



Help to protect our patch

A SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW REGIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR OTAGO

December 2017

INTRODUCTION

In October and November, we sought your ideas to help us shape how we will manage pests in Otago over the next ten years. We asked stakeholders and communities for their views on:

- Pest management issues in Otago
- The existing plan
- What could go into the new pest plan
- Any other feedback on pest management

This document is a high-level summary of the feedback we received. We'll take on board the feedback provided to inform the development of Otago's new pest management plan. You'll have another chance to let us know what you think when the plan is publicly notified for submissions, later in 2018.

Otago's new pest plan will:

- List the pest plants and animals that will have regulatory control and set out how they are managed.
- Bring Otago's pest management in line with other regional councils around NZ, including our neighbouring councils.

WHAT WE DID

Feedback was sought and received from stakeholders and communities in a number of different ways. This included a stakeholder forum on pest management and biodiversity, protect our patch pop-ins, and an online questionnaire. Staff also received written feedback, and feedback over the phone and through email.

Stakeholder forum on pest management and biodiversity:

The Otago Regional Council held a stakeholder forum on biodiversity and pest management plan on 31 October 2017, at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. The workshop sessions and a presentation on the development of a new pest management plan for Otago were held in the afternoon. The workshops provided information about the pest management plan and sought feedback on pest management issues in Otago to inform the development of the pest management plan.

42 stakeholders from local government, statutory authorities, Kāi Tahu, environmental groups and industry groups attended the session.

Protect our patch pop-ins:

Otago Regional Council staff held pop-ins in four locations across the region. The purpose of the pop-ins was to provide an opportunity for people to come along to learn about the pest plan and to provide their feedback in person and have a chat to council staff about pest management. Just over 50 people attended the pop-ins.

These pop-in sessions were held in:

- Cromwell on 14 November 2017
- Dunedin on 16 November 2017
- Balclutha on 21 November 2017
- Oamaru on 22 November 2017



People were able to provide feedback in a number of ways at the pop-ins. This included adding their ideas on big boards and posters on the walls, in person to a staff member, online using one of the laptops provided, and by filling in a paper feedback form.

Online feedback:

A protect our patch page has been set up on the Otago Regional Council website which contains information about what pest management plans do, why we are developing a new plan, and how we will do it. The page also contains some key information about the process of developing a new pest management plan and what is coming up next.

During the month of November, the protect our patch page also included an online questionnaire. This sought people’s views on the important pest management issues in Otago, pests in the current plan, pests they may wish to see in the new plan, and any other comments they have about pest management in our region.



1. WHAT ARE OTAGO'S BIGGEST PEST MANAGEMENT ISSUES?

We wanted to hear from people about what the biggest pest management issues in Otago are. This will help us target our approach to pest management to those issues that affect our environment and communities the most. We received many comments on pest management issues in Otago. These have been summarised into key themes below:

Our Environment	Our Response to Pests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The effects of predator pests on our native birds, lizards, fish and invertebrates ▪ The effects of species which outcompete or smother our native species and alter habitats for our indigenous biodiversity ▪ Risks to our marine ecosystems associated with the establishment of marine pests ▪ Effects on threatened or unique ecosystems and species ▪ Managing environmental pests is just as important as managing economic pests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better alignment with Predator Free 2050 and other national, regional and local initiatives is needed ▪ More flexibility needed to respond ▪ More regional leadership and support is needed and better coordination with other organisations and groups ▪ Issues with how pest management is undertaken including the methods of control and effects of control on the environment and other species ▪ Lack of understanding and complacent attitudes to pest issues
Our Economy	Our Society and Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The effects of rabbits not only on farms, but from lifestyle properties too ▪ Gorse and broom control on rural properties ▪ Wallabies are becoming an increasing issue ▪ More biocontrol methods are needed ▪ The need to prevent international incursions and spread ▪ Effects on primary production and tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tensions between recreational enjoyment such as hunting and angling and conservation and biodiversity outcomes ▪ Effects on taonga and mahika kai species ▪ The threats to our amenity and landscape values from wilding conifers, gorse, broom and other species ▪ Plant species which restrict recreational access and use of our lakes, rivers and natural areas

2. THE CURRENT PLAN

In the stakeholder biodiversity and pest management forum, we asked participants to provide feedback on what was working well and what was not.

This will help us to determine what we should keep in the current plan and what we could look at changing so that the plan is more effective.

Working well:

- There was agreement that the management of some of the pest plants and animals in the current plan has been working well. This included the management of specific species such as rooks and bomarea.
- Feedback was also provided on the positive responses to recent invasions from velvet leaf and wallaby, and with roadside pest control.
- Having a plan and developing a more comprehensive plan was seen as a positive first step.
- The Queenstown Lakes Wilding Conifer Control Strategy 2004 was also noted as being a success.

Not working well:

- A number of comments were received regarding a lack of flexibility both within the plan, and in the ability to respond to pest incursions.
- Legacy, existing plan, and cross regional issues were raised regarding specific pests, including the control of rabbits, wallabies and wilding conifers.
- Some participants considered that more species should be managed in the plan, marine species should be included, and that site-led and pathway-led approaches should be used for specific areas and pests.
- Some participants also considered that there is a need for greater linkages to other plans, strategies and initiatives. A number of comments were received on the issues created by differing approaches in urban and rural environments. For example, with gorse and broom.



In the pop-ins and through the online questionnaire, the community was asked to identify the pests in the current plan that are the most important to manage. All 23 pests in the current plan were identified to some extent as being important to manage.

However, some pests were considered more important to manage overall as they received more feedback about their impacts than many of the others, due to the effects they have on the environment, our economy and on people.

The top five pests identified through the online feedback were:

- Contorta pine, gorse, hare, feral rabbit, and Bennetts wallaby.

The top five pests identified though the pop-in feedback were:

- Feral rabbit, gorse, broom, Bennetts wallaby and old man's beard.



3. WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE NEW PLAN?

A number of additional plant, animal and marine species were suggested for inclusion in the new pest management plan and a number of responses were received regarding a greater use of site-led programmes.

Specific sites or areas that were suggested for site-led programmes include:

- The Aramoana ecological area
- Dunedin coastline
- Otago Peninsula
- Areas surrounding Orokonui Ecosanctuary
- Gorse and Broom free areas
- Gravel river beds

Some plant and animal species were suggested to the Otago Regional Council only one or two times. Other species were suggested many times, suggesting that these are species where there is a high interest from the community. A lot of the feedback received provided good information on the kinds of pest programmes, control methods, and rules that should be used, and we will take this feedback on as we draft the plan.

Plant species we heard about:

The bigger words represent the species we heard the most about, and the smaller words were the species we heard least about.



We received a lot of feedback on wilding conifers, banana passionfruit, Darwin's barberry, sycamore and lupins. Feedback was also received on a number of other plant species.

Animal species we heard about:

The bigger words represent the species we heard the most about, and the small words were the species we heard least about.

Hedgehogs Mice Magpie
Feral pigs **Possum** Feral deer
Mustelids Rats Feral cats
Feral goats

We received a lot of feedback on possums and predator pests such as ferrets, stoats and weasels (mustelids). Feedback was also received on a number of other animal species, including feral pigs, feral goats and feral cats, hedgehogs and mice.

Other feedback received on what the new pest plan could contain included:

- The new plan needs to be more flexible to respond to issues as they arise.
- We need to keep marine pests out of Otago's marine environment.
- Good neighbour rules should be a focus and should be used to bind all landowners, including the crown.
- Improve the accuracy of maps in the plan.
- Urban gorse and broom should be included in addition to rural areas.
- The new plan should have a broader focus on support and engagement of communities, landowners and groups. This should include better coordination of landowners and groups.



4. OTHER FEEDBACK RECEIVED ON PEST MANGEMENT

In addition to asking people for specific feedback on the development of a new pest management plan, Otago Regional Council also sought to get a better understanding from stakeholders and the community about any other issues or comments they wanted to make about pest management in our region. We also sought ideas at the stakeholder forum about what other pest management activities they would like to see the council involved in.

This will assist in understanding how we can better support the implementation of the new pest management plan and other pest management programmes in Otago, and also assist communities and groups with pest management where a non-regulatory approach is more suitable.

We received many different comments from people and the key themes we heard are summarised below:

- Continue investigating and researching biocontrol methods
- Take a more active role in regional leadership and collaboration
- Take a more pro-active rather than reactive approach to pest management
- Raising public awareness about the effects of pests and how they can be managed
- Better understand the implications of pest control, including effects of control measures and the impacts on other species and the proliferation of other pests
- Improve monitoring and surveillance of pests and undertake new research
- More hands-on support for landowners and communities to help them manage pests - including trapping and monitoring techniques
- Provide more information and educational material on pests
- Investigating, supporting and sharing new technologies



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

We'll take on board the feedback received to inform the development of Otago's new pest management plan and will continue to work with key stakeholders as we go. We will consider the things that need to be improved in the current plan, and what additional plant and animal species and pest management programmes should be included so that the pest management plan targets the pests causing the most harm. A cost benefit analysis and cost allocation analysis of these species will be undertaken to make sure that the rules proposed in the plan are effective and to determine how the pest control programmes will be funded.

There will be another chance to let us know what you think when the plan is publicly notified for submissions later next year.



To keep informed email pests@orc.govt.nz and tell us you want to receive updates as Otago's new pest management plan is developed.