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Media Release

EDS endorses Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's report

The Environmental Defence Society (EDS) strongly supports Rt Hon Simon Upton's call for significant improvements to New Zealand's environmental reporting regime. The Commissioner's report *Focusing Aotearoa New Zealand's environmental reporting system* was released earlier today.

"Mr Upton is clearly underwhelmed by the quality of the reporting regime and wants to see a serious commitment from Government to make improvements," said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

"He restates the need for good quality data to inform policy-makers and allow New Zealanders to track our environmental performance and outcomes. This will require greater investment in the reporting required under the Environmental Reporting Act 2015.

"He has called on the responsible Ministers – Finance, Environment and Statistics – to focus on the budgetary allocation to resource the reporting regime. EDS supports that call and notes that the Minister of Statistics is also an Associate Minister of Finance, so well positioned to lead that consideration.

"Mr Upton has also recommended some reframing of the reporting regime with theme-based commentaries that would reflect current issues rather than a rotation of domain focused reviews. That makes sense and will provide more timely and relevant data rather than simply proceeding on a rota.

"He has made suggestions for changes to the Act and to the respective roles of the Secretary for the Environment and the Government Statistician which seem sensible.

"He has also suggested state of the environment reporting should be on a longer cycle to enable comparisons to be more clearly made and a requirement for a formal response from Government to each report.

"Overall we are concerned at the obvious deficiencies in our environmental reporting system identified by the Commissioner, most of which come down to underfunding. We can't manage what we don't know so Government really does need to get on with implementing the suite of recommendations," Mr Taylor concluded.