

Report 15.455  
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Committee Environment Committee  
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## National Pest Pet Biosecurity Accord

### 1. Purpose

For the Committee to recommend that Greater Wellington Regional Council join the National Pest Pet Biosecurity Accord.

### 2. Summary

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) has been invited by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to join the National Pest Pet Biosecurity Accord (the Accord). The other participants in the Accord include other regional councils, the Department of Conservation (DOC), the Pet Industry Association, and the NZ Companion Animal Council.

This collective group aims to reduce the risk of exotic animals, birds, reptiles and fish that are kept as pets becoming established as wild populations in New Zealand. The Accord will focus on species with invasive potential. The Accord does not include domestic cats and dogs.

The Accord is modelled on the National Pest Plants Accord (NPPA) which has been operating successfully since 2001. GWRC is an active participant in the existing NPPA. Many of the activities proposed in the Accord are undertaken by GWRC Biosecurity staff when meeting the requirements of the NPPA. This existing involvement means that the costs of participating in the Accord can be covered by our current resourcing.

### 3. Report

#### 3.1 Background

The New Zealand pet industry encompasses a wide range of species, many of which are potentially invasive. The majority of species have been introduced legally, but there is a growing trend of pet smuggling both in and out of New Zealand.

MPI, DOC and regional council staff are encountering pet species for sale or in ownership with uncertainty around the legality of their ownership or their potential impact in the wild. An accurate species list is required for both retailers and regulators to clearly identify which species can be legally owned in New Zealand.

With our increasing urban population and greater ethnic diversity, attitudes towards pet ownership are also changing. Reluctance to euthanize problem or unwanted animals and cultural traditions that involve the release of birds or fish are examples of the growing risk to our native ecosystems.

Because of these issues MPI proposed the development of the Accord to better regulate the pet trade in New Zealand.

### **3.2 The Accord**

MPI, DOC, representatives of the pet trade and regional councils have worked together to develop the Accord. GWRC has been involved in the development of the document since 2011. The Accord is attached as **Attachment 1**. A list of prohibited pet species is under development.

The intent of the Accord is to prevent species kept as pets from establishing wild populations and becoming pests. This is largely through education and awareness around responsible retailing and pet ownership of risky species. Compliance activity will involve inspections of retailers, both physical outlets and online, for the trade or sale of prohibited species. This is similar to the current NPPA process for invasive pest plants.

Under the Accord, regional councils will, with the support of MPI, carry out inspections within their region to prevent the sale of species listed in the Accord. Biosecurity staff will be given powers, as Authorised Persons, by MPI to undertake regulatory activities under the Accord.

Our Biosecurity staff currently complete annual compliance inspections to satisfy Regional Pest Management Strategy and NPPA purposes. During these inspections they visit approximately 100 retailers across the region. Many of these outlets sell both animals and plants.

It is proposed that each of the parties involved in the Accord will meet their own costs. As GWRC is already committed to routine inspections there would be little additional cost meeting the new compliance requirements. The proposed Accord is a logical extension of the NPPA, with significant potential benefit for the region.

## **4. The decision-making process and significance**

The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002.

### **4.1 Significance of the decision**

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking into account the Council's significance and engagement policy and decision-making guidelines.

Due to the procedural nature of this decision officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record, outlining consideration of the decision-making process, is required in this instance.

## **5. Engagement**

Engagement on this matter is not necessary.

## **6. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

- 1. **Receives** the report.*
- 2. **Notes** the content of the report.*
- 3. **Recommends** that Council formally join the National Pest Pet Biosecurity Accord.*

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**Attachment 1: National Pest Pet Biosecurity Accord**