

23 NOV 2018

OIA18-0740

Mick Hall

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Dear Mick Hall

### OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

Thank you for your request of 26 October 2018, for the following information:

*Has research been carried out within the Kauri Dieback Strategic Science Advisory Group, or any research attached to the industry, to determine whether possible effects of Sodium fluoroacetate (1080) on soil microbial activity around kauri trees could be an aggravating factor in Kauri Dieback disease?*

We have interpreted your request to mean that you are seeking information on whether any research has been undertaken by the Kauri Dieback Programme (the programme) to determine if effects of 1080 could be an aggravating factor in kauri dieback.

The Strategic Science Advisory Group's (SSAG) role is not to conduct or commission research, but to operate independently at a strategic level to support the programme with expert scientific advice. Drawing on a wide range of expertise, the SSAG is developing a science plan that incorporates both strategic and operational science needs for the management of kauri dieback in New Zealand. Work undertaken in the development of the science plan has not identified 1080 as an issue in relation to kauri dieback. The science plan, once finalised, will be made available to the public.

The Kauri Dieback Programme is a collaborative partnership between the Ministry for Primary Industries, regional councils, Department of Conservation, Te Roroa and the Tangata Whenua Roopu (who engage with Māori communities throughout the kauri rohe). The programme has responsibility for managing and responding to the spread of kauri dieback and is supported by people who have skills in, or a focus on, environmental science, biosecurity, or mātauranga Māori (traditional knowledge).

Investigations undertaken by the programme to date have found the water mould *Phytophthora agathidicida* to be the primary cause of kauri dieback. This fungus-like pathogen infects the roots of kauri, damaging the tissues that carry important nutrients and water, effectively starving the trees to death. Soil disturbance from human activity, like

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people using unofficial tracks or not cleaning footwear, is one of the main ways the disease is spread.

Kauri dieback has been detected in areas where 1080 has not been used, and work undertaken by the programme has not identified any reason to link the use of 1080 to the disease. As such, research has not been carried out by the programme to determine if effects of 1080 could be an aggravating factor in kauri dieback. However, where pests may be a disease vector in kauri forests, aerial 1080 could prove to be an effective tool in combatting the spread of the disease.

Scientific efforts by the programme are currently focused on developing a range of tools and treatments to fight kauri dieback, which at present has no cure. This for example includes:

- phosphite injection trials which have been shown to successfully boost the tree's natural immunity
- investigation into the potential for other species to host the disease
- creation of better mapping and detection tools to better understand its distribution.

Further information on research carried out by the programme can be found on the website: <https://www.kauridieback.co.nz>.

Under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982 you have the right to request the Ombudsman to investigate and review this response.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Spelman  
Acting Director, Readiness and Response Services