



File ref: 5615953
Our ref: 18-E-0873

19 November 2018

Sue Boyde
fyi-request-8917-51c025e1@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Boyde

I have received your request dated 22 October 2018 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have requested information regarding the Taranaki Daily News article dated 16 November 2016 where it was reported that the Department of Conservation had agreed with Chris Wilkes and 100% Pure Taranaki Society that if they could keep rat numbers down by 40% and possums down by 18% in the Kaitake Ranges, the Department would consider not doing an aerial pest control operation in that area for another three years. You have requested the following:

1. *"Is this agreement and trapping project still in operation?"*

Your request is declined under section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist. No formal agreement was entered into between the Department and Chris Wilkes or 100% Pure Taranaki. However, during a discussion between a representative of the Department and Mr Wilkes, the point was made that if the rat, possum, stoat and ferret numbers in the Kaitake Ranges were reduced to very low levels by the time of the proposed aerial pest operation, there would be no need to undertake aerial pest control in that area. Mr Wilkes took it upon himself to try and achieve this through ground control. Subsequently, three permits to trap possums in the Kaitake Range were issued, one three-month permit to Chris Wilkes and two three-month permits to Tara Harvey. All three permits expired in 2017.

2. *"What are the pest species agreed to be controlled by the group, and the agreed limits (please specify the type of monitoring measurement)?"*

Your request is declined under section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist. No formal agreement was entered into and no limits on pest species were agreed to.

3. *"What is the date of the most recent monitoring, and what levels were found for each pest species?"*

The most recent monitoring in the Kaitake Range was undertaken in August 2018 using industry standard waxtags and tracking tunnels. For this round of monitoring rats were tracking at 75% and possums were at 20%.

4. *"When will the final monitoring series be carried out, that will decide whether the Kaitake Range will be included in the 1080 drop?"*

It is likely that the last round of monitoring prior to the aerial application of 1080 planned next year will occur in February 2019. It is expected that pests will be present within the Kaitake Ranges and the planned aerial application of 1080 will not be affected by the results of this round of monitoring.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Natasha Hayward', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Natasha Hayward
Director, Operations (Acting)
Hauraki Waikato Taranaki Region