

Submission on the discussion document – Action for nature: Implementing New Zealand's Biodiversity Strategy 2025–2030

June 2025

Introduction

The Aggregate and Quarry Association (AQA) is the industry body representing quarrying companies which produce 48 million tonnes of aggregate and quarried materials consumed in New Zealand each year.

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

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit on the discussion document – [Action for nature: Implementing New Zealand's Biodiversity Strategy 2025–2030](#) (the strategy).

General

We generally support the strategy and will continue to play our part in addressing the state of our biodiversity. We agree that all of us can increase effort and make a bigger difference for biodiversity by supporting others and making it easier for people to contribute.

The quarry industry works collaboratively with local iwi, 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. 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.

Action 3 – Develop a biodiversity investment prospectus to attract and direct external investment into biodiversity priorities.

We agree with the proposal to develop a biodiversity investment prospectus that would include a set of investment-ready priority projects to a range of potential funders, including businesses, philanthropists, NGOs and iwi, and seek their investment or co-funding.

We support the concept of a Biodiversity Credit Scheme (BCS) being part of the investment prospectus, as it is an opportunity to fund additional biodiversity improvement and has the potential to complement traditional ways of financing projects that support and conserve nature.

Biodiversity credits could be used to offset development impacts as part of resource management processes, provided they meet the requirements of both the BCS system and regulatory requirements. The BCS should sit alongside the environmental effects hierarchy in resource consenting giving the option to focus on enhancing existing degraded forest (weeds and pests) rather than planting from scratch (offsetting).

A BCS would attract investment in New Zealand. Not only will investors help to improve biodiversity they will have something tangible to show for their investment that could improve their reputation and/or provide credits for use elsewhere where offsetting and other measures to protect the environment are not possible.

Action 4 – Generate new revenue from public conservation lands and waters to invest back into biodiversity.

We support the proposal that the Department of Conservation (DOC) identify new sources of revenue and continue to review policies, processes, and fee schedules for existing activities.

The Crown should receive a fair return from commercial activities within public conservation lands and waters, provided there is standardisation and consistency between activities, and that DOC is recovering costs at an appropriate level.

It is important however that care will be taken to achieve a fair balance and to recognise the important contribution that many resource users such as quarries already make to protecting and restoring our biodiversity on a voluntary basis.

Action 6 – Increase the protection of biodiversity on private and Māori land by improving the accessibility and coordination of government support and incentives.

Incentives for resource owners and users to make decisions to protect and restore nature are critical to the success of the Strategy, including biodiversity enhancement on private land.

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.

It is critical that landowners, businesses, resource users / owners and industry are supported and, where appropriate, incentivised to contribute to protecting and restoring indigenous biodiversity.

Action 9 – Capture and embed the lessons from existing partnership-based delivery models for biodiversity and biosecurity management to inform decisions on future programmes.

We agree that partnership-based approaches provide an opportunity to grow community support for biodiversity work.

While our sector operates collaboratively with iwi, 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. There is opportunity for the quarry sector and DOC to jointly identify biodiversity investment opportunities that could offset impacts of quarrying operations and enhance biodiversity.

The following are examples of this:

- A Southland gravel extraction site operating on DOC land has created the Diamond Peak wetlands in Gore. The quarry operator is now working with DOC and local rūnunga on the finished form and planting plan.
- Maungakawa Scenic Reserve in the Waipā District, Waikato was recently returned to Ngāti Hauā and a local quarry is partnering with iwi in an ecological restoration and pest control initiative to safeguard and restore this precious whenua and its native ecosystems.

These examples demonstrate that the sector is responsive to the communities in which we operate and are actively working to mitigate our impacts on the environment and restore biodiversity for the benefit of nature, community wellbeing and the economy.

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