



11th May 2018

Otago Regional Council
Freepost 497
Private Bag 1954
Dunedin 9054

Via email: info@orc.govt.nz

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: QLDC SUBMISSION – BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Thank you for the opportunity to present our submission in relation to the Otago Regional Council's Draft Biodiversity Strategy.

We are keen to be heard in relation to our submission, should the opportunity arise.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Theelen'.

Mike Theelen
Chief Executive
Queenstown Lakes District Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jim Boulton'.

Jim Boulton
Mayor
Queenstown Lakes District Council

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 QLDC would like to commend ORC for taking the lead on this strategy.
- 1.2 The proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan contains a list of threatened plants, and an operative list of numerous recently-assessed significant natural areas that capture mostly woody indigenous vegetation, wetlands, and sites of specific wildlife interest. Both threatened plant species and significant natural areas are protected by indigenous vegetation clearance rules.
- 1.3 QLDC supports that the strategy will provide guidance and a common focus for policy and decision making, resource allocation, voluntary effort, and on-the-ground projects and initiatives relating to biodiversity management in the Region.
- 1.4 QLDC would like to make the following submission points so that the strategy will provide a framework for efficient and effective management of native ecosystems and the eradication of specified plants and animals in the Otago Region. This submission will comment on:
 - Community Groups
 - Pest Management
 - Wilding Conifers

2.0 COMMUNITY GROUPS

- 2.1 QLDC supports partnerships with ORC and supports the formation of a regional biodiversity group jointly funded by TLAs and ORC.
- 2.2 QLDC recommends that ORC work closely with existing community groups and is involved and committed to these groups.
- 2.3 QLDC commends ORC on the increase to the contestable ORC Biodiversity Fund of \$500k per year.
- 2.4 In addition to the ORC Biodiversity Fund, QLDC requests that ORC contributes committed remediation budgets and resources (in kind staff time) for established Biodiversity Community programs. QLDC and LINZ currently contribute to the following programmes:
 - Lake Wakatipu Aquatic Weed Management Group (Lagarosiphon control in the Kawarau River and preventing establishment in Lake Wakatipu)
 - Lagarosiphon control in Lake Wanaka
 - Predator free programmes in Otago
 - Wetland groups in the Queenstown Lakes District
 - Other pests/plant programmes that develop

- 2.5 QLDC requests that ORC expands its support for predator free programmes to areas outside of Dunedin, working with community programmes across Otago, for example the Wakatipu Wildlife Trust (Queenstown) and the Wanaka Backyard Trapping Group (Wanaka)

3.0 PEST MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 QLDC recognises the importance of administering and reviewing the Regional Pest Management Plan. Furthermore, we request that ORC involves and works closely with QLDC on the development of the Pest Management Plan in future.
- 3.2 QLDC recommends that ORC looks to other Regional councils nationally such as Environment Canterbury to assess the rules that have been implemented in their plans.
- 3.3 QLDC requests that ORC increases its resourcing for environmental monitoring and pest management compliance across Otago.
- 3.4 QLDC requests that ORC remains focused on providing engaged responses to pest management and demonstrating clear commitment to pest management.
- 3.5 It is agreed that ORC should take the lead on education and advocacy, by providing information on biodiversity and developing an online portal for sharing information.
- 3.6 Additionally, QLDC supports ORC' suggestion of an established targeted rate for pest control and/or biodiversity projects.

4.0 WILDING CONIFERS

- 4.1 QLDC commends ORC on its recognition of the scale and threat posed by wilding conifers to the region's water and land resources in the Long Term Plan.
- 4.2 The ORC Long Term Plan provides funding for wilding tree control. QLDC requests that ORC considers a substantial increase to its financial commitment to eradicating wilding conifers, as QLDC contributes \$500,000 annually in its Long Term Plan.
- 4.3 QLDC agree that protection of tussock grassland habitat is a key point in the Strategy. We do not agree that alpine tussock grassland in Otago Region is generally well-protected, Wilding conifers are a major threat to these tussock grassland.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

- 5.1 QLDC supports the actions and desired outcomes of the ORC's Draft Biodiversity Strategy. As outlined above, it is recommended that further focus is given to working with community groups, widening the approach to pest management and increasing funding for the eradication of wilding conifers.