

Submitter Details

First Name: **Jessi**
 Last Name: **Morgan**
 Organisation: **Morgan Foundation**
 On behalf of: **Geoff Simmons and Jessi Morgan**
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Trade competition and adverse effects:

I could
 I could not

gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission

I am
 I am not

directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that :

- a. adversely affects the environment, and
- b. does not relate to the trade competition or the effects of trade competitions.

Wishes to be heard:

Yes

I do NOT wish to speak in support of my submission and ask that the following submission be fully considered.

Preferred hearing location:

Oral Hearings - Our Natural Capital – Wellington’s Draft Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Hearing Needs:

Correspondence to:

Submitter

Agent

Both

Submission

1. Overall, do you support or oppose the general direction of Our Natural Capital?

Strongly oppose
 Oppose
 Neither support nor oppose
 Support
 Strongly support

Why do you say this?

We support the use of the term Our Natural Capital and having a plan in place to increase biodiversity in Wellington. It is refreshing to see that you recognise the value that native biota bring to Wellington, both social and economic. Biodiversity is a real advantage for Wellington to leverage and created a place where skilled people want to live ala Sir Paul Callaghan. We congratulate you for recognizing the impact that cats have on our biodiversity and raising this as an issue. As a

council a lot of money and effort is spent on Zealandia and predator control in reserves and our urban area. This is futile if we don't control the damage and effect on native populations that the cats do. The Morgan Foundation, along with support from the Council, has put a significant amount of effort in the Enhancing the Halo program and this has been successful in getting urban trapping more mainstream. We would be happy to hand this over for the Council to build on.

2. Do you support the Guiding Principles, Goals and Outcomes?

Strongly oppose Oppose Neither support nor oppose Support Strongly support

Why do you say this?

Generally we agree with the thrust of these, however we would go further - Wellington has the potential to be the first functionally predator free city in the world. We would like this to be the ultimate long-term vision and see a plan to move towards that.

3. Do you think we have identified the biggest issues facing indigenous biodiversity in Wellington?

Yes No

Your comments

With the burgeoning number of cats in Wellington (owned, feral and in colonies) there is a huge impact on our biodiversity. Wandering cats kill native birds. Studies have shown that in our cities cats kill native birds faster than they can breed.* The damage inflicted on native lizards and invertebrates is unknown but probably even greater- the Victoria University cat camera study suggested on average pet cats kill one lizard and three invertebrates each per day.^ This is a huge issue for our native wildlife, and one we need to deal with. The current definitions of feral, stray and companion cats are unworkable from a cat management perspective. Cats can wander and kill, cause damage or spread disease, while property owners have no reasonable recourse. Part of the solution is being able to identify companion cats and their owners, which can only be done through micro-chipping. Encouraging responsible cat ownership, including compulsory micro-chipping of cats, should be a priority for council - similar to what we have in place for dogs. * van Heezik, Y., et al. (2010) Do domestic cats impose an unsustainable harvest on urban bird populations? Biol. Conserv. 143, 121-130 ^ <http://wellington.govt.nz/~media/about-wellington/research-and-evaluation/natural-environment/2014-what-do-owned-free-ranging-domestic-cats-get-up-to.pdf>

4. Do you think we have identified the right priorities in order to achieve our desired outcomes for biodiversity in Wellington?

Yes No

Your comments

Cat management, especially within the Halo area around Zealandia needs urgent attention. With the significant network of predator control in reserves, and increasingly in backyards, cats are now the most prolific wandering predator of native birds and reptiles within the city*. Without appropriate controls on cats investing money in Zealandia is a waste of time as birds aren't safe outside the fence. The Morgan Foundation has pulled together a huge amount of research on cat predation, both domestic and international, and would be happy to share this. Our motion cameras in

properties around Wellington showed that there are over 49 million cat trespasses each year. We are miles behind cat management in Australia (where most cities have cat management regimes in place) and Wellington has the opportunity to be a leader within NZ. * <http://halo.org.nz/cat-control/>

5. Do you think we have identified the right organisations to partner with to achieve our objectives?

Yes No

Your comments

6. Do you think we have the right indicators and targets to measure our performance by?

Yes No

Your comments

Overall outcomes sound right. However need to include lizards in our native species. Lizards are extremely vulnerable to cat predation.

7. Do you agree with our direction for the tiered support for community groups?

Yes No

Your comments

We would support more education and support around predator control if these areas are not being adequately managed by contractors. The more involved these people are are protecting these areas from predators the better.

8. Is there anything you feel has not been adequately covered by the draft plan?

Yes No

Your comments

We need clear definitions of feral, stray and companion cats. We also need a plan for managing wandering cats, particularly within sensitive wildlife areas.

9. Do you have additional comments? (please attach additional pages via the 'Supporting Information' tab)

Yes No

Your comments

The recent finding of 18 Tui remains being found in Mapuia highlights the need for responsible cat ownership. It is futile to continue to spend ratepayer money to enhance biodiversity, in Wellington, while we don't have any means of enforcing responsible cat ownership. Anecdotally we are told that increasingly frustrated property owners are taking the law into their own hands - trapping and killing cats that trespass. There are a number of known cat colonies in Wellington. People are feeding these cats but the cats are not 'owned'. These colonies can be on council land but currently the council have no means to deal with them. This is not about devaluing or degrading cats. It is about making them more valuable, by making people more responsible for their cats. We need to manage cats like dogs. Zealandia, the Wellington Zoo and other council properties should be used to educate public about the risk of cats to our indigenous biodiversity and the importance of responsible pet ownership.

Attached Documents

File
Our Natural Capital – Wellington's Draft Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan