SUBMISSION ON THE BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

September 2019

INTRODUCTION

The Aggregate and Quarry Association (AQA) is the industry body representing Construction Material companies which produce an estimated 40 million tonnes of aggregate and quarried materials consumed in New Zealand each year.

Funded by its members, the AQA has a mandate to increase understanding of the need for aggregates to New Zealanders, improve our industry and users' technical knowledge of aggregates, and assist in developing a highly skilled workforce within a safe and sustainable work environment.

Background

Accessing, extracting, processing and transporting aggregate (crushed rock, gravel and sand) is needed for the construction of infrastructure in New Zealand. A wide range of industrial minerals are also produced in New Zealand including clay, limestone, perlite, halloysite, bentonite, zeolite, silica, dolomite and serpentine.

It is therefore vital that local aggregate resources throughout the country are identified, understood and effectively managed. Quarrying is a temporary land use, with site restoration a critical element to ensure that land is available for future generations. In many cases, site restoration can result in the delivery of valuable new habitats, contributing towards national biodiversity targets and wider 'net gain' ambitions.

We make the following submissions in relation to the Biodiversity Strategy consultation document – Our shared vision for living with nature.

Challenges and opportunities facing nature now and into the future

We generally agree with the description of the problem and challenges and opportunities listed in Part 1 including the broad definition that nature includes all living things and is diverse.

We note however that the significant contribution to the New Zealand economy by mining and quarrying is not listed alongside other primary production. The Government's 2019 National Planning Standards defines primary production as "*any aquaculture, agricultural, pastoral, horticultural, mining, quarrying or forestry activities*". In order to retain consistent definitions across planning documents, and avoid confusion and

potential conflict, the 2019 National Planning Standards definition of primary production should be used in this strategy.

In 2017, the New Zealand aggregate and quarrying sector produced 41 million tonnes of aggregates, including limestone and other products, with an economic contribution to New Zealand estimated at $2.8 billion. Mining in New Zealand contributes $2.25 billion to the national economy, employs 4,200 people and earns around $1 billion in export receipts.

It is critical that the sector delivers value, now and into the future in an environmentally and socially responsible way. Sourcing aggregate locally, safely, at reasonable cost and in environmentally stainable ways is fundamental to New Zealand's future.

Values and principles

We generally agree with the values and principles listed in Part 2.3

The quarry industry works collaboratively with local communities and councils to reduce our environmental impact and meet legal requirements of environmentally sustainable operations. This includes finding innovative ways to return former quarries to communities as lasting assets that contribute towards the delivery of positive biodiversity and nature conservation outcomes. Recent examples of site restoration resulting in the delivery of valuable new habitats that contribute toward enhanced biodiversity are The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust in Christchurch, Halswell Quarry in Christchurch, productive wine growing land in Marlborough and Memorial Park in Palmerston North.

Proposed long term outcomes

Systems and behaviour

We agree that to restore nature and empower everyone, we need to change the way we behave. While our sector operates collaboratively with communities and government to deliver sustainable outcomes, we do recognise that there is an opportunity to approach economic activity in a way that helps drive indigenous biodiversity restoration.

As an example of this, the quarrying operators in Canterbury have recently collaborated to develop a Code of Practice which enables quarrying to be undertaken in a manner which addresses both environmental effects and wider community concerns. The adoption of this code demonstrates that the sector is responsive to the communities in which it operates and is actively working to mitigate its impacts on the environment and restore biodiversity for the benefit of nature, community wellbeing and the economy.

Proposed system shifts

Communities are empowered to take action

We agree that enabling businesses to act is critical to achieving the 'all-of-New Zealand approach' that is needed to make real change.

Most quarries are small, with 90% of the 1,100 estimated operating quarries across New Zealand, employing 3 people or less. Many of these quarries are located in remote rural communities where there is little access to support services that can assist with their conservation and biodiversity enhancement ambitions. Conservation needs to be 'easy to see and easy to do' for these small rural businesses.

Incentives for resource owners and users to make decisions to protect and restore nature are critical to the success of the proposed system shifts, and strategy at large. The long term economic incentivisation of biodiversity enhancement on private land should form a part of this system shift.

If options such as an official environmental enhancement fund, at a national, regional or catchment level were available, the contribution to this fund in association with a resource consent mitigation process, would help fund wider biodiversity offset initiatives.

We support the proposed action to "assess potential tools to incentivise resource owners and users to make decisions to protect and restore nature that have wider benefits to society".