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Attn: Board Support Officer

Summary relating to the Conservation Board's position on the Stewardship Land review.

28th March 2025

Rapporteur: Dr Mike Legge, Chair.

Background

In May 2021 the Government made the decision to review the reclassification of Stewardship Land. Independent National Panels were established to provide recommendations on revised land classifications for Stewardship Land in the Western South Island and Northern South Island regions. A Ngāi Tahu appointed Mana Whenua Panel was subsequently established to complement and worked in conjunction with the National Panels.

Approximately 84% of land on the West Coast is Public Conservation Land and approximately 35% of this is Stewardship Land. At the start of the review process (November 2021) the West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservation Board (the Board) decided not to make a submission on the process as the role of the Board at that time was unclear (i.e., it was unclear whether there would be any direct involvement of the Board with the review process). However, the Board was kept up to date with developments and progress by the Western South Island National Panel and the Mana Whenua Panel when appropriate, as well as the Department of Conservation. In addition, the then Chair (Dr Mike Legge), attended and read the submissions made to the public hearings on the West Coast and reported back to the Board. During this time the Board concurred that the process being followed was appropriate and provided adequate opportunity for public input and discussion. Despite the lengthy process the Board agreed that it was kept well informed.

Current (2025) considerations

During the review process the Panels considered 504 areas of land classified as Stewardship Land. The current Board has been informed that there are 576 recommendations relating to Reclassification. It is understood that the intention is to reclassify 644.016 hectares of Stewardship Land. While the current Board does not have the specific details of the Reclassification or whether the recommendations relate to "*national or international importance*" (i.e., where the proposed areas are located within the Public Conservation Land). The draft "Memo: Stewardship Land Reclassification, West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservation Board Input" (the Memo) was circulated to all Board members prior to the Board and planning meetings held on 19-20 March 2025. While the constitution of the current Board is different to that of the 2021 Board, sufficient information was provided to the current Board to enable discussion of the Memo and background to the review process. Subsequently, the current Board supports the Reclassification proposals provided in the Memo. It was also noted that some areas were identified (specific areas not stated) for disposal but subject to survey. The Board requests that it is kept informed of this process. The Board also noted that the Minister's decisions may have relevance to the Conservation Management Strategy review currently underway on the West Coast and requests to be informed if this occurs.

Michael Legge (Dr)
Chair, West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservation Board.