



PREDATOR FREE 2050
TUIA TE TĀIAO

Innovate for a predator-free New Zealand

Predator Free 2050 Strategy (2026–2030)
Summary of submissions



**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

Cover: Takahē release in the Rees valley. *Photo: Samuel Purdie*

**Innovate for a predator-free New Zealand: Predator Free 2050
Strategy (2026–2030) – Summary of submissions**

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This report incorporates summaries generated using Microsoft 365 Copilot and Copilot Chat, generative AI tools. We read all submissions, tagged related comments to themes, identified key insights based on engagement and used Copilot to draft short summaries. All AI-assisted content was read, checked and verified by the Predator Free 2050 team to ensure accuracy and relevance.



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Pihoihi / Auckland Island pipit.

Photo: David Bundock

Executive summary

Predator Free 2050 (PF2050) is a national programme with the goal of eradicating rats, mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels) and possums from Aotearoa New Zealand by 2050 so that native biodiversity and communities can thrive. The national PF2050 strategy is revised every 5 years, with the next strategy due in 2026.

From May to June 2025, the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai sought feedback through public consultation to inform the revised strategy, receiving **3,398 submissions** from individuals, Imi, Iwi, Hapū, community groups, non-governmental organisations, local government bodies and others. The Predator Free New Zealand Trust helped to facilitate this submission process through an online survey. The review process gathered feedback on PF2050's proposed goals for 2030, the enablers and barriers to participation in PF2050, and the target species list.

Overall, the submissions showed that there was **strong support for the proposed 2030 goals**. Over 80% of those who completed a support/oppose survey agreed that the 10 proposed goals should be the focus for advancing PF2050 between now and 2030.

Submitters also suggested improvements to the strategy, including wording changes, clearer definitions, measurable targets, robust monitoring systems and better communication of progress.

A significant theme of the consultation was the **strong support for a change in the strategic approach to cats**. Submitters either requested that feral cats be added to the target species list or sought enhanced ways to control feral cats and/or manage companion cats.

Submitters also called for sustained and accessible funding to enable effective community participation. Feedback highlighted uncertain funding as the most significant barrier to participation in PF2050, with many calling for increased, simplified and more secure funding streams. There was also a desire for enhanced regional coordination, technical training and support to address volunteer burnout.

The feedback also highlighted that **the tools used in PF2050 are important**. Submitters supported a focus on new tools and innovation and called for science breakthroughs, which would expand the eradication toolbox with innovative, humane, cost-effective and scalable technologies.

Submitters shared that while attracting third-party, non-Crown investment is worthwhile, the **Crown must remain the primary funder and responsibility holder for PF2050**.

Māori and Moriori submitters emphasised the **need for sustained, equitable funding, Māori-led workforce development and a focus on Treaty-based governance models**. These elements were described as essential for enabling meaningful Imi, Iwi and Hapū involvement in PF2050.

Introduction

Purpose

Predator Free 2050 (PF2050) is a national initiative to eradicate rats, possums and mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels) from Aotearoa New Zealand by 2050 to protect native biodiversity and restore ecological resilience. The programme has inspired New Zealanders like no other conservation goal has before – Imi, Iwi, Hapū, landowners, communities, businesses, philanthropists, schools and thousands of volunteers have all contributed to this effort.

Innovate for a predator-free New Zealand: Predator Free 2050 Strategy (2026–2030) guides the work of all organisations and people involved in PF2050.¹ Its accompanying *National Action Plan 2026–2030* contains an overview of the programme's current issues, actions and goals for 2030, helping to direct activity and funding from non-governmental sources. This report provides a review of the submissions received on the *Predator Free 2050: Strategy review discussion document* (the discussion document).² It summarises the responses to questions posed in the discussion document and includes related insights from the feedback that was received.

About the consultation

The consultation ran from 5 May to 30 June 2025 and was conducted alongside the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai (DOC) review of *Te Mana o Te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Plan*.³

The process involved:

-  5 regional meetings held across the country with 294 attendees
-  2 public webinars with 211 attendees
-  14 stakeholder meetings
-  2,495 submissions via Predator Free New Zealand Trust (PFNZ Trust)
-  40+ mentions in national and regional media
-  Attendance at Fieldays
-  Online meetings with 25+ PF2050 landscape projects

¹ doc.govt.nz/pf-strategy-documents

² doc.govt.nz/pf2050discussion

³ doc.govt.nz/te-mana-o-te-taiao-implementation-plan



(Re)storying the Possum wānanga (gathering), March 2024, Wellington. Photo: Te Tira Whakamātaki

Consultation sought feedback on the following:

1. PF2050's proposed goals for 2030

Feedback was sought on each of the 10 goals for 2030. These goals were spread across the following four PF2050 focus areas:⁴

- **Mobilise for action:** Inspire and empower New Zealanders and communities to take action towards achieving PF2050.
- **Maintain the gains:** Maintain predator-free areas and continue suppression efforts to protect threatened species, while supporting community-led groups to sustain their work.
- **Innovate for eradication:** Advance affordable, humane and socially acceptable tools and techniques to build a toolbox and adaptable blueprints for large-scale predator elimination across diverse landscapes.
- **Prepare to accelerate:** Ensure that the foundations are in place to transition from local to national elimination, with clear actions, costs and benefits, and community readiness.

2. The target species list

Over the past 5 years, concerns have been raised that by leaving some predator species off the list, biodiversity benefits will not be maximised. Within the discussion document, the public were provided with information about the current feasibility of eradicating predator species at a national scale, including feral cats, hedgehogs and mice. DOC proposed retaining the current list (rats, possums and mustelids), and submitters were invited to share their views on alternative approaches and the potential benefits and risks of including feral cats.

3. Enablers and barriers of participation in PF2050

Communities play a critical role in achieving the PF2050 goal, so the public consultation included targeted questions that were designed to better understand the types of support individuals and groups need to engage effectively, as well as the barriers that may prevent their involvement in the programme.

⁴ The descriptors for these focus areas have been revised since the discussion document was published.

Summary of submissions

Who submitted

A total of 3,398 submissions were received during the consultation period. Submissions were received through three channels, which are shown below in Table 1.

Submissions were classified by submitter category, shown in Table 2.

Submitters who responded to the support/oppose questions, provided free-form written feedback and identified their submitter category were grouped accordingly. However, not all submitters supplied category information or additional feedback.

Insights from selected submitter categories have been incorporated under each goal and topic. These highlight perspectives that either were underrepresented in terms of submission volume or offered particularly valuable insights that were relevant to the goal or topic.

Table 1. How we heard from submitters

Submission method	Number of submissions
Free-form submissions via print or email to DOC	138
Print or online surveys to DOC	765
Online template submissions via the PFNZ Trust	2,495
Total	3,398

Table 2. Who we heard from

Submitter category	Number of submissions in category
Imi, Iwi, Hapū and Māori organisations	8
Businesses and the primary sector	10
Experts and scientists	24
Local government and statutory bodies	28
Community groups and non-governmental organisations	126
Individuals	691
Submitters using the PFNZ Trust template	2,495

What we asked

The purpose of consultation was to receive feedback on the three key areas outlined in the discussion document:

- PF2050's proposed 2030 goals
- The target species list
- The enablers and barriers of participation in PF2050

All questions were optional. The questions from both the discussion document and the survey are included in this document and organised by section. For questions such as 'What do you think of this?', respondents could choose from the following options: strongly support, support, neutral, oppose, strongly oppose, unsure or leave the question unanswered. These are referred to as support/oppose survey questions. Respondents also had the option to add free-text comments.

Insights from Imi, Iwi, Hapū and Māori organisations

Eight submitters identified as Imi, Iwi, Hapū and Māori organisations. Key insights from their feedback are summarised below. Their detailed feedback is also reflected throughout the summaries for goals and topics in this document.

Focused support is needed

Submitters emphasised the need for sustained equitable funding, Māori-led workforce development and genuine Treaty-based governance models. These elements were described as essential to enabling meaningful Iwi and Hapū involvement in PF2050.

Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and Māori leadership is critical

Submitters described empowering Māori-led conservation as critical to achieving ecological and cultural outcomes. Submitters called for increased funding, Treaty-based governance models and recognition of mātauranga Māori. This shift from Crown-led to Treaty-based, community-driven conservation was described as necessary and overdue.

The target species list needs expanding

Most Māori organisations and Iwi and Hapū advocated for the list to be expanded to reflect ecological realities and Māori and Moriori priorities.

Barriers to Māori participation need removing

Submitters identified systemic barriers that must be dismantled to allow for increased Māori participation. These barriers include decision-making structures, underfunding, lack of recognition for mātauranga Māori and exclusion from leadership roles.

Feedback on the overall set of goals

What we asked

- Are these 2030 goals the ones we should focus on to advance PF2050 between now and 2030?
- What do you think of this set of 2030 goals? (Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this set of goals? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

There was strong overall support for each of the 10 goals proposed within the discussion document. The proposal to retain the target species list generated a mix of support and opposition.

Of the 731 respondents who answered the question about the overall set of goals, 84% supported or strongly supported them, 7% were neutral, 7% opposed or strongly opposed them and 2% were unsure.

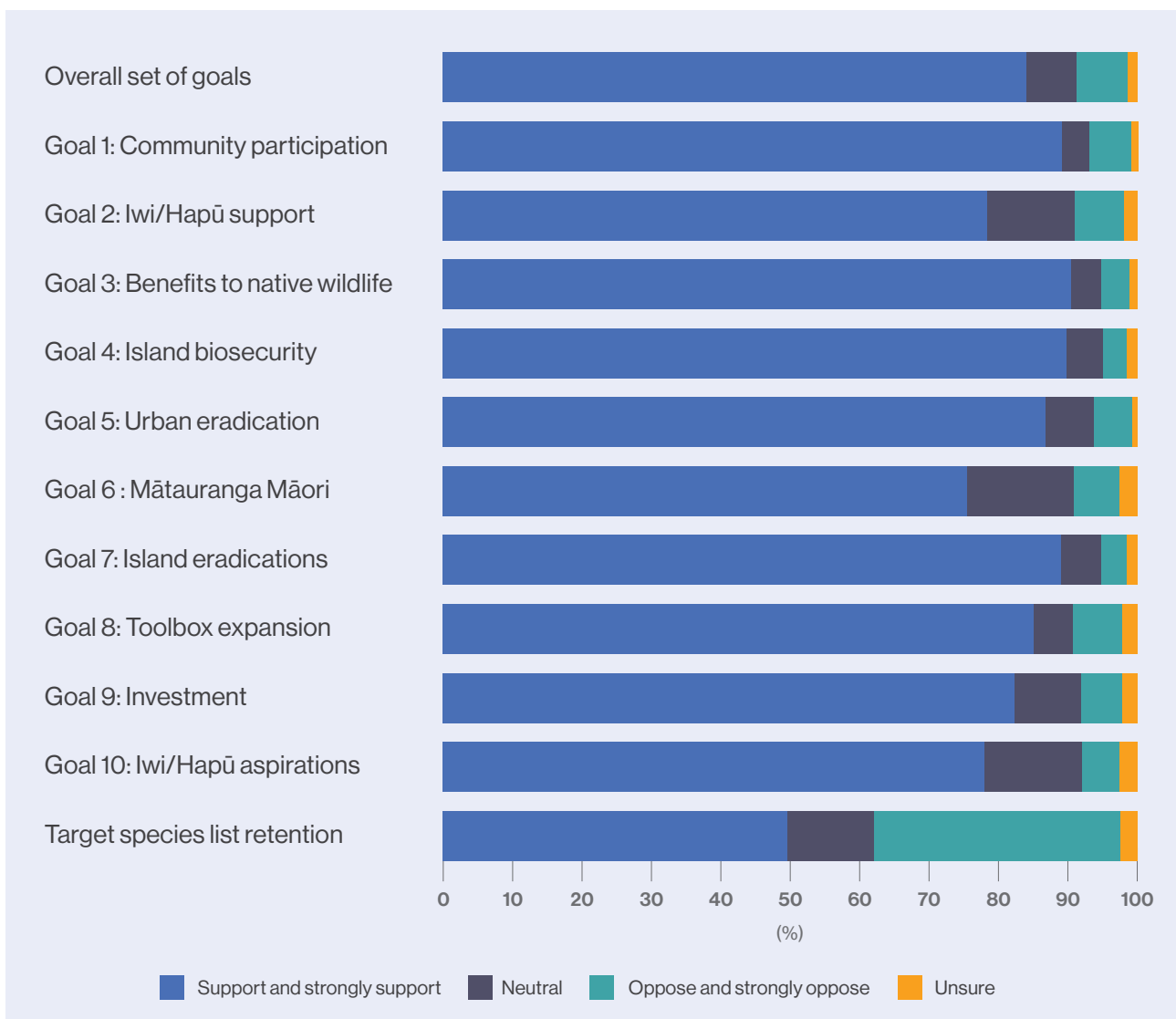


Figure 1. Survey responses on the set of proposed goals and target species list

The following key topics emerged from the survey responses and free-form comments about what submitters would change and why in regard to the set of goals, individual goals, barriers to participation and the target species list.



Funding and support

Submitters called for increased, sustained and accessible funding to enable effective community participation. Key suggestions included increased and ongoing financial support, access to essential resources (e.g. traps, bait, paid coordinators), simplified funding processes and reduced reliance on unpaid volunteers – all of which are seen as critical to maintaining long-term momentum.



Measurement and clarity

Submitters called for clearer definitions, measurable targets and robust monitoring systems to improve transparency and accountability. Key suggestions included defining vague terms like 'significant increases', 'demonstrable contributions' and 'satisfaction'; establishing co-designed indicators and cost-benefit analysis; and setting clear benchmarks for biosecurity standards and investment levels. Without these improvements, some submitters felt the goals were too vague and difficult to assess.



Ambitious targets

Submitters described the current goals as lacking ambition and called for bolder, more inclusive targets. Suggestions included raising the community participation goal from 25% to between 30% and 50%, including on all offshore island eradication efforts, incorporating all three proposed toolbox expansion areas in Goal 8 (species-specific toxins, targeted bait and breakthrough science laboratory concept for rat or stoat elimination), and expanding the scope for urban eradication work to include smaller towns and districts – not just major cities.



Governance and Māori partnership

Submitters sought genuine Treaty-based partnerships that empower Iwi and Hapū leadership and integrate mātauranga Māori into project design and decision making. Some submissions supported recognising mātauranga Māori as central to planning, priorities and values, as well as inclusive governance structures and project design. Some also highlighted the opportunity for all New Zealanders to participate in the movement, regardless of ethnicity.



Inclusion of cats in the target species list

Submitters supported the explicit inclusion of feral cats in the goals, citing their impact on native wildlife and the need for ethical and humane management strategies.



Community-led action and long-term impacts

Submitters highlighted the need for tailored approaches, authentic engagement, increased and sustained resourcing, broader community involvement, and recognition of social licence. They also highlighted the importance of ecological restoration through fenced sanctuaries, large-scale landscape projects or regional partnerships.



New goals and broader vision

Submitters proposed new goals or sought stronger national coordination, clearer social licence objectives, and/or greater emphasis on innovation and education.



FOCUS AREA 1

Mobilise for action

Inspire and empower New Zealanders and communities to take action towards achieving PF2050.

GOAL 1

By 2030, community participation in predator control activities has increased by 25% (from 2025 baseline), driven by active support, such as funding, resources, expert advice and training to ensure their success.

What we asked

- What do you think of this goal? (Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this goal? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

Of the 752 respondents who answered this survey question, 89% supported or strongly supported the goal, 4% were neutral, 6% opposed or strongly opposed it and 1% were unsure.

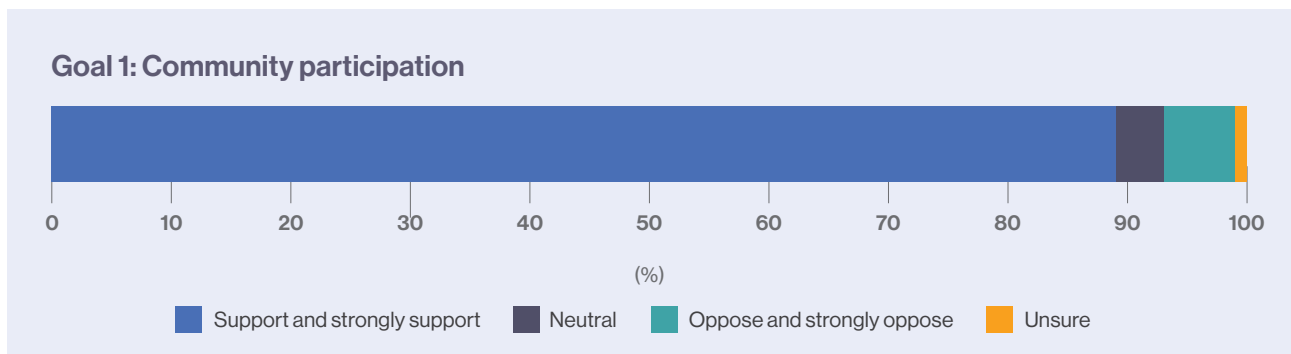


Figure 2. Goal 1 – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 33% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 294 comments. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insight

Community participation is important – 66 comments

Submitters called for better access to funding, training, expert advice and coordination, stressing that community-led efforts must be backed by national leadership, inclusive planning and recognition of the diverse contributions communities make.

Additional feedback

Continued participation requires ongoing support – 28 comments

Some submitters emphasised that success will hinge on meaningful, sustained support. Submitters raised concerns about the effectiveness, clarity and funding of this goal. They suggested that successful projects will need continued support; participation should be meaningful and well-resourced; and accountability, ecological impact and strategic alignment with DOC's efforts will be essential for long-term success.

Insights by submitter category

Imi, Iwi, Hapū and Māori organisations – 5/8 submitters (63%) provided feedback

Submitters stated that increasing participation in predator control will only succeed if it is Māori-led, Treaty-based, and supported by long-term funding, training and decision-making authority. They opposed reliance on volunteer labour and called for structural support, Treaty-based governance models and recognition of mātauranga Māori to ensure meaningful and sustained engagement.

Community groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – 81/126 submitters (64%) provided feedback

Submitters suggested that increasing participation in predator control by 25% is achievable, but only if it is backed by long-term funding, paid coordinators, access to expert advice and technology, and streamlined support systems. Recreation and hunting groups emphasised the need to recognise volunteer contributions and integrate recreational hunters into planning and delivery. Whether representing an NGO, local community group or other interest group, submitters raised burnout, fragmented leadership and complex funding processes as key barriers to increased participation. It was also emphasised that growth must be sustainable, inclusive and supported by national coordination, ethical practices and local empowerment.

Individuals – 175/691 submitters (25%) provided feedback

Submitters stated that meaningful increases in community participation will only occur if individuals are actively supported through sustained funding, inclusive access to tools and training, and expert ecological guidance. Financial barriers, lack of coordination and limited access to equipment were repeatedly cited as key obstacles. Other submitters noted the need for regional hubs, paid facilitators and robust monitoring systems, reflecting a demand for structured, well-resourced support to achieve the 25% increase.

GOAL 2

By 2030, Iwi and Hapū leaders are supported and enabled to actively participate in PF2050 projects, including in leadership and decision making.

What we asked

- What do you think of this goal? (Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this goal? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

Of the 746 respondents who answered this survey question, 78% supported or strongly supported the goal, 13% were neutral, 7% opposed or strongly opposed it and 2% were unsure.

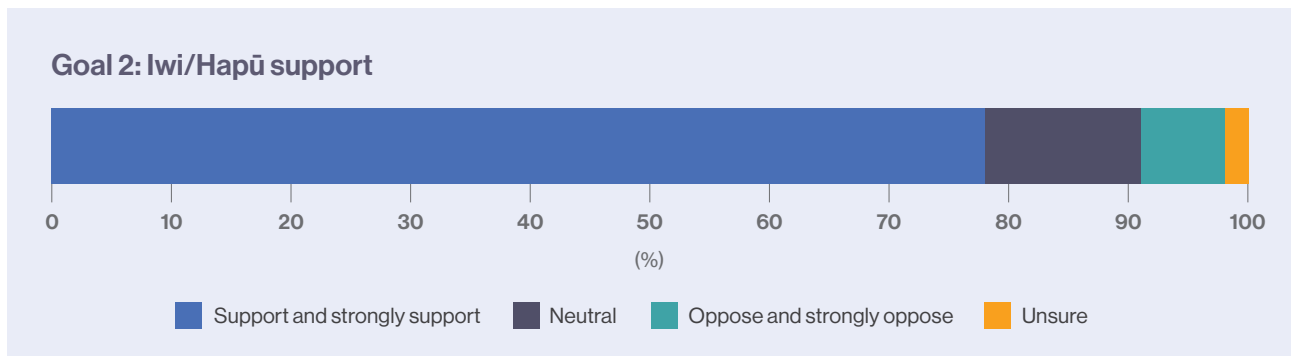


Figure 3. Goal 2 – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 24% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 218 comments. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insights

Iwi and Hāpū leadership and collaboration are important – 111 comments

Many submitters highlighted the need to empower Iwi and Hapū leaders and ensure their genuine involvement in both project leadership and decision making. Submitters noted that enabling active participation will require clear pathways for leadership roles and influence within PF2050 projects, not just support. Genuine participation will require sustained investment, fair compensation and co-design rather than token consultation. Some submitters noted that Iwi and Hapū leaders bring long-term environmental commitment and cultural knowledge to projects but also face resource constraints and competing priorities. There was also support for using

collaborative approaches, integrating Māori values, and fostering partnerships with local councils, landowners and wider communities to achieve PF2050 goals.

Opportunities are needed for all New Zealanders to participate –

59 comments

Some submitters questioned why Iwi and Hapū leaders should receive targeted support or roles in PF2050 projects. Some felt that this could risk division or inefficiency, while others noted the need for clear targets, accountability and recognition of existing contributions, emphasising that unity and equal opportunity for all communities would best serve the goals of predator eradication.

Insights by submitter category

Imi, Iwi, Hapū and Māori organisations – 5/8 submitters (63%) provided feedback

Submitters emphasised that to truly enable leadership and decision making in PF2050 projects, Māori must be supported through long-term funding, capability pathways and Treaty-based governance – participation will not be enough without structural change and recognition of tino rangatiratanga (self-determination).

Experts and scientists – 8/24 submitters (33%) provided feedback

Submitters suggested that supporting Iwi and Hapū leadership in PF2050 will involve more than vague goals – it will demand clear metrics, sustained funding and recognition of grassroots involvement. Co-design with Māori experts, investment in projects on Māori land and genuine outreach are essential to ensure that aspirations are realised across the rohe (area), not just by a few leaders.

Involvement in the predator-free movement

What we asked

- Are you involved in the predator-free movement? (Yes/no survey question)
- If you are already involved in predator-free work, what support do you or your group need to maintain the progress you have made? What barriers are there to being involved?
- If you are not already involved in predator-free work, what support or information would you need to get involved? What barriers are there to being involved?

What we heard

Of the 753 respondents who answered this survey question, 65% indicated they were involved in the predator-free movement and 35% indicated that they were not.

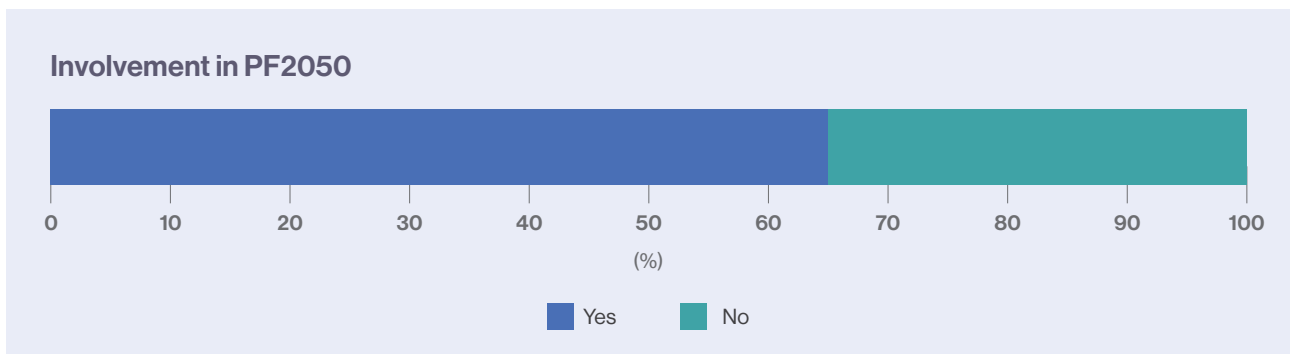


Figure 4. Involvement in the predator-free movement survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 69% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 626 comments. The questions were also asked in the PFNZ Trust template. The insights from those who provided feedback to DOC are summarised below, and the insights from those who provided feedback using the PFNZ Trust template are summarised in the *Insights by submitter category* section below and in detail on page 35.

Key insights for those involved in the predator-free movement

Ongoing accessible funding is needed –

338 comments

Submitters said that increased, ongoing, accessible funding and resources – especially for traps, bait and paid coordinators – enable participation in the predator-free movement, while the biggest barriers are financial costs, complex funding processes and over-reliance on unpaid volunteers, which make it hard to sustain long-term involvement and momentum.

Volunteer burnout and ageing is an issue –

149 comments

Submitters felt that involvement in the predator-free movement is limited by time and physical ability. Many submitters noted that volunteer burnout, ageing participants and the lack of paid support make it difficult to sustain engagement, while practical support like funding, paid coordinators and flexible roles for those with limited mobility were seen as essential for broader participation.

Practical support helps –

149 comments
Submitters felt that involvement in the predator-free movement is enabled by practical support such as funding, access to traps and engagement from regional councils, especially

for rural and private landowners. However, barriers include a lack of information about local initiatives, prohibitive costs, the possibility of reinvasion from uncontrolled neighbouring areas, and the need for more targeted policies and incentives to encourage widespread participation and collaboration among landowners and communities.

Connection and communication

improvements are needed – 129 comments

Submitters felt that involvement in the predator-free movement is enabled by clear communication, accessible information and strong community connections, while barriers include a lack of awareness, limited support or resources, bureaucratic hurdles and difficulty finding ways to participate at a local level. Submitters also mentioned that ongoing motivation and recognition of volunteer efforts will be important for sustaining engagement.

Additional feedback

Access to training, tools and advice enables participation – 110 comments

Submitters highlighted that involvement is enabled by access to training, tools, expert advice and on-the-ground guidance, especially for new volunteers or community groups.

Key insight for those not involved in the predator-free movement

Participation support and barriers for those not involved varies – 146 comments
Submitters felt that involvement is enabled by accessible information, local contacts, visible volunteer opportunities, and material support like traps and funding. However, barriers include lack of time, cost, limited knowledge, physical ability, ethical concerns about predator control methods and difficulty finding local groups or clear guidance on how to participate.

Insights by submitter category

Submitters using the PFNZ Trust template – 2,495 submitters provided feedback

Submitters identified that the support needed to maintain progress includes making funding easier to access and manage, providing long-term targeted support, and funding people, not just gear. The barriers to participation that were identified includes time constraints, burnout, difficulty accessing expertise and knowledge, and the challenge of making an impact. For further information, refer to page 35.

Imi, Iwi, Hapū and Māori organisations – 4/8 submitters (50%) provided feedback

Submitters emphasised that meaningful participation in PF2050 will require sustained Crown funding, Māori-led workforce development, authentic Treaty-based co-governance and recognition of mātauranga Māori. Barriers to involvement include colonial decision-making structures, underfunding, exclusion from leadership roles, and a lack of protection for Māori knowledge and data sovereignty.

Community groups and NGOs –

100/126 submitters (79%) provided feedback

Submitters suggested that for those not yet involved in PF2050, key support needs to include long-term funding, access to tools and expertise, recognition for potential contributions, and inclusive, humane approaches. Barriers to participation include volunteer burnout, complex funding systems, ethical concerns about lethal control methods, a lack of coordination and leadership, and limited opportunities for community groups or animal welfare-aligned groups to engage meaningfully.

Landscape projects and ecosanctuaries –

17/19 submitters (89%) provided feedback

Submitters in this sub-category, which sits under the community groups and NGOs category, emphasised the need for long-term and stable funding, formal recognition as core delivery partners, and better integration into the national PF2050 strategy. Barriers to involvement include fragmented coordination, a lack of access to innovation and exclusion from strategic planning – despite this group's proven role in community mobilisation, biodiversity recovery and tool development. Including sanctuaries and landscape projects in PF2050 more explicitly would unlock research, funding and scalable models for national success.

Individuals – 489/691 submitters (71%) provided feedback

Individual submitters said they need accessible funding, tools, training and expert support to participate in PF2050. Barriers to participation include cost, time constraints, lack of awareness, ethical concerns and limited coordination or leadership – especially for those outside formal groups or in underserved areas.



FOCUS AREA 2

Maintain the gains

Maintain predator-free areas and continue suppression efforts to protect threatened species, while supporting community-led groups to sustain their work.

GOAL 3

By 2030, national and community-led predator control projects are demonstrating significant increases in the population trends of native species that are highly threatened by predators.

What we asked

- What do you think of this goal? (Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this goal? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

Of the 749 respondents who answered this survey question, 90% supported or strongly supported the goal, 4% were neutral, 4% opposed or strongly opposed it and 1% were unsure.

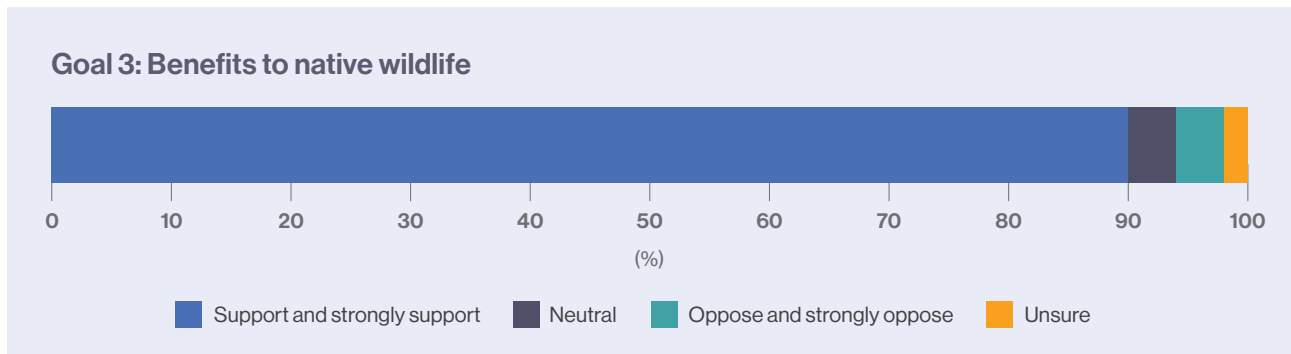


Figure 5. Goal 3 – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 28% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 249 comments. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insight

Monitoring matters – 87 comments

Many submitters emphasised the need for sustained and adequate funding, especially for outcome-focused monitoring of native species. They called for clearer definitions of success, robust data collection methods and stronger support for community groups to ensure that predator control efforts lead to measurable biodiversity gains.

Additional feedback

Control must be part of a whole-of-ecosystem approach – 29 comments

Some submitters advocated for predator control to be part of a broader ecosystem approach. They believed that without also addressing habitat restoration, pollution, land-use pressures and climate change, predator control alone would not be enough to protect native species.

Predator removal for biodiversity is complex – 28 comments

Submitters stressed the importance of maintaining current gains, scaling successful community-led efforts, ensuring adequate funding and professional support, and clearly defining what success looks like for threatened species recovery. Submitters also emphasised that PF2050 must focus on predator eradication rather than just suppression to truly protect native species.

Insights by submitter category

Experts and scientists – 14/24 submitters (58%) provided feedback

Submitters suggested that measuring biodiversity outcomes will require long-term investment in monitoring frameworks that are co-designed with Māori and tailored to community capacity. Without baseline data, technical support, and recognition of wider social and cultural benefits, expecting significant species recovery by 2050 is unrealistic and risks excluding grassroots efforts.

Local government and statutory bodies – 15/28 submitters (54%) provided feedback

Submitters stated that achieving measurable increases in native species populations by 2030 will require long-term funding, standardised biodiversity monitoring and regionally tailored approaches. They emphasised that robust data systems, community empowerment and clear national coordination will be essential to ensure that predator control efforts deliver tangible ecological outcomes.

Community groups and NGOs – 72/126 submitters (57%) provided feedback

Submitters emphasised that predator control must be linked to measurable biodiversity outcomes, not just activity levels. They called for investment in long-term monitoring, ecological expertise and tools to track native species recovery. Hunting and recreation groups stressed that success should also consider social licence, game animal impacts and ecosystem-wide effects. Across sectors, there was a call for clear baselines, consistent metrics and support for community-led data collection to ensure that efforts are valued and effective.

GOAL 4

By 2030, New Zealand’s offshore predator-free island network is managed to best practice biosecurity standards.

What we asked

- What do you think of this goal? (Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this goal? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

Of the 748 respondents who answered this survey question, 90% supported or strongly supported the goal, 5% were neutral, 3% opposed or strongly opposed it and 2% were unsure.

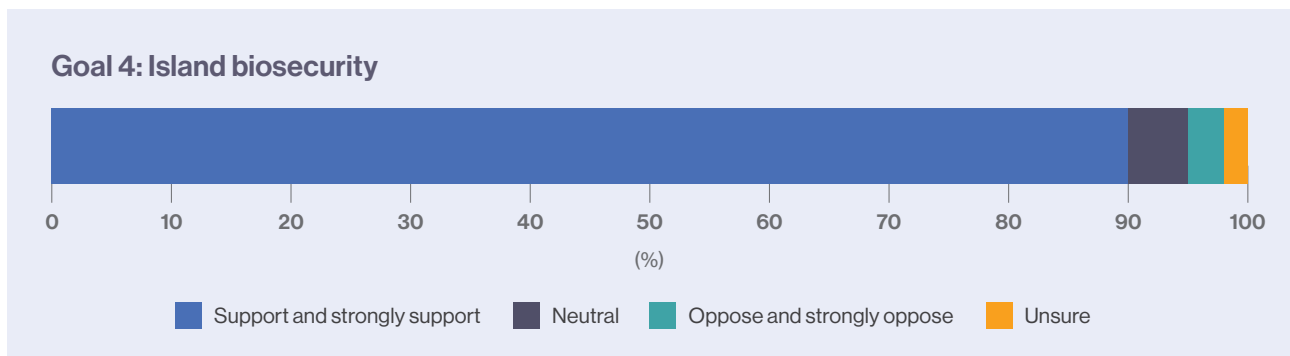


Figure 6. Goal 4 – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 21% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 187 comments. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insight

Offshore islands are important –

57 comments

Many submitters emphasised the significance of offshore islands as safe havens for native species, underscoring their critical role in biodiversity recovery. There was strong support for maintaining and expanding these predator-free areas, alongside calls for robust, well-funded biosecurity measures to prevent reinvasion. While some submitters felt that best practice biosecurity was already in place, others believed it should be implemented or strengthened. Many also suggested that the success stories from these islands should be more widely shared to inspire broader predator control efforts.

Additional feedback

Ongoing biosecurity improvements are needed – 27 comments

Some submitters generally supported ongoing biosecurity management of offshore predator-free islands, but many questioned the cost-effectiveness and clarity of the best practice standards. They emphasised the need for technological innovation, better communication, and a stronger focus on mainland projects where public engagement and biodiversity impact are more visible.

Community involvement matters – 25 comments

Some submitters appreciated the goal but felt that achieving best practice biosecurity will require more local input, community engagement and recognition of Māori partnership. Concerns were raised about several issues, including the indiscriminate use of toxins, the need for humane and tested tools, the importance of consistent national standards, and safeguarding public access and cultural relationships. The unique challenges and opportunities on inhabited islands like Rakiura/ Stewart Island and Aotea/ Great Barrier Island were also highlighted.

Insights by submitter category

Imi, Iwi, Hapū and Māori organisations – 3/8 submitters (38%) provided feedback

Submitters stated that managing offshore predator-free islands to best practice biosecurity standards must include smaller islands, reflect local realities and be co-designed with tangata whenua. Biosecurity is critical, and investment must support prevention, freight protocols and community-led protection efforts.

Experts and scientists – 9/24 submitters (38%) provided feedback

Submitters suggested that managing offshore predator-free islands to best practice standards must include clear definitions, updated biosecurity plans and recognition of tino rangatiratanga. Public expectations are high and success will depend on robust advocacy, surveillance and incursion response – especially on populated islands where biosecurity challenges are greater.

Local government and statutory bodies – 10/28 submitters (36%) provided feedback

Submitters suggested that managing offshore predator-free islands to best practice biosecurity standards by 2030 will require adaptive, ecosystem-specific approaches, alignment with international standards and sustained investment. They cautioned against over-prioritising offshore islands at the expense of impactful mainland efforts and called for clearer definitions and measurable benchmarks to guide progress.



FOCUS AREA 3

Innovate for eradication

Advance affordable, humane and socially acceptable tools and techniques to build a toolbox and adaptable blueprints for large-scale predator elimination across diverse landscapes.

GOAL 5

By 2030, rats, mustelids and possums are eradicated from a major city and there is a tested and proven blueprint for scalable deployment to other urban environments.

What we asked

- What do you think of this goal? (Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this goal? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

Of the 750 respondents who answered this survey question, 87% supported or strongly supported the goal, 7% were neutral, 5% opposed or strongly opposed it and 1% were unsure.

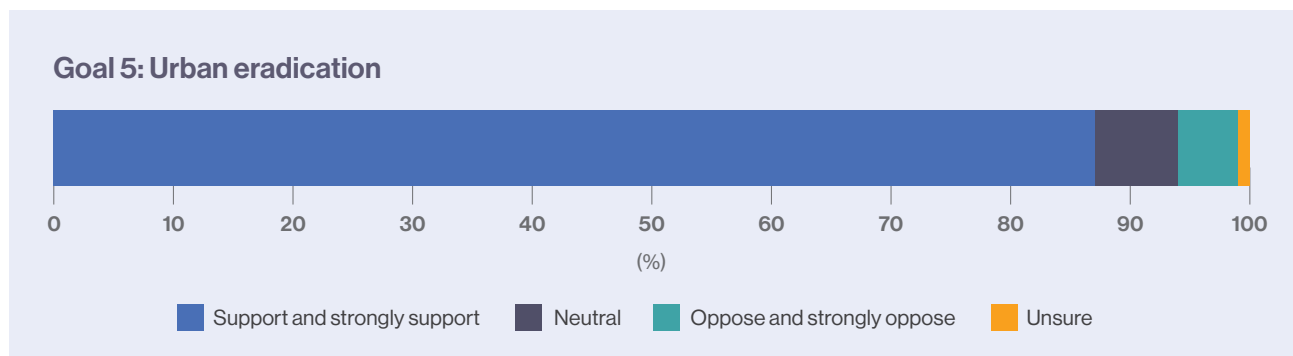


Figure 7. Goal 5 – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 28% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 250 comments. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insight

Urban eradications are of interest –

72 comments

Many submitters supported the goal, frequently pointing to Predator Free Wellington as a successful example that has already demonstrated a tested and scalable blueprint. Many submitters emphasised the importance of community involvement, secure funding and tailored approaches to different urban environments, while also noting that urban eradication offers high visibility and public engagement potential.

Additional feedback

Community considerations are important –

41 comments

Some submitters expressed concern about the feasibility and ethics of urban predator eradication, especially regarding the use of poisons and the impact on pets, non-target species and public health. Some supported the goal in principle but emphasised the need for community engagement, responsible pet ownership, clear communication, and a realistic, well-funded approach that prioritises safety and social licence.

Urban eradications should not be a strong focus –

31 comments

Some submitters felt that prioritising predator eradication in a major city is misguided, arguing it will divert resources away from more ecologically valuable areas like national parks and conservation areas. They questioned the feasibility and impact of urban eradication, citing reinvasion risks, limited biodiversity gains, and concerns about the safety and appropriateness of control methods in populated areas.

Insights by submitter category

Local government and statutory bodies –

8/28 submitters (29%) provided feedback

Submitters stated that eradicating rats, mustelids and possums from a major city by 2030 will require ambition, scalable urban models, strong public support, and investment in innovation and workforce development. They emphasised that success must be demonstrated across diverse urban environments and supported by clear communication, adaptive strategies and robust monitoring to guide replication nationwide.

Community groups and NGOs –

57/126 submitters (45%) provided feedback

Submitters suggested that urban predator control is possible, but only with sustained investment, strong leadership and scalable models. While some groups saw urban goals as symbolic or resource-diverting, others pointed to successes like Predator Free Wellington as proof of concept. There was a consensus that urban eradication must include pests like mice and feral cats and be supported by community outreach, paid staff and robust biosecurity systems to ensure that ecological gains are not undermined.

Individuals – 175/691 submitters (25%)

provided feedback

Submitters emphasised that urban eradication must be underpinned by a proven, scalable blueprint that includes community employment, humane methods, public education and digital tools. Success will depend on strong coordination, ethical safeguards and public support to ensure that eradication efforts are effective and socially accepted.

GOAL 6

By 2030, Mātauranga Māori is making demonstrable contributions to eradication outcomes.

What we asked

- What do you think of this goal?
(Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this goal? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

Of those 747 respondents who answered this survey question, 75% supported or strongly supported the goal, 15% were neutral, 7% opposed or strongly opposed it and 3% were unsure.

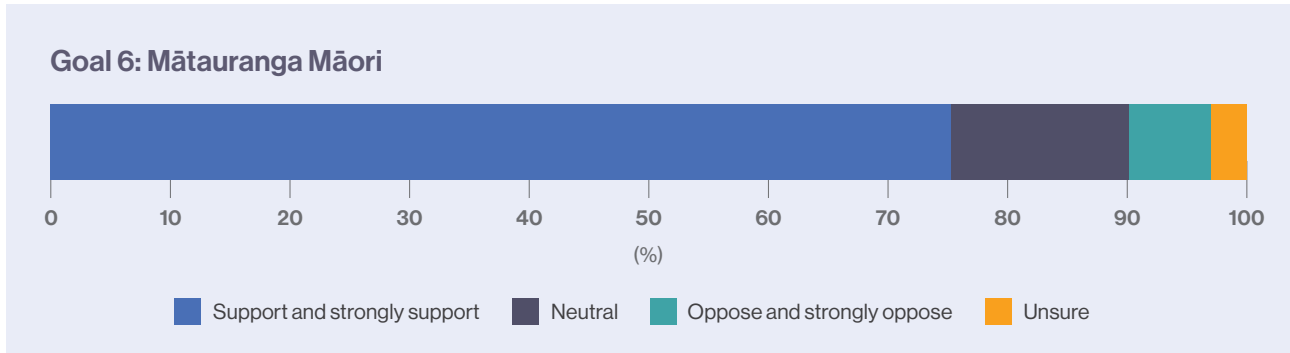


Figure 8. Goal 6 – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 20% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 180 comments. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insights

Mātauranga Māori approaches have benefits –

58 comments

Many submitters emphasised that the success of Iwi- and Imi-led projects highlights the importance of recognising and integrating mātauranga Māori. Māori and Moriori leadership and partnership were seen as key to predator eradication efforts. Backed by sustained funding, these initiatives contribute to restoring the mauri (life force) of ecosystems and fostering community engagement. Submitters called for dedicated and ongoing funding to enable meaningful participation in research, innovation, monitoring and long-term stewardship. Protections for cultural intellectual property need to be in place with mana whenua to determine appropriate metrics and goals.

The goal should be reframed –

57 comments

Many submitters questioned the relevance and effectiveness of mātauranga Māori in achieving predator eradication outcomes, with concerns about tokenism, a lack of evidence and the potential diversion of resources. This group of submitters emphasised the need for measurable, evidence-based contributions and cautioned against framing the goal in a way that felt divisive or racially exclusive.

Insights by submitter category

Imi, Iwi, Hapū and Māori organisations – 4/8 submitters (50%) provided feedback

Submitters stated that mātauranga Māori must be ethically protected, led by mana whenua and resourced to contribute meaningfully to project outcomes – its integration must reflect Māori authority, not tokenism, and be recognised as a living, innovative knowledge system.

Experts and scientists – 6/24 submitters (25%) provided feedback

Submitters suggested that mātauranga Māori must be valued for its deeper kaupapa (principles), not just for its contribution to eradication. Co-design with Hapū, adequate funding and space for cultural indicators will be essential. Imposing outcomes defined by the agency risks undermining the programme's integrity and fails to reflect Māori aspirations.

GOAL 7

By 2030, predator eradication is complete or underway across 75% of New Zealand's offshore island network area (this includes the Maukahuka Pest Free Auckland Island project).

What we asked

- What do you think of this goal? (Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this goal? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

Of the 747 respondents who answered this survey question, 89% supported or strongly supported the goal, 6% were neutral, 4% opposed or strongly opposed it and 2% were unsure.

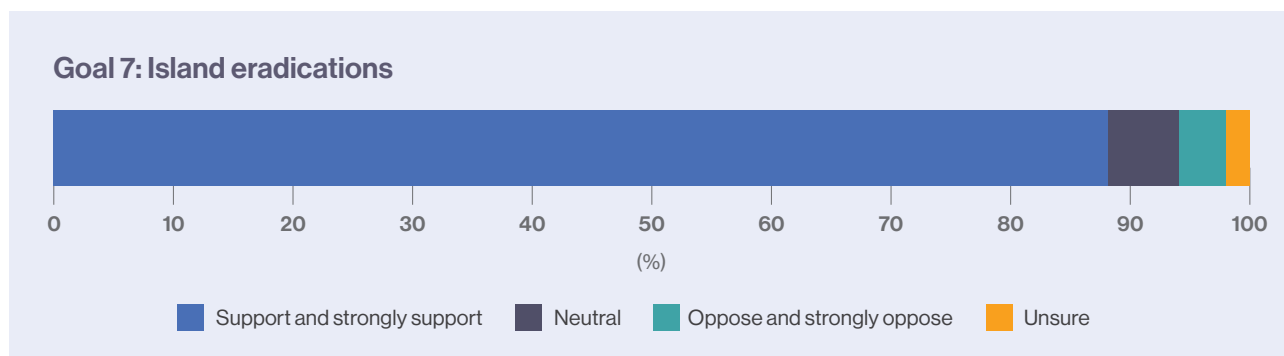


Figure 9. Goal 7 – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 19% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 174 comments. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insight

Offshore islands are strategic priorities –

51 comments

Some submitters supported offshore island predator eradication, seeing it as essential for protecting biodiversity and providing safe havens for vulnerable species. Some felt the 75% target is achievable but not ambitious enough, and called for a goal of 100% coverage, the inclusion of more islands such as Rakiura / Stewart Island and the Chatham Islands, and sustained funding, biosecurity and community involvement to maintain progress.

Additional feedback

A focus on offshore islands may divert efforts –

26 comments

Some submitters supported offshore island predator eradication but felt it should not come at the expense of mainland efforts, especially in urban and accessible areas where public engagement is stronger. They also raised concerns about cost, inhumane methods and the limited relevance of island projects to broader national goals.

Insights by submitter category

Experts and scientists – 9/24 submitters (38%) provided feedback

Submitters stated that achieving predator eradication across 75% of offshore islands by 2030 will require clearer definitions, realistic timeframes and prioritisation of inhabited islands. Submitters suggested that success could be measured not just by operational status but by public understanding, social licence and readiness to invest in complex, long-term projects like Maukahuka / Auckland Island.

Local government and statutory bodies – 8/28 submitters (29%) provided feedback

Submitters noted that achieving predator eradication across 75% of New Zealand's offshore island network by 2030 will require sustained investment, adaptive biosecurity strategies and alignment with international best practice. They emphasised the need for clear definitions, baseline mapping and measurable targets, while cautioning that an offshore focus should not come at the expense of mainland efforts.

GOAL 8

By 2030, the eradication toolbox has expanded to include at least one:

- species-specific toxin(s) that is registered and available for use in New Zealand
- bait that is registered for use in New Zealand to target introduced mammalian predators
- laboratory proof of concept for a breakthrough science solution that helps achieve affordable and scalable rat and/or stoat elimination.

What we asked

- What do you think of this goal? (Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this goal? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

Of the 746 respondents who answered this survey question, 85% supported or strongly supported the goal, 6% were neutral, 7% opposed or strongly opposed it and 2% were unsure.

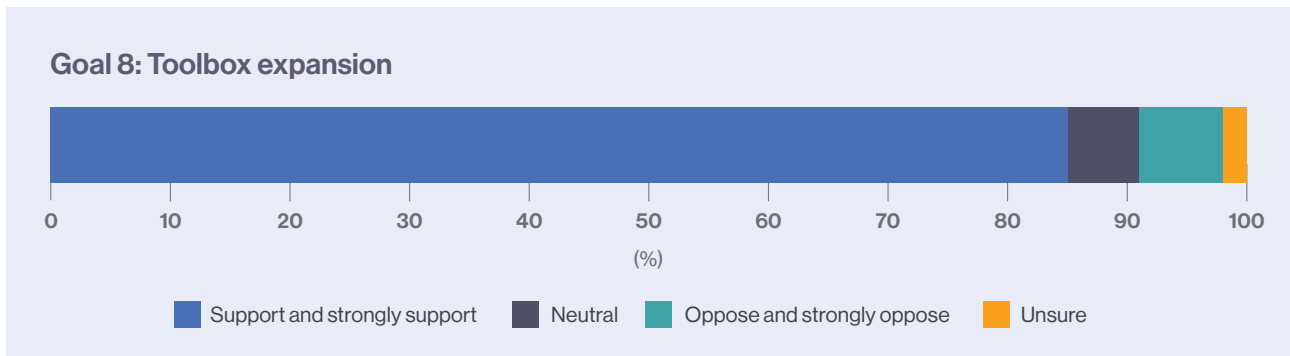


Figure 10. Goal 8 – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 34% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 309 comments. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insights

Some eradication tools raise concerns – 77 comments

Some submitters strongly opposed the use of toxins – especially 1080 – citing concerns about the inhumane treatment of animals, environmental contamination and harm to non-target species. They called for humane, ethical and non-lethal alternatives and emphasised the need for public consultation and community-led approaches over broad-scale poison use.

New tools and innovation are supported – 66 comments

Some submitters emphasised the urgent need to expand the eradication toolbox with innovative, cost-effective and scalable technologies – especially species-specific toxins, smarter traps and AI-enabled tools. Submitters also stressed the importance of equitable access, real-world testing and consistent funding to support community-led efforts and ensure that tools are safe, culturally acceptable and effective across diverse environments.

Science breakthroughs are essential but must be treated carefully – 61 comments

Some submitters emphasised the need for bold innovation, particularly in genetic technologies like gene editing and fertility control, while also expressing concern about safety, ethics and public acceptance. Many felt that scientific breakthroughs and species-specific tools will be essential to achieving PF2050, but stressed that these must be affordable, well-tested, and supported by strong legislation and funding.

[Additional feedback](#)

Support for existing toxin use and national regulations are needed – 35 comments

Some submitters felt that national regulations around toxins and tools are either too lax or too restrictive – some submitters are concerned about the lack of testing, transparency and oversight, while others believed there are too many rules and called for legislative reform to allow more freedom in developing and using eradication technologies.

[Insights by submitter category](#)

Iwi, Hapū and Māori organisations – 3/8 submitters (38%) provided feedback

Submitters stated that expanding the toolbox must be guided by tikanga (protocols), mātauranga Māori and mana whenua leadership. Tools like toxins or genetic technologies must be ethically assessed, culturally safe and developed in partnership, not imposed without consent.

Experts and scientists – 14/24 submitters (58%) provided feedback

Submitters suggested that expanding the toolbox must go beyond a single breakthrough – it will require funding pathways for testing, community uptake and safe deployment. Success depends on transparency, ecological safeguards, and ensuring that new tools are accessible, scalable and trusted by those on the ground.

Local government and statutory bodies – 20/28 submitters (71%) provided feedback

Submitters emphasised the need for investment in breakthrough science, streamlined regulatory processes and ethical oversight. They called for national coordination to support innovation, ensure social licence, and accelerate the development and deployment of species-specific tools that are affordable, scalable and culturally appropriate.

Community groups and NGOs – 77/126 submitters (61%) provided feedback

Submitters stated that expanding the eradication toolbox will be essential to achieving PF2050 goals, especially for challenging species like rats and stoats. They called for investment in species-specific toxins, humane and effective baits, and breakthrough technologies, such as AI-enabled traps and genetic solutions. Hunting and recreation groups strongly supported innovation that reduces reliance on aerial toxins and improves safety for game animals and dogs. Animal welfare groups advocated for the prioritisation of humane, non-lethal methods, such as fertility control, genetic sterilisation and humane deterrents. Across sectors, there was a call for faster regulatory pathways, field trials, and equitable access to tools for Iwi, community groups and volunteers.

Individuals – 188/691 submitters (27%) provided feedback

Submitters welcomed innovation but strongly cautioned that new tools must be humane, species-specific and ethically sound. This category has a clear opposition to toxins and genetic engineering without oversight, calling for independent monitoring, public consultation, and investment in non-lethal alternatives like fertility control and smart technologies.



FOCUS AREA 4

Prepare to accelerate

Ensure that the foundations are in place to transition from local to national elimination, with clear actions, costs and benefits, and community readiness.

GOAL 9

By 2030, PF2050 has attracted significant investment from non-Crown funders, supported by clear analysis of the costs and benefits associated with achieving a predator-free New Zealand.

What we asked

- What do you think of this goal? (Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this goal? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

Of the 748 respondents who answered this survey question, 82% supported or strongly supported the goal, 10% were neutral, 6% opposed or strongly opposed it and 2% were unsure.

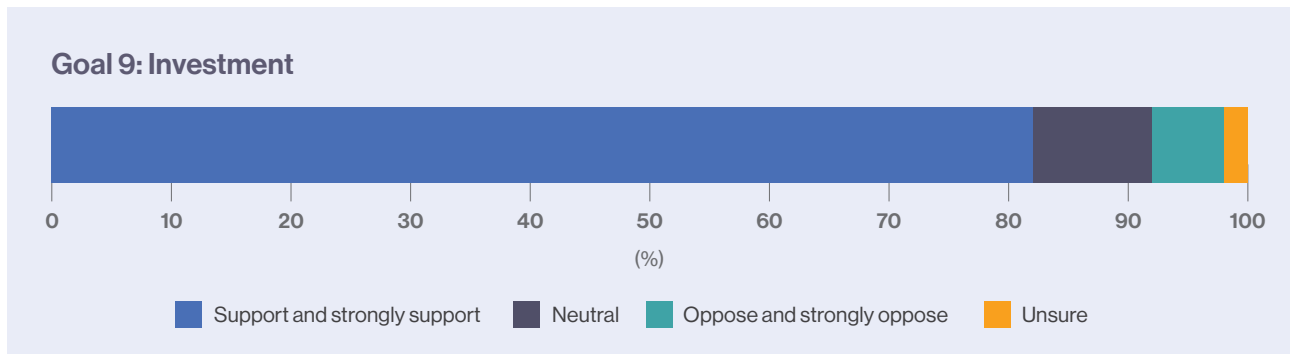


Figure 11. Goal 9 – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 38% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 340 comments. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insights

Government has the primary funding responsibility – 156 comments

Many submitters strongly felt that while attracting non-Crown investment is worthwhile, the Crown must remain the primary funder of PF2050. They expressed concern that shifting the burden to private or philanthropic sources could undermine the programme's stability, and emphasised that consistent, long-term government funding will be essential to maintain momentum and public confidence.

Alternative funding opportunities are important – 116 comments

Many submitters emphasised the importance of inclusive partnerships – particularly with Iwi, Hapū, community groups and private landowners – and called for sustained funding and transparent governance to ensure that the programme is successful long term. Submitters also supported robust cost-benefit analysis and stressed that strong Crown leadership remains essential to uphold responsibilities and maintain momentum.

The goal being undermined is a concern – 44 comments

Some submitters expressed concern that relying heavily on non-Crown funders could compromise the integrity, sustainability and public accountability of PF2050. They worried that private investment might skew priorities, introduce ideological or commercial biases and lead to short-term or unstable funding, potentially undermining long-term conservation outcomes and the original vision of the programme.

Insights by submitter category

Businesses and the primary sector – 6/10 submitters (60%) provided feedback

Submitters suggested that attracting significant non-Crown investment by 2030 will require sustained funding certainty, inclusive engagement and credible cost-benefit analysis. Both sectors emphasised long-term financial support, recognition of diverse contributors, and strategic inclusion of marine and rural stakeholders as essential to unlock philanthropic, private and community-led investment in achieving a predator-free New Zealand.

Experts and scientists – 15/24 submitters (63%) provided feedback

Submitters emphasised that attracting non-Crown investment must not replace the Crown's Treaty obligations. A robust cost-benefit analysis that reflects ecological, cultural and social values will be essential to build a compelling case for investment. Significant funding must be clearly defined and aligned with the scale of PF2050's ambition.

Local government and statutory bodies – 19/28 submitters (68%) provided feedback

Submitters called for transparent cost-benefit analysis, a clear national implementation plan and strong Crown commitment to maintain confidence in the programme. They emphasised that investment should be underpinned by demonstrated biodiversity outcomes, regional coordination and compelling public narratives to build broad-based support.

Additional feedback

Strong collaboration and robust cost-benefit analysis are essential – 51 comments

Submitters highlighted that the benefits of PF2050 extend well beyond biodiversity, encompassing improved public health, mental wellbeing, tourism and economic resilience. They also stressed that attracting non-Crown investment will require clear cost-benefit analysis, equitable community funding models, and recognition of the vital role played by volunteers and local groups.

GOAL 10

By 2030, Iwi and Hapū are satisfied that PF2050 projects are realising or supporting their aspirations in their rohe.

What we asked

- What do you think of this goal?
(Support/oppose survey question)
- What would you add, remove or change about this goal? Why would you make these changes?

What we heard

Of the 745 respondents who answered this survey question, 78% supported or strongly supported the goal, 14% were neutral, 5% opposed or strongly opposed it and 3% were unsure.

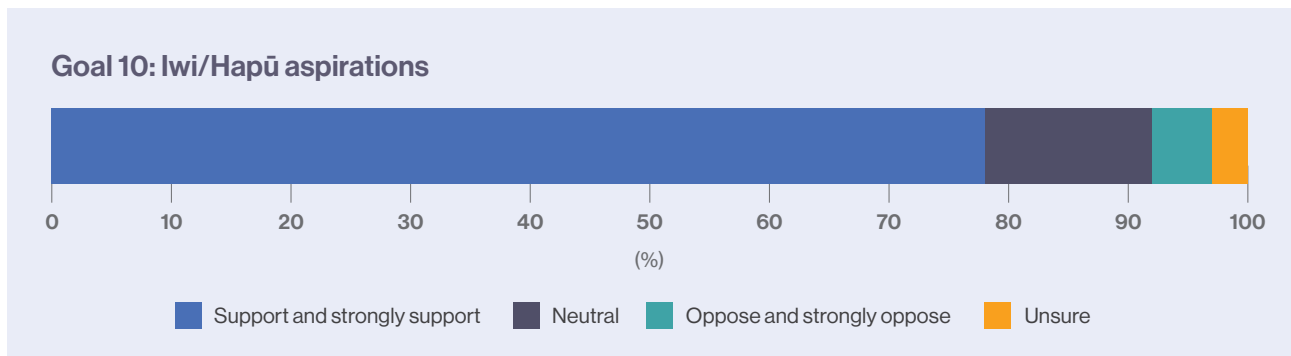


Figure 12. Goal 10 – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 15% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 134 comments. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insights

Iwi and Hapū need to be involved from the start of the project – 40 comments

Many submitters felt that Iwi and Hapū need to be actively involved from the start, with PF2050 projects co-designed to reflect mātauranga Māori, uphold tino rangatiratanga and embed Treaty of Waitangi principles. They consistently called for genuine partnerships, dedicated resourcing, and support for Iwi-led ecological models that honour cultural values and aspirations across diverse rohe.

Goals must integrate Iwi and Hapū aspirations and broader community input – 35 comments

Some submitters emphasised the need for PF2050 projects to be genuinely shaped by Iwi and Hapū aspirations, with strong partnership, co-design and recognition of mātauranga Māori. A smaller number of submitters felt the goal should be broader, suggesting that the aspirations of the wider community, not just Iwi and Hapū, should also be considered.

Insights by submitter category

Imi, Iwi, Hapū and Māori organisations – 5/8 submitters (63%) in this category provided feedback

Submitters stated that satisfaction with PF2050 projects will depend on genuine partnership, not passive engagement. Projects must be driven by Imi, Iwi and Hapū aspirations, supported by funding and capability pathways, and measured through transparent, inclusive processes that uphold tino rangatiratanga.

Experts and scientists – 2/24 submitters (8%) in this category provided feedback

Submitters noted that Iwi and Hapū satisfaction must be defined by their own aspirations, not external measures. Ongoing support for a Māori Predator Free strategy, co-developed indicators and meaningful engagement across the rohe will be essential to ensure that PF2050 projects reflect mana whenua priorities and build enduring partnerships.

Target species list

The following three questions were posed in the discussion document relating to the target species list. Currently, the list for PF2050 includes rats (Norway rats, ship rats and kiore), possums and mustelids (weasels, ferrets and stoats).

What we asked

- What do you think of the proposed approach to retain the current PF2050 national target species list? (Support/oppose survey question)
- Are there alternative approaches that PF2050 could be taking? If so, what are they and why?
- What do you see as the benefits and risks of not including feral cats on the PF2050 national target species list at this time?

What we heard

Of the 740 respondents who provided feedback to DOC on this survey question, 50% supported or strongly supported the retention of the list, 12% were neutral, 35% opposed or strongly opposed it and 3% were unsure.

This topic received the least amount of support and the highest level of opposition of those proposed. The additional written feedback highlighted that there were mixed interpretations from submitters on the support/oppose survey. Some submitters supported retaining the list *if* feral cats were added to the list. Others were neutral or opposed the proposal as feral cats were *not* included in the list.

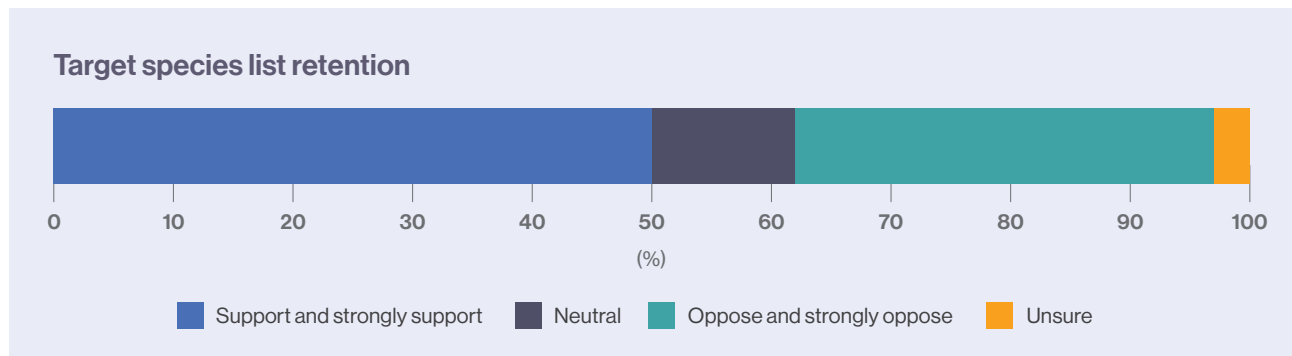


Figure 13. Proposal to retain target species list – support/oppose survey responses

Of the 903 submitters who provided feedback to DOC, 80% provided feedback on this topic, contributing 726 comments. These questions were also asked in the PFNZ Trust template. Their insights are summarised below.

Key insight

An alternative approach to including or otherwise managing feral cats is needed – 656 comments

Many submitters strongly advocated for the inclusion of feral cats in the list, citing their significant impact on native wildlife. They also called for better domestic cat management – like mandatory desexing, microchipping and containment – to prevent stray and companion cats from contributing to feral populations. When combining the PFNZ Trust template submissions with the submissions made to DOC, over 90% of submitters either requested that feral cats be added to the list for eradication or sought enhanced ways to manage feral and/or companion cats.

An alternative approach to including mice is needed – 106 comments

Some submitters raised concerns that mice often proliferate after rat removal, leading to predation on native fauna and the disruption of ecosystem balance.

Excluding feral cats from the target species list has benefits – 223 comments

Submitters felt that excluding feral cats from the list helps maintain public support for PF2050 by avoiding backlash from cat lovers and confusion between feral and pet cats. Some submitters suggested that excluding feral cats prevents harm to companion animals, reduces social conflict and allows limited resources to stay focused on species with clearer eradication pathways, where we already have social licence to eradicate. Some submitters suggested this approach allows time to develop scalable, humane control methods for feral cats.

Additional feedback

An alternative approach to including other species that are not mammalian predators is needed – 161 comments

Submitters raised concerns that the current approach to the list (rats, possums and mustelids) is too narrow to effectively protect ecosystems. Other species such as hares, wallabies, deer, goats, pigs, wasps, weeds and mynah birds were identified as also posing significant threats. Herbivores were viewed as ecosystem predators due to their damaging impact on native vegetation.

An alternative approach to including hedgehogs is needed – 135 comments

Some submitters raised concerns that hedgehogs are often overlooked as harmful predators of native fauna.

Excluding feral cats from the target species list has risks – 652 comments

Submitters highlighted that feral cats are apex predators that are responsible for the widespread predation of native birds, lizards and insects, and their growing populations could undo conservation gains, especially as other predators are removed. Many also believed that not including feral cats in the list weakens public understanding, delays innovation in humane control methods and sends the wrong message about the seriousness of the issue. Some submitters suggested that their exclusion from the list creates a barrier to the national regulation of cats.

Insights by submitter category

PFNZ Trust template submitters – 2,495 submitters provided feedback

All 2,495 submitters who completed the PFNZ Trust template engaged on this topic, with 99% of them directly requesting the addition of feral cats to the list. Of these submitters, 383 (15%) provided written feedback on this topic in addition to, or instead of, the template. Submitters said that not including feral cats as a target species undermines PF2050, leaving a major predator unaddressed, fragmenting control efforts and sending the wrong message about their impact on biodiversity. Other submitters advocated for alternative approaches such as companion cat management.

Animal welfare groups – 11/11 submitters (100%) provided feedback

Submitters were divided on the inclusion of feral cats in the list. Some argued it could strengthen national coordination, improve responsible pet ownership and protect native wildlife; however, others warned that inclusion risks inhumane treatment, misidentification of pets and social discord. Submitters emphasised that feral cats originate from domestic populations and advocated for humane, non-lethal strategies to be used, such as desexing, microchipping and the trap-neuter-return method. This sub-category, which sits under the community groups and NGOs category, called for a national cat management framework and ethical oversight, stressing that predator control must prioritise animal welfare and avoid the inhumane treatment of animals.

Experts and scientists – 20/24 submitters (83%) provided feedback

Submitters highlighted that excluding feral cats from the list poses significant ecological risks. Feral cats are recognised as major predators with demonstrated impacts on native biodiversity. Experts argued that omitting them from the list undermines ecosystem-based management and risks perverse ecological outcomes by leaving key predators unmanaged. Including feral cats in the list would align with scientific recommendations, reduce biodiversity threats and support integrated restoration efforts. The primary risk of inclusion is the current capability gap in effective control methods, but experts stress that this should not override ecological imperatives.

Local government and statutory bodies – 27/28 submitters (96%) provided feedback

These submitters strongly supported including feral cats in the list, citing their significant ecological impact, their risk to public health and the administrative burden caused by the lack of national direction. The exclusion of cats was seen as undermining the strategy's credibility and effectiveness, forcing councils to rely on fragmented and costly local bylaws. Submissions included the need for phased or place-based approaches to avoid public backlash and ensure feasibility. Submitters within both local government groups and statutory bodies called for a national legislative framework to enable consistent, humane and effective feral cat management.

PFNZ Trust online template submissions

Founded in 2013, the PFNZ Trust is an independent charitable trust and key partner in the PF2050 programme. The PFNZ Trust's main role is to support the grassroots predator-free movement by inspiring, enabling and advocating for community conservation.

During the consultation period, the PFNZ Trust promoted an online template on their website, which included responses to topics within the discussion document that submitters could use to submit feedback on the strategy. Fields were editable, enabling submitters to either send the online template submission without changing it, edit the content or provide additional free-form comments.

What the PFNZ Trust asked

The PFNZ Trust online template was based around the following three questions:

- What support do you or your group need to maintain the progress you have made?
- What barriers are there to being involved?
- Do you think feral cats should be added to the target species list? Why?

A total of 2,495 submissions were received through the PFNZ Trust's online template. Of these, 2,027 were identical, meaning the submissions were the same as the online template.

What we heard

It was a submission template so strongly emphasised that while volunteers and community groups are the driving force behind the predator-free movement, the current system is unsustainable. The funding and support structures were not considered fit for purpose, relying too heavily on unpaid labour and short-term, complex funding arrangements. For the movement to thrive, systemic change was requested to ensure long-term, accessible funding, targeted support and investment in people, as well as equipment.

The following key points were raised in the template:

- Volunteers and community groups are essential, but current funding and support systems are unsustainable and overly complex.
- Funding should be easier to access, provided for longer periods and cover more than just equipment – it should also support people, including operational costs and specialist expertise.
- Barriers to participation include burnout and difficulty seeing the impact of the programme. Better support, coordination and ways to measure results are needed.
- Feral cats being excluded as a target undermines the PF2050 mission – it leaves a major predator unaddressed, fragments control efforts and sends the wrong message about their impact on biodiversity.

Additional feedback

In addition to the template, 468 submitters provided additional feedback, which is summarised below:

- Submitters emphasised the need for stable, multi-year funding to retain skilled people, along with access to technical expertise, such as geospatial information systems, communications and biodiversity monitoring, shared resources, and leadership development. Submitters also called for practical tools to measure impact, stronger coordination between agencies like DOC and councils, tailored support for smaller or remote groups, and more opportunities for innovation and knowledge sharing across the network.
- Submitters described volunteers as deeply committed but often stretched thin, facing burnout and financial strain as they balance demanding conservation work with other responsibilities. They noted that short-term funding, patchy support from DOC and councils, and complex compliance requirements make it hard to sustain momentum. Submitters also highlighted that broader social pressures, remote locations, cultural views on pets (especially cats), technology challenges, inconsistent government backing and fragmented land ownership further complicate engagement and collaboration across communities.
- Some of those identifying as volunteers and working within community groups expressed frustration at the impact feral cats have on predator control, sharing personal stories that highlight the scale and seriousness of the problem, while also calling for humane treatment and clearer distinctions between feral, stray and domestic cats.
- Some suggested expanding the target species list to include other pests like hedgehogs and wild pigs, and a few cautioned against aggressive action on feral cats, advocating instead for more education-focused and humane solutions.

Acknowledgements

DOC is grateful to everyone who joined the discussions and meetings, raised questions, and provided feedback. The submissions and engagement have been constructive and valuable, with contributors bringing many different points of view that have informed the revision of *Innovate for a predator-free New Zealand: Predator Free 2050 Strategy (2026–2030)*.⁵

5 doc.govt.nz/pf-strategy-documents