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Environment Canterbury
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Via email: haveyoursay@ecan.govt.nz

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Kia Ora

Submission on Environment Canterbury 2023-24 Draft Annual Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Environment Canterbury 2023-24 Draft Annual Plan. We are generally supportive of the proposed continuation of investment in important and necessary programmes of work. We do, however, have some concerns regarding the proposed reduced rates funding and associated investment in some areas, particularly biodiversity and pest control programmes. We do not support any scaling back, reduction or deferral of work which is intended to deliver important biodiversity, ecological and environmental outcomes. The climate emergency and its effects require more investment more quickly, not less investment more slowly.

Like other parts of the region, Banks Peninsula has been affected by a number of severe weather events resulting in flooding and landslips. We support the prioritisation of related flood protection, land drainage and erosion control work, particularly those projects which protect essential public infrastructure, which reduce sedimentation ingress into waterways and harbours, and which reduce or prevent ecological damage. We note this is to be funded by borrowing over 10 years. When funding capital projects of this nature which have intergenerational or long-term benefit, we would encourage borrowing over a longer 30 year period to correspondingly spread these costs intergenerationally, and to reduce the immediate and more significant financial impact on today's ratepayers.

We are supportive of the continuation of the work done by the Regional Council in the areas of biodiversity and pest management, and support the "hard and early" approach described in the Draft Annual Plan. Collaborative and genuine partnerships with other agencies, landowners, and the community, including community participation, are key to the success of this work. We would support expansion of this work and a more ambitious programme being put forward, either as a revision of this Draft Annual Plan, or in next year's Long Term Plan. We are particularly supportive of funding for pest control programmes on Banks Peninsula, including those delivered by Pest Free Banks Peninsula. Of particular note is the emerging and increasingly concerning problem of feral pig infestation, which requires both increased investment and a co-ordinated approach locally, regionally, and nationally. We would strongly encourage this.

We note with concern the proposed reduction in rates funding and expenditure for essential biodiversity and pest control work. In particular we note the apparent overall small increase in funding for these activities vs the Long Term Plan budget, but we are concerned about the actual more significant decrease in funding compared to the current (2022-23) financial year. We do not support reducing the funding available for this important work or any reduction in expenditure or the size of work programmes. We submit that the rates funding for this work should remain at the same level as last year, as a minimum. We would also encourage and support development over the 2023-24 period of a proposal for a targeted rate

for biodiversity across Christchurch City and Banks Peninsula, to be considered as part of next year's Long Term Plan.

We support the work to make public transport more affordable and more attractive to users, with the aim of encouraging more people to use public transport more often. In particular we note the proposed increased frequency of bus services to Lyttelton. We welcome this, and encourage a continued focus on effective connectivity with the Diamond Harbour Ferry, recognising this as one of the main public transport access routes for recreational visitors to Banks Peninsula as well as being key transport infrastructure for residents. We would also encourage future attention being given to the lack of public transport to and from Governors Bay, and request consideration of the extension of some Route 28 services to Governors Bay, or consideration of the reinstatement of the pre-earthquake Governors Bay bus service. This service would provide public transport connectivity for recreational visitors to this part of Banks Peninsula, in addition to serving residents.

We also note and support the ongoing contribution from the Regional Council to maintenance on the Little River Rail Trail, which supports biking access to Little River and is one of the key recreational access points from the City to Banks Peninsula.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make this submission. We request the opportunity to speak to our submission at an appropriate meeting.

Nga Mihi



Andrew Turner
Trust Manager