

**Submission:** Environment Canterbury Long Term Plan 2018-28  
**From:** Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust  
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**Organisation role:** Conservation and recreation on Banks Peninsula

## Submission summary

The Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust was established by Christchurch City Council for the benefit of the present and future inhabitants of Banks Peninsula and its visitors.

The Trust has a vision to restore the environment of Banks Peninsula to its former rich biodiversity with local people prospering and passionately participating in conservation and outdoor recreation.

The Trust is working to realise its vision through projects built upon four key pillars: Access, Biodiversity, Knowledge and Partnerships. The Trust is taking a leadership role in promoting and facilitating public access on foot and bike on Banks Peninsula and a support role in projects supporting biodiversity recovery and enhancement. The Trust works in partnership with others, including the Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group, Department of Conservation, Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, tangata whenua, local communities, organisations and authorities, and the Christchurch City Council to achieve these aims.

The Trust has strategic goals to see

- Banks Peninsula become Pest Free;
- Increase in protection for areas with high biodiversity values;
- Public access on a network of well managed walking and biking tracks to connect people with the natural environment and build environmental stewards of the future.

The Trust supports the:

- Submission of the Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group in full;
- Provision in the ECAN LTP for expansion of the Community Initiative program targeted pest control rate for Banks Peninsula to include the Port Hills.

The Trusts seeks in addition:

- An increase in funding to at least \$40k in the LTP for 2018-19 to support the Goat Eradication project on Banks Peninsula;
- A financial contribution of at least \$50k in 2018-19 to enable the Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills Partnership (PFBPP) to develop an overarching strategy for Pest Free Banks Peninsula and a collaborative work programme;
- A sustainable revenue stream allocated to the PFBPP collaborative work programme from 2019-20 onwards;
- Recognition of the role native forest protection plays in climate change mitigation

The Trust is concerned about:

- Proposed discontinuation of the #535 bus service between Lyttelton and Rapaki;
- Cost of the ferry service to Quail Island.

## **1 Biodiversity and Biosecurity**

The Trust appreciates ECAN's desire to see a step-change in biodiversity enhancement, and specifically to extend the targeted rate to fund greater control of a wider range of pests on Banks Peninsula.

We also seek a greater recognition of the role that biodiversity enhancement in the form of native forest regeneration and protection plays in climate change mitigation.

### **1.1 Feral goat eradication**

The Trust is involved as a funding partner in the current push to eradicate goats from Banks Peninsula, recognising the significant threat they pose to native habitat in the area. We appreciate the effort that has gone into goat control in the past and welcome the opportunity to trial a new strategy aimed at complete eradication. The Trust agrees with the Pest Free Working Group that feral goats should be the first pest to be eradicated, and one that is potentially achievable with current technology and a new methodology.

The decision by ECAN to recognise goats as a feral pest in the recent Regional Pest Management Plan and to place more responsibility on landowners to contain domestic goats was critical to the Trust's decision to become the major financial backer of the trial of goat eradication being carried out this year at Little Akaloa.

In making its financial commitment, the Trust signalled that it does not have sufficient funding to fund any further stages of the goat eradication. We therefore encourage ECAN to financially support our commitment to the trial by a greater funding role in the Goat Eradication project (currently being managed by the Pest Free Banks Peninsula Working Group and executed by the Department of Conservation). We would like to see ECAN commit funding of at least \$40,000 toward goat control on Banks Peninsula in 2018-19 to support the Goat Eradication project, and then further funding in future years as determined by the Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills Partnership strategy to be developed in 2018-19.

Unless further funding from ECAN is forthcoming, it is likely that feral goats will soon re-infest the trial area around Little Akaloa and could then spread back to other areas of Banks Peninsula that are currently goat free, undoing the investment in good work to date.

### **1.2 Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills partnership**

The Trust believes that a community based partnership model will be essential to achieve the long term goal of pest eradication and hence have joined the PFBPP. It will be essential that the work of this group and the methodology it develops are supported by the government agencies with funding and pest related strategies and work aligning with the PFBPP overarching strategy.

We support the proposal in the LTP that the collaborative work programmed is supported with funding to PFBPP of \$50,000 in Year 1.

We also support the view put forward by the PFBPP that from Year 2 onwards, the ECAN LTP provides a long term funding stream toward the PFBPP work programme financed 50% from the general rate and 50% from the Banks Peninsula targeted rate.

### **1.3 Climate mitigation**

The Trust welcomes the new Climate change integration programme proposed under the Hazards, Risks and Resilience section of the LTP and the measures proposed around adaptation to climate change.

We submit that the potential for regenerating native forest to act as carbon sinks should be recognized in the Biodiversity section of the LTP and that ECAN work with others to facilitate landowners who covenant areas for biodiversity protection to receive some financial recognition for their efforts in the form of carbon credits and/or rates relief.

Native forest regeneration happens rapidly on Banks Peninsula, but ensuring that the species within the regenerated areas represent a wide range of biodiversity requires management effort such as fencing and weed and pest control. Financial compensation or incentives are likely to encourage more landowners to covenant and manage their regenerating forests providing biodiversity and climate change gains.

## **2 Public Transport**

The Trust supports public access on a network of well managed walking and biking tracks to connect people with the natural environment and help build environmental stewards of the future. The Trust has worked extensively with Department of Conservation to develop the Te Ara Pātaka track network linking the Lyttelton and Akaroa craters with a summit track, and owns the Rod Donald Hut which provides a second night of accommodation on this route. We have been delighted with the response of families and youth organisations to this hut and are experience very much higher usage levels than anticipated.

Having an effective public transport network is important to facilitating public walking access and the Trust promotes the use of public transport in its walking publications where services are available. Currently on Banks Peninsula this is limited to the bus services to Lyttelton and Rāpaki, the Akaroa shuttle and the Diamond Harbour ferry.

Encouraging people to use public transport is part of the modal shift sought by the Christchurch City Council and another important contributor to climate change mitigation.

### **2.1 Lyttelton inner harbour bus service**

The Trust is concerned at the proposed removal of the #535 service from Eastgate to Rāpaki, particularly if this means there is no service between Rāpaki and Lyttelton. We feature this service in our Lyttelton Town and Hills walking brochure as a way to encourage people to explore the area. In future it will also provide a service to people using the Head to Head walkway as a return trip alternative.

We suggest that an innovative solution may be to provide a mini-bus service from Governors Bay to Lyttelton connecting with the #28 bus, thereby increasing the communities connected, rather than total withdrawal of the only public bus service operating within Banks Peninsula.

### **2.2 Quail Island ferry**

The Trust is currently collaborating with DOC to develop a simple family tramping accommodation using an underused historic building on Quail Island. We see Quail Island as presenting an ideal opportunity for Christchurch families to introduce their children to the natural environment with an exciting but easy trip to this special place.

We are aware of how well used Diamond Harbour to Lyttelton Ferry service is, but concerned about the cost of trips to Quail Island. We submit that ECAN work to find ways to make the Quail Island ferry service more family friendly, including by adding it as a destination covered by the public transport subsidy.

***We wish to be heard in support of our submission.***