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Media release

EDS challenges the legal profession to stand up for independent legal research



The Environmental Defence Society is disappointed to hear that the New Zealand Law Foundation is going into recess, with no new funding applications being considered after June 2020.

Over the last three decades, the Foundation has provided a valuable source of funding – over \$30 million – for hundreds of projects involving legal research. That research has been conducted by legal scholars and others and has made a real contribution to New Zealand society.

“The reasons for a recess are sound – to safeguard and build on its remaining capital funds,” says EDS Executive Director, Gary Taylor.

“However, that this has to happen is a real shame. Some of the most interesting and fruitful legal research projects of recent times have received funding from the Foundation. That includes a significant body of work led by EDS, including most recently its project looking at the future of New Zealand’s resource management system.

“The Foundation has been extremely important as a source of independent funding for a long time, and has had very real impact.

“Legal issues are only becoming more complex in modern times, and independent work on law reform more important.

“The importance of the Foundation to New Zealand law cannot be overstated. We need a continuous programme of improvement to the laws that govern our democracy.

“Whilst we are pleased that the new Borrin Foundation is there to part-fill the gap, the legal community should rally around the Law Foundation and fund it. Surely there are sufficient resources available amongst the legal fraternity, including members of the judiciary, to recapitalise the Foundation so that it can continue.

“I challenge the leaders in the law profession to look carefully at how a sustainable funding stream could be created for the Law Foundation,” Gary Taylor concluded.