

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

In relation to the

DESERT ROAD INVASIVE LEGUME CONTROL PROJECT



Between

Department Of Conservation
New Zealand Defence Force
Lake Rotoaira Forest Trust
Genesis Energy

Waikato Regional Council
Horizons Regional Council
New Zealand Transport Agency
Transpower

2014 to 2025

This **Memorandum of Understanding** is operative as at October 1, 2014.

1. Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formalises the agreement of eight organisations to work collaboratively to protect the Desert Road landscape from the adverse effects of three legume pest plants: broom, gorse and tree/yellow lupin.

2. Background

The Central North Island Desert Road tussock-lands are special, containing unique landscapes and ecosystems that are highly valued. The road is bordered to the west by Tongariro National Park. Land to the east is mostly managed by the NZ Army. Figure 1 shows the extent of the project area¹ and the focus of this MOU. Crown agencies, iwi, landowners and regional authorities have diverse interests in the threatened ecosystems and surrounding land, as do power and roading infrastructure providers. Several organisations carry out broom, gorse and lupin control in parts of the area for their own purposes. Until the advent of this project there was no overall co-ordination of effort to understand and manage the legume weed invasion.

The density and distribution of invasive plants vary across the landscape. A December 2012 aerial mapping exercise (refer to map in Appendix 1) established a baseline of the existing broom infestations, from which it is possible to build integrated management plans between the parties. Much of the landscape is legume-free but there are some large infestations along road verges and in more remote areas out of sight of State Highway 1. Roads, roading activities and vehicles exacerbate the constant risk of weeds moving across the landscape and are the most important 'pest pathway' to manage.

¹ 'Project Area' means those parts of the Central North Island desert Road tussock lands currently or potentially affected by invasive legumes, as outlined in Figure 1.

Potential broom, gorse and lupin management zone Desert Road Corridor

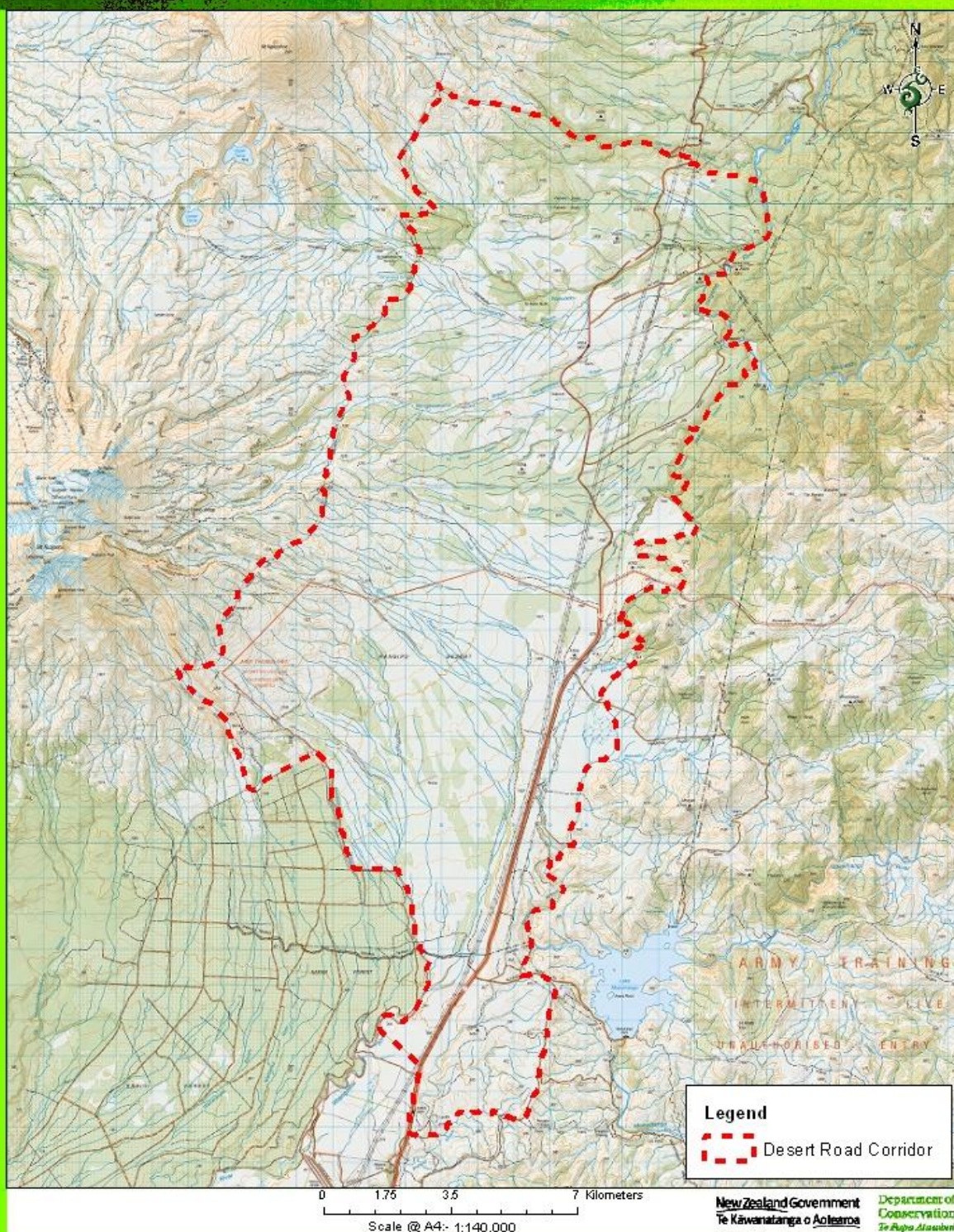


Figure 1. Zone within which woody legume weed management plans should be developed.

The Desert Road Invasive Legume Control Project (DRILCP), comprising most of the MOU organisations, has been established to oversee the project and to achieve the vision outlined below. The project is branded as *'No More Yellow – Sweep These Pests Away'*.

While the DRILCP is the 'governance structure' providing project oversight, higher level guidance may, from time to time, be given to the DRILCP via executive management teams or elected members from the MOU signatory organisations.

3. The vision

" The unique natural values and vistas of the Desert Road environments are protected from invasive legumes "

4. Project principles

- Collaboration and sharing of data
- Coordinated and prioritised control of invasive legumes, including pathway management
- Monitoring and reporting of progress
- Clear advocacy on the benefits of control and the risks of doing nothing
- Best practise control guidelines established through adaptive management

5. Objectives and methods

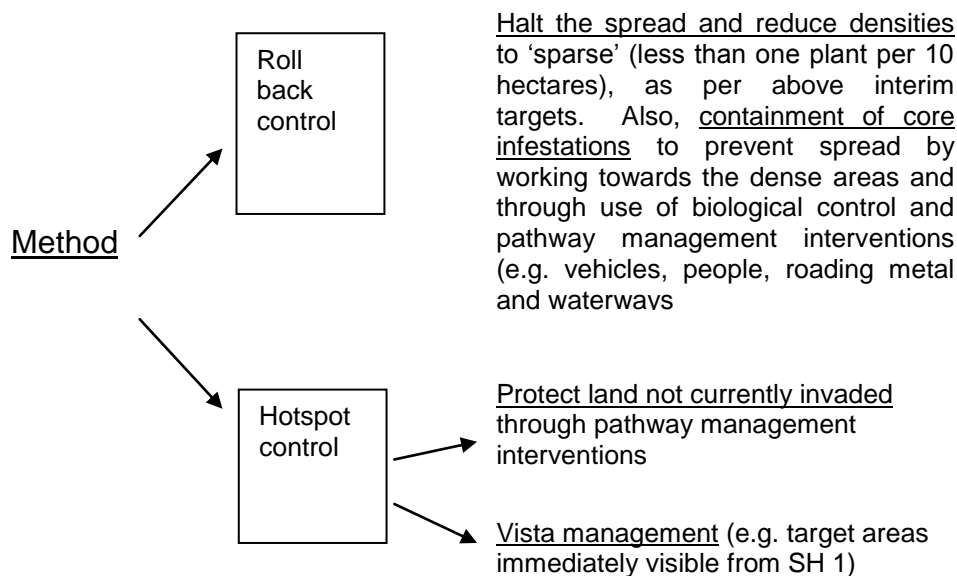
The parties to this MOU acknowledge that there are a number of overlapping goals related to preserving the Desert Road landscape and ecosystems. These goals can be achieved by focusing on five key objectives and methods:

- i) Wide-ranging and genuine cooperation between the parties to achieve sound landscape and pest management outcomes over the life time of the project.**

Method: support for the Desert Road Invasive Legume Control Project, regular attendance at group meetings, sharing data and planning for Desert Road pest plant control and at least an annual review.

ii) Introduced legumes in the project area are measurably reduced in density by 2025.

Interim targets: (a) near zero density in 100% of the known sparse/low density areas by 2025, (b) a measured reduction in moderate density areas by 2025 and (c) containment of high density areas, and eliminate risk of spread from these sources, by 2025. (More detailed measurement criteria will be contained in the Operational Plan).



iii) Trend monitoring carried out² to assist with annual reporting on progress against the control objectives.

² Each species flowers at different times and will require separate surveillance flights. Broom = 2012 (mid December), gorse = 2013 (early November) and lupin = 2014 (late November/early December).

Method: Three yearly aerial photo mapping, comparing progress with the 2012/13 baseline for broom and 'as required' mapping for gorse and lupin following baseline survey; annual recording (presence/absence) of 'hotspot' control work, and annual reporting by and to each organisation as appropriate. (A standard reporting template will be developed and detailed in the Operational Plan to allow consistent reporting between the parties).

iv) Advocacy to stakeholders, other interested parties and the public that is timely, clear and appropriate.

Method: The parties will seek to develop a community based approach to focus on the environmental and tourism benefits of the project and the risks of not carrying through with the project. Such initiatives include: signage, website development, Turangi/Waiouru awareness/media campaigns, social media and building on the range of successes similar to those achieved with the didymo awareness programme.

v) Better overall control is achieved through adaptive management techniques and the recognition of 'best practice' evolution.

Method: Various control methods (e.g. bio-control, manual control techniques or different agrichemicals and application means and rates) will be trialled, where appropriate, to advance 'science learnings' and ensure cost efficiencies are ever present for all parties.

6. Parties to the MOU

a) The Crown

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is a government department charged with conserving New Zealand natural and historic heritage under the Conservation Act 1987. One of the key DOC activities is stopping the decline of indigenous biodiversity by managing threatened species and ecosystems on public conservation land. DOC works with a number of organisations and other Crown agencies through its partnerships programmes to achieve this objective.

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) is founded under the Defence Act 1990. Its role is to secure New Zealand against external threat, protect sovereign interests and to take action to meet likely contingencies in New Zealand's strategic areas of interest. NZDF comprises the three main services, Navy, Airforce and Army and other smaller divisions. The NZ Army has one of its key bases at Waiouru, at the southern end of the Desert Road, and its lands extend well into the project area. Land management, including pest plant control, is a key part of their operations. The NZ Army undertakes extensive annual contorta pine control (and other invasive plants) across the training area.

Note: A 2012 amendment to the Biosecurity Act 1993 (as outlined in the National Policy Direction) provides for 'good neighbour rules' which will bind the Crown and other parties to control named pest plants (and animals) under different Regional Pest Management Plans (RPMP's) in force throughout New Zealand.

b) Regional Councils

Waikato Regional Council (WRC) and Horizons Regional Council (HRC) are local authorities under the Local Government Act 2002. Both councils have responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991 to maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity within their regions. The councils also have a number of Biosecurity Act 1993 functions to control unwanted organisms. Managing pest plants (e.g. broom and gorse) that threaten environmental and economic values are carried out through the development of Regional Pest Management Plans. Management interventions include but are not limited to: undertaking direct control work, enforcing strategy/plan rules, monitoring and advocacy.

c) Crown entities

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) is a Crown owned entity tasked with promoting safe and functional land transport. The NZTA plans, operates

and maintains the 11,000 km State Highway network. State Highway 1, The Desert Road, bisects the project area and is a vital transport corridor nationally. State Highway 1 is also a principle vector for the spread of pest plants by nature of its high usage and maintenance requirements. NZTA has an obligation to manage invasive pests along this network under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and is actively managing pest plants along with other vegetation controls.

Transpower New Zealand Limited (TPNZ), established in 1994, is the State Owned Enterprise responsible for electric power transmission in New Zealand. As the owner and operator of the National Grid (high voltage transmission network) it connects power stations with consumers throughout New Zealand. Transpower and its contractors require access for servicing and maintenance of pylons and communication towers. While not a landowner, Transpower is a key organisation involved in achieving this projects' vision. Transpower is committed to working with communities to manage their environmental impacts.

Genesis Energy (Genesis) is a State Owned Enterprise power generation and retailing company, founded in 1999. Genesis operates the Tongariro Power Scheme, which involves scheme infrastructure and associated land in the project area. Genesis has an obligation to manage invasive pests on its land under the Biosecurity Act 1993. Genesis has a sound environmental philosophy with regard to projects of this nature, where care is needed to manage pests in special landscapes.

d) Other parties

The Lake Rotoaira Forest Trust (LRFT) was established in 1973 to represent the interests of owners of 85 separate Maori land titles located on the slopes of Mounts Pihanga, Tongariro, Kakaramea and Kuharua, around the shores of Lakes Rotoaira and Otamangakau and in the Upper Whanganui River Catchment. There are almost 10,000 owners and nearly 23,000 hectares of land, of which 40 per cent is in productive plantation forest. LRFT has an

obligation under the Biosecurity Act 1993 as land managers to manage invasive pests on lands (commonly referred to as the Rangipo North Blocks) within the project area.

7. Commitments made by parties to the MOU

(a) Communication

- The parties will be active members of the DRILCP and participate in regular meetings at least annually (ideally in early September), to discuss progress towards stated goals and co-operate to achieve the project vision and principles.
- The parties agree that any printed (e.g. signage, flyers) or electronic material (e.g. media releases) produced for advocacy purposes is approved in advance through the DRILCP group.
- Other organisations may have close interests in this project and are possible valuable advocacy partners to achieve the project vision, but are not MOU signatories. The organisations include but are not limited to: Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, Ngati Rangi Trust, Project Tongariro, Tongariro Conservation Board, Destination Great Lake Taupo, Advocates for the Tongariro River, Landcare Research Ltd, Tukino Skifield, Ruapehu District Council and Taupo District Council.

(b) Roles and responsibilities

- The parties will have due regard to, and promote the vision and principles of, this project whenever possible, within and outside their organisations.
- The parties will maximise opportunities for data and knowledge sharing through the DRILCP.
- The relevant parties will coordinate the planning and development of work programmes (e.g. pest control operations) through the DRILCP in ways that are consistent with the project vision and principles.

- The relevant parties will undertake the control of invasive pest plants on lands they own or administer, in the project area, in ways that are consistent with the project vision and principles and any operational plan developed by the DRILCP during the MOU period (including meeting Biosecurity Act 1993 obligations).
- Where possible, the parties will provide for, or contribute funding (or other resources in kind) towards, the implementation of the operational plan, including for example, meeting the costs of pest control on lands they own or administer, contributing to monitoring/photography costs (where appropriate) and other initiatives determined by the DRILCP during the MOU period.


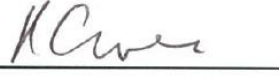

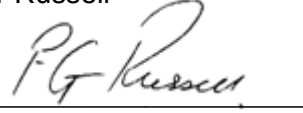


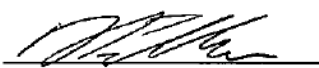
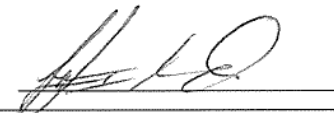
8. Commencement, review and termination

This MOU commences on October 1, 2014 and will remain in force until November 30, 2025.

The parties agree to review the MOU annually to ensure it remains effective, up-to-date and complies with current law.

This MOU may be terminated by any party in writing to all signatories. The termination will not abrogate a terminating party from any legal obligation under and current law with regard to this project.

9. Implemented by the parties as a Memorandum of Understanding:

<p>Signed for and on behalf of: Department of Conservation</p>	<p>Name <u>MEIKENE HARVEY-BRECK - 21/02/2013</u></p> <p>Signature <u></u></p>
<p>Signed for and on behalf of: NZ Defence Force</p>	<p>Name <u>Rob Owen</u></p> <p>Signature <u></u></p>
<p>Signed for and on behalf of: Lake Rotoaira Forest Trust</p>	<p>Name <u>DI CHAK WITĪ MARENA</u> <u>SEVERNĒ</u></p> <p>Signature <u></u></p> <p>19th December 2013</p>
<p>Signed for and on behalf of: Waikato Regional Council</p>	<p>Name Peter Russell</p> <p>Signature <u></u></p>
<p>Signed for and on behalf of: Horizons Regional Council</p>	<p>Name <u>CRAIG MITCHELL</u></p> <p>Signature <u></u></p>
<p>Signed for and on behalf of: New Zealand Transport Agency</p>	<p>Name <u>Kaye Clarke</u></p> <p>Signature <u></u></p>
<p>Signed for and on behalf of: Genesis Energy</p>	<p>Name <u>David Pellowe</u></p> <p>Signature <u></u></p>
<p>Signed for and on behalf of: Transpower</p>	<p>Name <u>Jim Ireland</u></p> <p>Signature <u></u></p>

Appendix 1: Broom distribution survey.

