



Summary of Key Ecology Matters for the Consent Hearing

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1.0 Introduction

The applicant has provided two sets of ecological evidence, addressing avifauna (Dr Leigh Bull) and other ecological matters (Dr Vaughan Keesing).

Summary comments are provided below on the key ecological matters.

2.0 Avifauna

Dr Bull's evidence addresses all matters in a satisfactory manner, and there are now no areas of disagreement.

3.0 Lizards and Invertebrates

Lizards

A lizard survey has not been undertaken so the applicant cannot confirm whether there are lizards at the site, even though it is potentially very likely that lizards could be present.

Draft consent conditions state that “a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist is present at the start and throughout the duration of vegetation clearance to inspect the area for indigenous lizards or katipo”.

However, Advice Note 8 states:

8. Should the presence of indigenous lizard or invertebrates be confirmed by the pre-works survey referred to in Condition 25, the consent holder is advised that a wildlife permit under the Wildlife Act 1953 from the Department of Conservation is required before any land disturbance works at the site. This permit authorises the catching, handling, releasing, and incidental killing of wildlife species, including lizards. The activity must be conducted in accordance with the obtained permit.

The Advice Note indicates, correctly, that a Wildlife Act Authority is required “before any land disturbance works at the site”.

Any indigenous lizards found at the site will need to be salvaged and moved to a safe relocation site, which will need to be identified for the Wildlife Act Authority.

Invertebrates

Vegetation and habitats at the site are potentially suitable for katipo spider, which have a national classification of At Risk-Declining. Management of any katipo potentially present at the site will require measures like those required for lizard management.



4.0 Dune Planting

Vegetation management on dunes is totally contingent on the presence of adequate sand substrate, but sand management is not addressed in the draft consent conditions.

The applicant is proposing to provide a 'Remediation Planting Plan (RPP)', as addressed in draft Conditions 31-43. These requirements have some serious deficiencies:

- Areas to be monitored and subject to ongoing maintenance need to be mapped.
- Targets for planting and cover are not appropriate due to the short term proposed, as discussed below.
- The requirement to plant is limited to a maximum term of two years and two storm events. However, it takes at least two years to get spinifex established and for the plants to be actively accreting sand, and erosional storm events occur every year.
- Consent conditions need to allow for the time it takes for planted spinifex to establish and to extend runners.
- The 'maintenance' term for plantings of two years is too short, and foredune vegetation will require monitoring and maintenance (i.e. spinifex planting) for the life of the structure.
- The proposed RRP does not address the area to the south of the structure, which may well experience adverse effects.
- The proposed RRP will not address the damaging effects of pedestrian traffic on the dunes. Measures need to be provided to limit pedestrian traffic from the adjacent houses and the 'general public' using the beach and dunes.

5.0 Other Matters

Repositioning of the proposed structure

Moving the structure further inland would be ecologically beneficial as it will enable the foredune to be wider at the southern end, with a greater likelihood that a cover of spinifex can be maintained, which would improve the resilience of the overall dune system.

Term of the consent, if granted

Active management of vegetation is required for the life of the structure, which apparently has a design life of 50 years. However, there could be considerable change in the coastal environment at Waihi Beach in general over the next 50 years, and at the project site, so it would be advisable to have a shorter consent term, to enable adaptive management of the structure and its effects, e.g. 25 years.

