BEFORE THE MT WELCOME EXPERT CONSENTING PANEL

IN THE MATTER of an application for approvals under section 42 of the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act)

AND

IN THE MATTER of the Application for approvals by Pukerua Property Group Partnership for Mt Welcome, Pukerua Bay, Porirua Project including resource consents, a wildlife permit, an archaeological authority and a complex freshwater fisheries approval to develop residential allotments, an allotment and preparatory works to enable a future commercial centre and associated infrastructure in Pukerua Bay, Porirua. Application FTAA-2603-1181

JOINT STATEMENT OF EXPERTS IN THE FIELD OF HERPETOLOGY

Dated 18 August 2026

INTRODUCTION

1. Expert conferencing of the topic of herpetology (lizards) took place by videoconference on 18 August 2026.
2. The conference was attended by:
    a. Chris Wedding (CW) on behalf of the Director General of Conservation
    b. Tony Payne (TP) on behalf of the applicant
    c. Nyree Fea (NF) on behalf of Porirua City Council
3. Gary Bramley acted as facilitator and assisted the experts to draft the Joint Witness Statement

CODE OF CONDUCT

4. The experts confirm that they have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 and agree to comply with it. The experts confirm that the issues addressed in this Joint Witness Statement are within their area of expertise, unless stated otherwise.

SCOPE OF STATEMENT

5. In our conference we discussed the issues relevant to the Application which arise within our field of expertise. Prior to attending the conference, we each read the relevant parts of the Application, the evidence and independent reports prepared by the other expert(s) and circulated.
6. The issues are:
    a. Survey coverage, including survey of SNAs;
    b. Extent of lizard habitat affected;
    c. Value of lizard species present;
    d. Method of Assessment of effects;
    e. Suitability of relocation sites;
    f. Adequacy of the Lizard Management Plan;

g. Application of offsetting/compensation;

h. Utility of a Biodiversity Offset Accounting Model; and

i. Length of time pest management to be implemented.

7. Matters g and h were not addressed due to a shortage of time. No conclusions were reached on those matters, and their absence from this statement should not be taken as agreement as to the adequacy of offsetting/compensation or the utility of a BOAM.

8. In relation to each issue, we discussed points of agreement and disagreement in relation to:

    a. Facts;

    b. Assumptions;

    c. Areas of uncertainty or lack of information; and

    d. Expert opinions / conclusions.

9. In this Joint Statement we report the outcome of our discussions in relation to each issue by reference to points of agreement and disagreement relating to facts, assumptions, uncertainties and expert opinions / conclusions. We have noted where each of us is relying on the opinion or advice of other experts. Where we are not agreed in relation to any issue, we have set out the nature and basis of that disagreement.

10. We have not considered the draft consent conditions proposed by the Applicant.

ISSUE 1 – Survey Coverage, including survey of SNAs

FACTS

1. The following facts are agreed:

    a. NF has been to the site. CW has not and is relying on his experience the information provided in the reports. Those reports did not provide detailed descriptions of lizard habitat, other than generally classifying types of habitat such as seral broadleaved forest and long grass.

b. NF is not a herpetologist, but has a general lizard knowledge and is supported by specialist herpetologists in her team.

c. 100% detection probability of lizards is unachievable with any lizard survey.

d. Lizards tend to be patchily distributed in the landscape.

e. The SNAs have not been surveyed for lizards, particularly arboreal species.

f. TP has updated the LMP to allow for three days of surveying in response to feedback received. He will include additional survey in the LMP to confirm presence/absence of lizards within the SNAs. NF will confirm the number of nights of spotlighting she considers necessary. CW noted that the typical approach is to repeat check during suitable survey conditions, so at least two nights is expected for the current project.

g. Note that the extent of the SNA vegetation to be cleared is a topic of conversation in the terrestrial ecology joint conferencing.

EXPERT OPINIONS

1. The following expert opinions were recorded in relation to this matter:

    a. CW and NF agree that the lizard survey was capable of confirming presence of lizards, but was not comprehensive enough to determine absence, estimate relative abundance or conclude that lizards are confined to localised parts of areas of contiguous vegetation. In their view, lizard absence should not be assumed where they were not detected in contiguous potential habitat, including the planted native scrub and pine forest. This has implications for effective lizard management. In particular, the survey confirms presence, but was not designed to estimate detection probability, population abundance, or the spatial boundary of occupied habitat.

    b. CW and NF agree there are varying detection probabilities for lizards in different habitats. They consider that the lack of detection of lizards

at some locations within the site may be a reflection of this phenomenon rather than a lack of lizards per se.

c. CW and NF agree that there are areas within the site which have not been surveyed that could provide suitable habitat for lizards. A precautionary approach would treat them as having lizards present. For management purposes, unsurveyed or incompletely surveyed areas that contain suitable habitat should therefore be treated as potentially occupied unless field assessment provides a robust basis for exclusion.

d. TP noted that manual surveys have been extensive in the "best available" habitats on several occasions and no evidence of copper skinks has been detected. Devices were placed where he expected to find them, and they were detected. In his view he has been conservative and mapped a larger extent of habitat than that indicated by ACO survey alone. He will provide maps of the areas manually surveyed and the timing of those surveys as well as photographs of the material turned over during searches and more photographs of potential lizard habitats.

e. TP is of the view that it was not possible to survey the SNA adjoining SH59 with survey devices (e.g., Gee minnow traps, ACOs). He concedes that he could have used spotlighting there.

f. CW and NF consider that arboreal lizard species may be present in the SNAs and the areas of non-SNA scrub/shrubland. In their view the vegetation to be removed would need to be surveyed in advance of any vegetation clearance to confirm lizard presence/absence so that any resident lizards can be managed effectively.

g. TP noted that the planted indigenous area of forest/shrubland south-east of SNA029 (and north of the access track) is spatially isolated, i.e., it is discontinuous from any other forest and on that basis is unlikely to provide habitat for arboreal lizards. TP noted that the pasture is closely grazed and that the area is continually disturbed by livestock and that New Zealand arboreal geckos generally do not disperse through open

grazed pasture; instead, they behaviourally avoid farmland matrices, treating open pasture as a significant movement barrier.

h. CW is of the view that one should be careful about making assumptions about species distribution, especially when the vegetation is decades old as in the SNAs, planted shrubland and pine forest. Salvage of lizards in such areas often yield unexpected results, including higher numbers of lizards than survey, as reported and discussed at past SRARNZ[1] (e.g. February 2026) so one should always adopt a precautionary approach. There is a risk of failing to detect/manage significant populations if one assumes lizards are not present.

i. CW noted that native lizards, including copper skinks and arboreal geckos are known to traverse areas of pasture and therefore the assumption that the area of indigenous scrub (south-east of SNA 029 and north of the access track) is spatially isolated is not supported by evidence.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. We agree on the following assumptions in relation to this issue:
    a. No points of agreement in relation to assumptions.

2. We do not agree on the following assumptions in relation to this issue:
    a. TP has assumed lizards are present in the SNAs and this could be verified by multiple days of surveys, including spotlighting and manual searching of felled vegetation to inform lizard management. He noted that spotlighting is proposed as part of the LMP to assist in lizard salvage. CW and NF agree that lizards are likely to be present in the SNAs.
    b. TP has assumed that traffic can be appropriately managed as part of roundabout construction to enable lizard salvage. In his view he has been conservative in assuming all potential lizard species are present within the SNAs. Given that the SNA comprises a thin, small

[1] Society for Research of Amphibians and Reptiles New Zealand (SRARNZ)

area (1,400m^2) of seral vegetation, TP wouldn't expect high densities/numerous lizards to be present.

Areas of Uncertainty

1. The following area of uncertainty is agreed in relation to this matter:
    a. The extent of SNA removal was the subject of discussion in the terrestrial ecology joint witness conference and the outcome of that discussion materially affects the estimates of SNA removal referred to throughout the lizard conferencing and subsequent effects on lizard populations.

Importance

1. The following is agreed in relation to the importance of this issue:
    a. The adequacy and comprehensiveness of the survey materially affects the reliability of the information used to inform the ecological impact assessment.
2. The following matter is not agreed in relation to the importance of this issue:
    a. CW and NF are comfortable with the survey effort, but consider that the interpretation was not precautionary. In their view, the interpretation of the extent and location of potential lizard habitat is not justified based on the evidence. Extrapolation from a lack of lizard detections to conclude that lizards are not present beyond the surveyed areas is inappropriate and results in the scale of effects for lizards being underestimated.
    b. TP is of the opinion that his interpretation has been conservative and his assessment can be relied upon.

ISSUE 2 – Extent of lizard habitat affected

Facts

1. The following facts are agreed in relation to this issue:
    a. TP has interpreted lizard distribution at the site based on ACOs, manual searches and professional judgement.

2. The following facts are not agreed in relation to this issue:
    a. No facts were disagreed in relation to this issue.

EXPERT OPINIONS

1. Expert opinions in relation to this matter were as follows:
    a. CW and NF are of the view that there is no evidence to support the exclusion of almost the entire contiguous fragment where copper skink were found. In their view one should assume that copper skink are present in the wider fragment unless there is strong evidence to the contrary. The approximately 3,500 m2 mapped by TP largely reflects localised survey and detection areas and does not, in CW and NF's view, demonstrate the boundary of the contiguous habitat feature.

    b. CW and NF are of the view that numerous surveys using different methods in the fragment where copper skink were detected would not necessarily exclude the area as habitat for copper skink (i.e., absence of evidence is not evidence of absence). Their view is that one should assume that copper skink are present throughout the entire fragment based on what is known about their habitats and distribution and lizard values assessments and habitat management should be planned accordingly. Copper skink are not confined to particular vegetation edges or forest types within their natural range.

    c. NF and CW consider that other, similar fragments to the one where copper skink were found may provide habitat for copper skink as well. NF to provide TP with information with respect to possible areas she identified during her site visit.

    d. NF and CW have concluded that given the scope and extent of the lizard surveys, adaptive management in the LMP needs to be conservative to reflect the degree of uncertainty with respect to lizard presence and abundance.

e. TP's view is that you can always collect additional information, but in making his determination he relied on his understanding of the landscape and land use at this site and relevant experience in similar highly modified sites. He considers that there is little value in collecting more information in relation to this site. TP considered that if all experts had visited the site it may have helped align the opinions in his view.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. There were no material assumptions in relation to this matter.

UNCERTAINTIES

1. No uncertainties applying to this issue were agreed.
2. The following matters relating to uncertainty are not agreed:
    a. NF and CW agreed that one of the issues is lack of information. A lot of the matters identified in their reviews of the application originate in the lack of data with respect to the site. The lizard EcIA report doesn't provide sufficient information with respect to habitat and few photographs (NF, CW). Without mapped manual-search coverage, habitat descriptions and representative photographs, the basis for excluding parts of the connected fragment cannot be independently evaluated.
3. We agree that addressing the following matters would assist in improving the certainty and knowledge gaps discussed.
    a. TP agreed to provide maps of the areas manually searched, timing and photographs of material turned over during searches.

IMPORTANCE

1. We agree that reliable quantification of the available lizard habitat is central to assessing the effects of the proposal and providing for adequate effects management.

ISSUE 3 – Value of lizard species present (including estimates of 'low abundance')

FACTS

1. The following facts are agreed in relation to this matter:
    a. Copper skink are assessed as regionally "Threatened" by Crisp et al. (2023).

ASSUMPTIONS

1. No assumptions were identified in relation to this matter.

EXPERT OPINIONS

The following expert opinions were expressed in relation to this matter:

a. CW and NF consider that the appropriate approach is to apply the regional threat ranking when assessing effects. That would imply a value of "very high" using the EIANZ EcIAg. CW and NF consider the Wellington mainland classification the more ecologically relevant regional status for a mainland development.
b. TP's view is that it is more appropriate to use the national status ("At Risk – Declining") because he considers that the regional threat status is overly conservative. This equates to a "high" value using the EIANZ EcIAg. TP's view is that this is more appropriate for copper skink based on data collected after Crisp et al (2023) was published (i.e., not considered in the regional assessment).

IMPORTANCE

1. The following is agreed in relation to the importance of this issue:
    a. The threat status feeds directly into the effects assessment and the overall level of effect depends on the value assigned. This difference of opinion has a material difference in determining the level of effects and level of effects management deployed.

ISSUE 4 – Application of the EclAg

1. The following facts are agreed in relation to this matter:
    a. The EIANZ has recently issued an explanatory note warning against 'diluting' the level of effects by applying an ED scale.
    b. There are no records of copper skink in the adjoining landscape (extent not defined) in the DOC herpetofauna database.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. No assumptions were identified in relation to this issue

EXPERT OPINIONS

1. The following expert opinions were expressed:
    a. CW and NF consider that the magnitude of effect is "very high" on the basis that one of the features being lost is the vegetation fragment which provides habitat for copper skink and that results in a 'Very High' level of effect and potential loss of a local population of 'very high' value lizards. This determination has been reached giving consideration to the scale of the "local landscape" rather than the scale of the ecological district (ED) applied by TP. The local landscape is defined as larger than the site, but smaller than the ED and region, and takes into account local records. CW's assessment focuses on the permanent removal of almost all habitat associated with the only known copper skink population within the development site. The availability of visually similar vegetation elsewhere does not demonstrate that it is occupied, equivalent in habitat quality, or connected to this population. For clarity, CW uses 'local landscape' to mean the ecological context around the affected population, informed by habitat connectivity, plausible dispersal and known records, rather than a fixed administrative ED-wide denominator.
    b. TP has taken into account that copper skink occur in high densities and are well distributed within the ED, and the relocation of 97 copper skinks c. 30km away in his assessment of threat status. This sub-

population was unknown at the time the regional threat ranking was published.

c. CW does not consider the relocation record c. 30 km away to be evidence of copper skink abundance or distribution throughout the ED. Native lizards are patchily distributed through potential habitat (as agreed) and potential habitat elsewhere cannot be assumed to be occupied, or converted into an ED-wide population estimate, without survey data or another defensible population model.
d. In TP's view, CW has considered all of the potential habitat on site as part of the magnitude of effect, however, he has not applied the same consideration for other areas of potential habitat within the local landscape. CW has also not clearly defined "local landscape".
e. TP's view is that the population at the Mt Welcome site represents less than 0.1% of the population of copper skink in the ED, and a very small proportion within the "local landscape" so effects are "very low". He hasn't applied the magnitude of effect at the site level – it is applied at the same level as the ecological feature, which is what the EIANZ explanatory note provides for. He has applied the assessment at the scale of the ED in accordance with the EIANZ guidelines, in his experience copper skink are highly abundant within the ED at some locations and there are numerous sub-populations throughout the ED. The fragment of vegetation on site represents a very small area of potential habitat for copper skink at both a local landscape area and the ED scale. Confident that effects are being managed appropriately and will result in better outcome for copper skink.
f. CW disagrees with TP's interpretation of the EIANZ explanatory note. In CW's view, the note cautions against diluting a permanent loss by expanding the assessment denominator to a wider landscape where habitat has not been surveyed, mapped or valued to an equivalent level of detail. The wider ED provides relevant context, but should not be used to dilute the loss of a rare, threatened or otherwise important ecological feature within the zone of influence.

IMPORTANCE

1. The following is agreed in relation to the importance of this issue:
    a. The scale at which the assessment is applied has a direct impact on the level of effect – the smaller the scale applied the higher the level of effect.

ISSUE 5 – Suitability & carrying capacity of relocation sites / contingency plans for high captures

FACTS

1. The following facts are agreed in relation to this matter:
    a. This issue may have been partly resolved by the proposal to release all copper skinks into R1 which is connected to the QEII covenant and the associated margins. TP confirmed that released lizards will be able to interact with an existing population in the QEII covenant area (which TP has assumed to be the source population within the site) and it is proposed to extend the amount of lizard habitat around R1, e.g., there is batter slope that will be planted and made suitable for lizards. This will not be available immediately, but will increase the extent of lizard habitat and would all be connected at that location.
    b. Baseline monitoring after the pasture has been retired (and potentially available for lizards to colonise) and before lizard release would be appropriate to estimate baseline lizard numbers because that allows you to demonstrate that you have improved lizard populations once salvaged lizards are added to the habitat. CW and NF consider baseline monitoring should be undertaken before release, once the habitat is in the condition intended for receiving lizards, so that resident occupancy and habitat use are understood before translocated animals are added.

2. The following facts are not agreed:
    a. TP considers that there is contingency provided for salvage of a high number of lizards via the ability to add more rock piles/log stacks and predator control to provide lizard habitat within the release area.
    b. CW and NF do not agree. CW has not reviewed any LMP updates that identify any monitoring outcomes that would trigger contingency actions, other than relocating all unexpected species to another offsite location that has not been surveyed.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. The following assumptions are agreed in relation to this matter:
    a. Grazed pasture does not provide suitable permanent habitat for lizards.
    b. Rank pasture does provide lizard habitat.
    c. Any salvaged lizards would be released into rank pasture which has been planted with lizard suitable shrub species.

EXPERT OPINIONS

1. The following expert opinions were expressed in relation to this matter:
    a. NF and CW consider that the carrying capacity of the existing habitat has not been assessed. The normal process would be to carry out a pre-release survey to inform that assessment. NF noted that the vegetation currently comprises grazed pasture with some shrubs and scattered vegetation and could be occupied by lizards. CW and NF do not consider gross area alone to be a quantitative carrying-capacity assessment. Carrying capacity requires consideration of resident lizard abundance and habitat use, resource availability, refugia, vegetation structure, connectivity and predator pressure.

    b. TP's view is that potentially suitable habitat makes up <5% of the release site, rather it comprises c. 95% grazed pasture. A pre-

release survey would not assist because the habitat is grazed pasture, it would also be hard to do whilst the area continues to be grazed by livestock.

c. TP's view is that carrying capacity has been assessed quantitatively by measuring the extent of the release sites which currently do not provide any habitat for lizards. This quantifies the amount of habitat created versus the amount removed. On that basis there is more habitat being created than being removed, and therefore effects on lizards will be positive.

d. CW's view is that planting only 20% of the area with indigenous species is insufficient. Rats and mice will invade rank grass which poses a predation risk to future lizards. Ways to achieve good lizard habitat via planting would use native species such as flax, pōhuehue and the like. He would expect the receiving site to be predominantly indigenous vegetation, with sufficient connected ground cover, refugia and structural complexity to support both resident and translocated lizards over time. The concern is not that rank grass cannot provide skink habitat, but that planting only 20% of the release area has not been justified against measurable habitat requirements or long-term predator pressure.

e. TP confirmed that the goal is a mosaic of habitats including rank grass which he considers ideal lizard habitat. TP disagrees that the area should be 100% planted with indigenous species. Rank grass provides suitable habitat for copper skink and northern grass skink, and that has been proven at this site, and throughout the ED, where these species currently occur.

f. The extent of habitat restoration is still based on an assumption that lizard habitat is confined to 3,500m^2, which is in dispute. On that basis the extent of habitat restoration is insufficient. The

claimed habitat gain also depends on the disputed 3,500 m2 impact estimate. If the source habitat is materially larger, a 2.5x area ratio is correspondingly overstated and does not, by itself, demonstrate sufficient receiving-site capacity or a positive outcome.

UNCERTAINTIES

1. CW and NF consider material uncertainty remains regarding resident lizard abundance, current and future carrying capacity, the time required for the release habitat to become functional, and the contingency required if capture numbers exceed assumptions. These matters were not resolved in conferencing.

IMPORTANCE

1. The application relies on salvage and relocation of lizards to mitigate effects that cannot be avoided. Determining the extent and quality of potential relocation sites and providing contingency should more lizards be salvaged than expected is relevant to ascertaining whether the effects management hierarchy has been appropriately applied in accordance with the relevant policy documents (particularly the NPS-IB).

ISSUE 6 – Adequacy of the Lizard Management Plan

FACTS

1. The following facts are agreed in relation to this matter:
    a. The LMP was updated 7 August 2026 – CW and NF haven't seen this version. Updates include:
        i. Salvage over five days instead of three;
        ii. No lizards for three consecutive days is the trigger to stop;

iii. Copper skinks to be released into Area 1, two log stacks are to be created initially with an additional 1/10 animals salvaged subsequently;
iv. Bait station spacing reduced to 25m;
v. More details provided about the grazing retirement process of areas intended to provide habitat for lizards;
vi. Pest control approach;
vii. Habitat performance monitoring;
viii. Adaptive management;
ix. Animal welfare/euthanasia.

b. Following on from discussions with the applicant's project team the day before conferencing, TP confirmed during the conference that an additional c. 2.4ha has been identified to be enhanced to provide permanent lizard habitat.
c. This was the first time CW and NF had heard this and they will need time to consider the implications.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. No assumptions were identified in relation to this matter:

EXPERT OPINIONS

The following expert opinions were expressed in relation to this matter:

1. CW and NF consider that the LMP should include:
    a. Baseline survey for release sites;
    b. Extent of planting in release sites;
    c. Use of a variety of lizard capture devices at suitable density to salvage lizards so as to maximise chances of capture (cf relying on one method);
    d. Include habitats that have not been surveyed, but could be suitable for lizards; and
    e. Provide for machine assisted destructive searches through the entire area of potential habitat with triggers that reduce effort if no lizards found. Without inclusion of this the salvage is insufficient.

f. The definition of ‘potential habitat’ needs to be updated since many potential habitats have not been considered or surveyed.
g. measurable receiver-site habitat and performance standards, monitoring for all relocated copper skink irrespective of capture number, and predetermined contingency for unexpectedly high capture numbers or receiver-site failure.

2. CW and NF consider that the key issue is one of scale – the application creates an adverse effect that is not addressed in the effects management proposed. The assumption is that lizards are not present when there isn’t enough evidence to confirm that. The LMP's claimed mitigation quantum remains tied to the disputed 3,500 m2 impact estimate. Until the impact habitat is reliably defined, it cannot be demonstrated that the proposed receiving habitat restoration is commensurate with the effect.

3. TP considers that the proposal will create 2.5x the extent of the current lizard habitat and adequately address effects. He agrees to a baseline survey for release sites. The LMP already includes a variety of capture devices (ACOs, pitfall traps) at a high density (5m spacing). Further, he agrees to include machine assisted destructive searches in the LMP.

4. TP disagrees that increased planting should be undertaken, since rank grass provides ideal complex habitat for copper skink and northern grass skink.

5. TP also disagrees with the assertion that habitats have not been surveyed.

UNCERTAINTIES

1. CW and NF consider material uncertainties remain until they have reviewed the 7 August 2026 LMP and the additional c. 2.4 ha enhancement proposal is defined in terms of location, current condition, planting extent, timing, pest control, performance targets and monitoring. These matters were not resolved in conferencing.

IMPORTANCE

1. The applicant is reliant on the lizard management plan (LMP) to manage adverse effects of the project. The LMP needs to be commensurate with the level of effects and designed to address effects to the extent practicable.

ISSUE 7 – Pest Control Programme

FACTS

1. The following facts are agreed in relation to this matter:
    a. The applicant proposes two years of mammalian pest control at release sites following the final lizard being released (i.e., will extend for period of releases plus two years) to allow lizards to establish and 10 years of cat management at all the release sites and the QEII covenant site.

2. The following facts are not agreed in relation to this matter:

EXPERT OPINIONS

1. CW and NF consider this is inadequate and doesn't seem to be linked to anything other than temporary survivorship of released individuals. To be sufficient the pest control should take account of survival of founders and at least two breeding seasons to allow future generations to establish/expand. The duration is also typically tied to vegetation establishment to ensure suitable habitat is created. This would generally be a term of at least five years after lizard relocations and restoration plantings have been completed. CW and NF consider the relevant endpoint is not merely survival of founders for two years, but establishment of a persistent population in suitable habitat. Pest control should continue until predefined population and habitat-establishment criteria are met, with at least five years as a minimum given that the receiving habitat is being created or enhanced. CW also considers that a fixed 10-year cat management period does not address the ongoing predation source created by permanent residential land use, and that durable cat and rodent controls are

required for as long as the receiving habitats are relied upon to support the affected lizard populations.

2. TP based the pest control programme on his experience monitoring Lincolnshire Farm where a population was established and doing well within two years because it had mature, complex habitat. It is that complex habitat that is the key, two years provides an opportunity for founders to establish and breed within complex habitat. In TP's view, the lizard management and approach follows evidence based conclusions at Lincolnshire Farm, Sasanoff View and Jamaica Rise, all within the Wellington region. After three years of monitoring, these projects have demonstrated successful translocations and benefits to the affected lizard species. The approach adopted here follows those approaches which have proven to be successful given the highly modified and low-quality habitat on site. He is confident that by increasing the extent and quality of lizard habitats at this site that there will be a measurable benefit to lizards. He does not agree with CW and NF's assumptions regarding vegetation, that in his opinion provides sub-optimal or no suitable habitat for lizards should be adopted and applied in the effects management.

3. Where CW and NF have made recommendations for increased salvage effort and other parts of the lizard management process TP has adopted those and accepted those recommendations in the updated LMP.

4. TP is willing to accept further recommendations provided as part of this process including:
    i. Undertaking a baseline survey of the release sites
    ii. Using machine assisted salvage
    iii. Undertaking two nights of spotlighting within the isolated fragment of native trees for arboreal lizards
    iv. Taking a more precautionary approach to the amount of habitat affected, even when I do not consider it suitable for lizards.

UNCERTAINTIES

1. There were no agreed uncertainties applying to this issue.

2. We do not agree that the following uncertainties apply to this issue:

    a. CW and NF consider that there is too much uncertainty in the project to have confidence that there won't be significant negative effects on lizard populations. This includes uncertainty regarding the long-term effects of increased domestic cats and commensal rodents on small retained and created habitats, and whether the proposed control periods are sufficient to maintain population persistence.

    b. NF noted she is concerned about construction effects and how they will be effectively managed to protect lizards during construction. The assumptions of lizard distribution are based on insufficient survey effort and it is unclear how the applicant will respond adaptively to things that cannot be predicted. These uncertainties could have profound effects on the staging of the project and survival of lizards. The high levels of uncertainty mean this project is high risk for the applicant.

IMPORTANCE

1. Mammalian predators are an important agent of decline for native lizard species including, but not limited to, cats, rats and mice. Sustained effective control of these predators is required to maintain lizard populations at most mainland locations. Accordingly, predator control is integral to the long-term suitability and carrying capacity of the receiving sites and to whether salvage can reasonably be expected to mitigate population-level effects.

References

We have referred to the following documents in our discussions:

- Crisp P, Hitchmough R, Newman D, Adams L, Lennon O, Woolley C, Hulme-Moir A, Bell T, Herbert S, Spearpoint O and Nelson N. 2023. Conservation status of reptile species in the Wellington region. Greater Wellington Regional Council, Publication No. GW/ESCI-G-23/03, Wellington.

- https://srarnz.com/conferences-2/srarnz-conference-2026/#programme

- https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/science-and-technical/drds353entire.pdf

- https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/science-and-technical/drds369entire.pdf

Signed

Tony Payne

Chris Wedding

26-08-26

Nyree Fea