

IN THE MATTER

of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER

of the proposed Waikato District Plan (stage
1) – Hearing 21A – Significant Natural Areas

**SUMMARY OF STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ANTONY JULIAN BEAUCHAMP
FOR THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CONSERVATION**

16 NOVEMBER 2020

Department of Conservation

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Introduction

1. My name is Antony Julian Beauchamp.
2. My evidence in chief sets out my qualifications and experience.
3. This is a summary of the statement of evidence that I prepared for Hearing 21A - Significant Natural Areas (**SNA Hearing**) of the Proposed Waikato District Plan.
4. My evidence covers three general matters as follows:
 - a. the pathology, biology and vectoring of kauri dieback;
 - b. regulation and/or voluntary action (and the consequences of unregulated spread);
 - c. section 42 report and Federated Farmers submissions.
5. My evidence is presented in the SNA Hearing in the most appropriate section, but I understand that the impact of the submission is wider and intended to cover other zones.

The Pathology, Biology and Vectoring of Kauri Dieback

6. Kauri dieback ultimately kills all kauri (*Agathis australis*) that the disease infects. Urban sites can be contaminated by any process that moves soil and then these sites become a source of contamination.
7. Kauri dieback is caused by infection of small kauri feeder roots with a fungus like organism, *Phytophthora agathidicida*. This organism produces in kauri roots a hard-coated oospore that is released into soil when the roots are killed and rot. This spore can last many years in soil before activating and can be moved within soil to new sites.
8. New infections are not visible, and it is only when kauri show extreme stress from loss of roots that the symptomology (leaf loss and bleeds near the tree base) occurs that we become aware of the extent of infection. Sites are contaminated in most cases years before we see symptomology and we cannot eliminate dieback once it is introduced to a site. This lag phase is poorly understood but is in the order of 6 weeks for seedling, less than a decade of young rickers (< 50 cm girth at 2 metres up the trunk) and potentially decades of the larger trees.

9. Kauri dieback can be moved by any process that moves soil including landslides, human earthworks, hooved animals and human footwear. Kauri within any District Council zone can be infected.
10. Kauri root systems can extend beyond the drip line of the tree and current best practice is to ensure that soil from 3 times the maximum drip line of any kauri remains in that area or is transported to a regulated landfill.

Regulation and / or Voluntary Action (and the consequences of unregulated spread)

11. In my opinion current proposed National Regulations or Regional Rules are insufficient to control the spread of kauri dieback, and District Rules need to cover gaps in earthwork and cultivated land situations.
12. Kauri dieback is an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993. A proposed National Pest Management Plan with 12 rules has been submitted twice to Government but is currently unfunded. The proposed earthwork rule (No. 5) in that plan is aimed at natural (uncultivated) areas with kauri and will not cover all planning zones where kauri are located.
13. Waikato Regional Council does not have rules that are adequate to cover kauri in properties that are not found by soil sampling to be contaminated.
14. In my opinion, the control of the spread of kauri dieback must involve both voluntary actions by individuals around individual hygiene and regulation to ensure that consents and management plans are put in place and that the information about the incidence of dieback is recorded. If kauri dieback is detected, then it can remain in the soil long after trees stand.

Section 42 report and Federated Farmers submissions

15. The Section 42 report recommends voluntary actions based on a guide "Protecting kauri: a rural landowners guide". I agree that a risk management plan approach and that site-based management plans are appropriate. However, I consider this guide is not adequate to direct how risk management plans need to be structured. The guide does not cover all the situations (zones) where kauri are located, and lacks provisions assigning responsibility to ensure that processes are followed well documented/mapped and successful. There is no way of Council knowing where kauri dieback is in the region.

16. The guide is not a Waikato Regional Council document and is not a direction from Regional Council. The guide is endorsed by MPI and in my opinion may change after a new kauri Dieback Management agency is put in place. In my opinion, the guide is open to change by others without Waikato District Council or Waikato Regional Council input and should not be relied upon over regulatory measures implemented through Council. In my opinion, it is safer for Council to include the matters covered by the guide within the Proposed District Plan.
17. The Environment Court in an interim decision, has indicated that kauri dieback should be addressed through Biosecurity and RMA processes, and that the matter of regulating earthworks near Kauri needs the consideration of District Councils.

Dated 16 November 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A J Beauchamp', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

A J Beauchamp