifting to sustainable production.

Dr. Will Edwards of Te Korowai O Ngāruahine Trust referred to the Taranaki Regional Economic Development Strategy, “Within that strategy, there are a number work areas or threads. One of them is called Energy Futures and it’s no secret that one of the main focuses of that is a post-carbon economy. That, I contend, is in line with where our region needs to go.”

References

CJT website: https://climatejusticetaranaki.wordpress.com/resources/fact-sheets-presentations/


South Taranaki - more Shell mining - hearing in Taranaki (cont)
The Bill provides for consideration of the environment OR amenity and recreation, so the environment could be disregarded altogether. That is almost certainly the intent behind the Bill. It is the product of ecological and biophysical illiteracy.

This pernicious Bill would override all other laws including the RMA. That means that the RMA and its, Purpose, Principle, processes, and its National and Regional Policy Statements and Plans, National Environmental Standards, including the New Zealand Coastal Policy would not apply.

No other environmental, coastal, water or biodiversity protection laws or regulations would be allowed to apply. This disgraceful little Bill, if passed, would override the Conservation Act, the Wildlife Act, the Reserves Act, the Biosecurity Act and all other laws and regulations unless those are amended in turn to override this Bill.

By bypassing the RMA it would also by-pass the RMA’s processes of hearings, appeals and legal remedies available under the RMA.

Instead, the Bill provides for the appointment of a Committee (carefully chosen, you can be sure, to want to suppress mangroves) which writes a management plan, consults the public and then issues the plan. That’s it. No science, no expertise, no appeals.

The Bill fails to tackle the causes of the spread of mangroves, which are sedimentation and nutrients from farming, coastal subdivision and poor land use practices. Chopping down the mangroves will not stop the run off. To do that, you need to have better land use practices so there is less sediment and nutrients getting into the water-ways.

Mayor of the Thames Coromandel District Council, Sandra Goudie, a former National Party MP, is known for her anti-environment and anti-mangrove views.

The stench and debris of the dying coastal mangrove ecosystem lasts for months, with black sludge and the discarded bodies of the mangrove trees haunting the harbour in Tairua and Whangamata on the east coast of the Coromandel.

As NIWA put it in a report in early 2017, research from the Firth of Thames has shown that the “muddy sediments are typically deposited before mangroves expand into new areas, rather than mangroves causing an increase in deposition of muddy sediments”

“Many mangrove removal areas have shown both immediate and long-term adverse impacts, which include anoxic (lacking oxygen, often black in colour and smelling of sulphur) sediments, minimal dispersal or decomposition of mangrove debris, high levels of hydrogen sulfide associated with rotting plant material, bacterial mats, large and prolonged algal blooms, and vehicle track marks persistent for many years after removal.”

That is the legacy of those who remove of mangroves. It is a legacy being experienced around the Coromandel and the Hauraki District. It pongs! It is the product of ecological illiteracy and a refusal to confront the real problem of poor land use.

National’s Scott Simpson, MP in the Coromandel area, has promoted the Bill, yet he is National’s Environment spokesperson.

All-in-all, the Bill is anti-environmental ad hoc law making at its worst and we recommend that you submit in opposition to it.


You can find links to the legislation from there.

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www.eco.org.nz
Ross Sea Protected since 1 December 2017

The Ross Sea Region Marine Protected Area (MPA) came into force on 1 December. The Ross Sea MPA will give varying measures of protection to an area of over 1.55 million km² of the Ross Sea in the Southern Ocean which surrounds Antarctica. The MPA includes the Ross ice shelf which would increase the total area of the MPA to nearly 2 million km².

This major gain of marine protection in the Southern Ocean was agreed at the October 2016 Antarctic marine convention (CCAMLR) meeting. It reflects the combined efforts of New Zealand and the United States and many supporters globally.

ECO’s Barry Weeber was at the CCAMLR meeting that achieved this result, and he has worked for years for this result, along with ASOC and New Zealand colleagues.

The proposal for a series of 19 marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean was originally developed and campaigned for by the Antarctic and Southern Oceans Coalition (ASOC) with the Antarctic Oceans Alliance. ECO is a long-term member of both organisations. These introduced the idea of protection of the whole of the Ross Sea, drawing on science by a scientific group led by Halpern that showed it to be the most intact ocean ecosystem left globally.

The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) embarked over 10 years ago on a process to establish a network of representative marine protected areas. This network has so far only got two MPAs including the Ross Sea Region MPA.

The Ross Sea MPA is large, though not as big as proposed by ASOC because of pressure from fishing interests and governments that did not want to protect the whole area.

Of the area protected over 1.12 million square kilometers will be fully protected from commercial fishing with the remaining protected area is designated as special research zone (SRZ). Some areas outside the MPA are open to commercial toothfish fishing, including some that were previously not open for this purpose.

It is disappointing that so-called commercial “research fishing” has been allowed in the Special Research Zone and that the northern tooth fish spawning banks and the eastern areas of the Ross Sea are not better protected.

Another disappointment is that the new MPA will expire in 35 years rather than being made permanent. Let’s hope future generations ensure that CCAMLR will recognise the value of protecting this area and will renew it in 35 years.

Ross Sea is a special place

The Ross Sea was identified by a major international scientific study as the least modified marine ecosystem on earth. It is clearly the most important to protect. The area includes habitat for penguins and other seabirds, killer whales, seals, many kinds of fish but particularly toothfish, and the fantastic corals, starfish, krill and bivalves, and other astonishing sea creatures that live in the Ross Sea. The MPA will allow a great chance of surviving and functioning as an intact ecosystem with this decision.

The Ross Sea is home to 38% of the world’s Adélie penguins, 26% of Emperor penguins, more than 30% of Antarctic petrels, 6% of Antarctic minke whales, and perhaps more than 30% of “Ross Sea” type killer whales. Moreover, it has the richest diversity of fishes in the high latitude Southern Ocean, including at least seven species found nowhere else.

It is time to celebrate the combined efforts of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC), the Antarctic Ocean Alliance, and their member organisations and supporters, and the scientists, officials, politicians and diplomats for achieving a major conservation success with protection or safeguarding chunks of the Ross Sea in Antarctica.

Special acknowledgement to former Foreign Affairs Minister Murray McCully, New Zealand’s diplomatic team led by Jillian Dempster, and the science teams.

An essential ingredient was sustained public pressure and the tenacious work of the non-governmental organisations who launched the idea, including ECO.
Marine Debris and plastics – Even in the Southern Ocean

Marine debris threaten oceans throughout the world including the Southern Ocean and the seas around New Zealand. Global attention is now focused on the problem.

Plastic debris includes lost fishing gear and line, plastic bags and bottles, straws and bottle tops, packaging, and a multitude of other forms. Microplastics result from the fragmentation of larger debris items over time, and may include the microplastics from untreated greywater, in toothpastes and soaps, or the microfibres that are washed off synthetic fabrics from washing machines.

Marine plastics are usually categorised by size into three forms:

- microplastics (less than 5mm in length);
- mesoplastics (5mm-2cm); or
- macroplastics (>2cm).

All types of marine plastics are a major threat to marine biodiversity. Plastics are almost everywhere, and they make up about 80% of marine debris. The form, buoyancy, indigestibility, deceptive visual form and the chemical nature of plastics endanger marine life.

Plastic items do not degrade, but fragment into smaller plastic particles. There is a vast and growing number of microplastics in the oceans from the fragmentation of macroplastics.

Research into where marine debris accumulates, and where it comes from shows that it overwhelmingly comes from 10-20 major rivers. When washed out of these to the sea, the plastics follow ocean currents, drop to the seafloor, or accumulates in coastal areas.

Most of marine debris comes from on-land sources eg coastal urban areas and river mouths. Discarded fishing gear is however also a major and durable threat. Once in the ocean, plastics items can be widely distributed by ocean currents and persist in the marine environment for hundreds of years.

No ocean has escaped the effects. Macro-, meso- and microplastics have been documented in both the sub-Antarctic and the Southern Ocean.

There have been years of effort and careful diplomacy by New Zealand and the USA to achieve the result.

Particular tributes are due to movie maker, Peter Young, of Fisheye Films, who made the Last Ocean movie which raised awareness immensely. This result is a joint effort.

This year the CCAMLR Scientific Committee agreed to a substantial research and monitoring plan for the MPA. This plan was developed through joint effort of New Zealand, US and Italian scientists, and others.

Further proposals

Progress on additional Southern Ocean MPAs has been very slow. Frustratingly, the proposal from Australia and the EU for protection of East Antarctic areas again failed to gain consensus at this years CCAMLR meeting. ECO hopes that careful diplomacy will see the proposal agreed at next year’s meeting.

Further proposals are being developed. Active efforts are being undertaken in two areas - the German efforts in the Weddell Sea, and by Argentina and Chile in the Antarctic Peninsula.

Greenpeace has launched a campaign to help support further Antarctic MPAs, in particular in the Weddell Sea and around the Antarctic Peninsula. Greenpeace is undertaking an expedition to the peninsula this summer which will include the use of a two-person submarine to help document these special areas.

Greenpeace was a key participant in the campaign to stop mining in Antarctica in the 1980s and early 1990s. It operated a year-round base (World Park Base) at Cape Evans in the Ross Sea from 1987 to 1992.

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Marine Debris and Plastics (cont)

Macroplastics pose risks to large invertebrates and marine vertebrates, through entanglement and ingestion. This can be lethal, through strangling or drowning in debris if animals are so tangled they cannot escape. It also has sub-lethal impacts, as entanglement can inhibit movement and cause pain, reducing an animal’s ability to move, hunt or migrate. Around New Zealand entanglement affects seals, whales, and seabirds. Ingestion of plastic bags by turtles and marine mammals has been globally documented.

In the Southern Ocean the effects of debris documented includes entanglement of seals and seabirds, the ingestion of plastic by Antarctic toothfish. Macroplastics in the Southern Ocean are found to be made up of mostly domestic waste, such as beverage cups, polystyrene and food wrappers, as well as longline fishing gear.

There is evidence to suggest that microplastics can accumulate up the food chain. The key issues of microplastics is that ingestion and entanglement has been shown to be lethal to zooplankton, and has potential impacts through the food web; also, as microplastics travel from northern waters to the Southern Ocean, they may act as a vector for disease.

Microplastics have been found to carry toxic bacteria and chemicals between ecosystems. They have been eaten by zooplankton, and accumulate in the marine foodweb.

Microplastics are buoyant and can be transferred from surface ocean mixing at a much greater level than previously thought. Microplastics have been found in the Ross Sea and in the greater Southern Ocean; in some areas concentrations are comparable to the Northern Hemisphere oceans. This includes concentrations of microplastics found off Antarctic bases that release untreated greywater into the environment, as well as in regions of heightened shipping activity.

Marine plastics have been found to be lethal, or have sub-lethal impacts on individuals of many marine species. One of the challenges of global marine debris research is to assess the impacts of marine debris on a species population level.

Ending the use of one trip plastic bag is just the first step in dealing with the growing problem of marine plastics in the marine environment.

Thanks to Eaven Brennan, the Fenner Foundation and the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (www.ASOC.org) for the information.

The Story of Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay

The Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay have produced a part 2 review of their over 44 years of Existence. The review by Michael North covers the period 2007 to 2016.

The Friends history prior to 2006 was covered in a companion publication.

In summary “The Friends have continued to submit on consent applications, sometimes culminating in case law around sustainable management in the coastal marine area. It has fought aquaculture over-development in the CMA of the top of the South Island particularly in the Marlborough Sounds, kept involved with Port Nelson Pollution issues, and participated in the process of identifying significant landscapes and natural areas in the Tasman District.”

The Friends have also played an active role in the management of Waimea Island and the development of biodiversity action plans for the Nelson City Council.

The Friends noted the impact that the curtailment of the Department of Conservation advocacy role combined with cuts to DoC funding had had put greater demands on volunteer groups to advocate to the sustainable management of the coastal marine environment.

Aquaculture and marine farm developments has been a major focus. The Friends have also been involved in advocating for the protecting of landscape and natural areas.

Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay, PO Box 35, Nelson 7040. www.nelsonhaven.org.nz Email: em@nelsonhaven.org.nz

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