

## **EDS News December 2022**

### **What a year!**

#### **New Secretary for the Environment**

#### **Scallops off the menu**

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#### **National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity imminent**

#### **Important Conferences in 2023**

### **What a year!**

As we head into a welcome break, it's worth reflecting on what's been an action-packed year for EDS. We've had a massive work load: resource management and freshwater reforms; conservation law reform projects; hosting a large Climate Change and Business Conference; advocating for native forests to displace permanent pines; working with colleagues to present key concerns to the Prime Minister; keeping communication and ideas flowing with the opposition; preparing some significant litigation to challenge bad environmental practices; submitting on key plan changes; engaging with officials on implementation of Sea Change in the Hauraki Gulf; working up a major project on the expected Climate Adaptation Act; and much more. It's also been a tough year for many, with Covid-19 running interference across society.

**We sincerely hope all our supporters have a good break over Christmas and come back refreshed for the challenges that lie ahead in 2023! Best wishes from the EDS Team.**

### **New Secretary for the Environment**

EDS welcomes the appointment of James Palmer as the incoming Secretary for the Environment (from March 2023). James is well-known to us in his current role as Chief Executive of Hawkes Bay Regional Council and as a former Deputy Secretary at the Ministry for the Environment. He will bring regional council experience to the job which is welcome given we are entering the implementation phase of both the freshwater reforms and the new resource management system. He replaces Vicky Robertson who retires after 7 years in the role. Vicky will be reflecting on her time at the Ministry when she presents a Valedictory Speech at EDS's conference in March.

### **Scallops off the menu**

The recent announcement by Fisheries Minister David Parker of further closures to scallop fisheries in the Hauraki Gulf is welcome, albeit a little overdue. It seemed very unwise to leave two small pockets available for dredging when the rest of the fishery was clearly in such a dire state. They are now also in serious decline. Approving the closures on an emergency basis was definitely needed and EDS will keep watch for any legal challenges to Parker's decision which we consider lawful and with merit. Now the scallops have a chance to recover and this should be the end of environmentally destructive scallop dredging in the Hauraki Gulf.

### **Resource management reforms latest**

EDS is in the middle of a deep dive into the Natural and Built Environment Bill and the Spatial Planning Bill. Our analysis is revealing some key improvements that are needed especially to the former bill. We are focusing, amongst other matters, on the purpose and principles clauses; on limits, targets and exemptions; on the framing for the exercise of Ministerial discretions; and on transition. We expect to release our initial thoughts on the bills next week with 2 purposes in mind. First, we want to provide other submitters with ideas that might be useful in preparing their own submissions. Secondly, we will be seeking considered feedback to help sharpen up our own thinking. We are planning to formally file our submissions with the Select Committee prior to the closing date, now 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

### **Three Waters weirdness**

It's hard to separate the wheat from the chaff when it comes to evaluating the Three Waters reforms, now substantially enacted by Parliament. There has been so much frankly weird commentary that has had more to do with raw politics than the merits. But from an environmental perspective the creation of the four new entities has in our view always made good sense. It enables a bigger balance sheet to fund the appalling infrastructure deficit in both potable and waste water services and that it is likely to lead to improved drinking and receiving water quality.

### **National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity imminent**

The NPS IB is expected to be released before year end. When it receives formal approval there'll no doubt be the usual complaints from farmer groups. But it's worth remembering that the regulation had its genesis in the collaborative process that ran for 18 months and to which Federated Farmers was a party. Indeed, the resultant draft was approved by all the parties to the process which commenced under the former National-led government. The Gazetted version will have changed in some respects but one would hope that farmers might acknowledge the need for such measures to turn around the continuing loss of precious indigenous biodiversity on private land.

### **Important Conferences in 2023**

EDS is hosting 2 conferences next year. ***Pivot Point: Deep Environmental Change, Auckland, 22-24 March 2023*** is now open for registrations [here](#). This is Aotearoa New Zealand's leading environmental summit and features a range of high quality international and local speakers traversing the big changes ahead for environmental management. The ***15th Climate Change and Business Conference*** is in advanced stages of planning and will be held in September, the venue and date to be advised shortly. This event is being organized jointly with the Sustainable Business Council and promises to provide some real impetus from the business community towards net zero.