



Hon Damien O'Connor

Minister for Biosecurity

PRESS RELEASE

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Hon James Shaw

Associate Minister for the Environment

Stronger biosecurity protections at our border and for our iconic kauri

- \$28 million (as part of \$32 million over five years) to roll out a National Pest Management Plan to protect kauri from dieback.
- \$8.9 million for advanced screening technology to strengthen biosecurity management of the growing mail pathway.
- \$22.5 million for the National Animal Identification and Tracing Scheme (NAIT).

Budget 2021 makes important investments to protect kauri, introduce hi-tech biosecurity safeguards and bring a greater focus on animal tracing to support the eradication of *Mycoplasma bovis*.

“As a nation that depends on trade and tourism, and a country whose lifestyle is linked to our unique natural environment, our focus on investment in biosecurity is vital,” Damien O'Connor said.

“The Government is stepping up efforts to protect kauri against dieback and preserve the taonga for future generations. There is great work being done across the country, but with this new investment, we have the opportunity to do more to protect our forest giants, their wide ecosystems and the beautiful clean, green brand that makes us proud.

“Rolling out a National Pest Management Plan is the strongest form of protection available under the Biosecurity Act 1993 to combat kauri dieback disease.

“It is a legal framework that will bring together the work of government, councils, iwi and non-government organisations under a new umbrella agency that will oversee all activity regarding the spread of kauri dieback. It ensures everyone is at the decision-making table and involved in the strategic direction and day-to-day response,” Damien O'Connor said.

“Our kauri forests are an incredibly important taonga for Aotearoa New Zealand and our Government is taking action to ensure they remain standing, healthy, and strong,” Associate Minister for the Environment James Shaw said.

“Right now these iconic trees face potentially fatal threats from kauri dieback. Stopping the spread of the disease needs increased support and resources – and this Government is providing that.

“Today’s announcement builds on the work of existing kauri programmes and will help to contain the disease while a cure is found.”

James Shaw noted that today’s announcement also helps to advance the commitments in the Cooperation Agreement between Labour and the Green Party to protect kauri and to build on pest management programmes.

The Government will also fund new technology to detect biosecurity threats in international mail.

“New Zealand Post’s decision to shift its international mail operations to a new processing centre in Auckland has created an opportunity to rethink how we keep out pests and diseases that could arrive with ever-increasing mail volumes,” Damien O’Connor said.

“The investment will involve installing new 3D scanner technology that has the potential to automatically detect things like seeds and fruit.

“Biosecurity will also be enhanced by the screening of electronic data associated with individual mail items.

A continued focus on NAIT compliance and enforcement was critical to ensuring the national animal tracing system was as reliable as it could be and supported the programme to eradicate *Mycoplasma bovis*.

“Our ability to trace cattle and deer through the NAIT system is a critical factor in managing biosecurity threats that could have a devastating impact on New Zealand’s agricultural sector. Traceability is also important for food safety and quality assurance programmes and for responding quickly to natural disasters.

“We’ve achieved increased levels of NAIT compliance in recent years. This funding will help us maintain and build on that good work,” Damien O’Connor said.

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