



PRESS RELEASE
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\$1.1 billion investment to create 11,000 environment jobs in our regions

- \$433 million for new jobs in regional environmental projects
- \$315 million biosecurity, including weed and pest control.
- \$200 million for DOCs Jobs for Nature Fund
- \$154 million for new jobs enhancing biodiversity on public and private land

Budget 2020 will create almost 11,000 new jobs in regional New Zealand to restore our environment.

Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage says “this investment in nature will not only support thousands of people with jobs but pay dividends for generations to come by giving nature a helping hand.”

Pest Eradication and Management

This \$315 million package is made up of four initiatives:

- \$148 million for the Department of Conservation to ramp up pest control and eradication, including advancing Predator Free New Zealand and working with iwi to prevent the collapse of North Island forests
- \$27 million for the Ministry for Primary Industries to get populations of wallabies in the Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Canterbury and Otago under control
- \$40m for Land Information NZ to undertake pest and weed control in rivers on Crown land
- \$100 million to help control wilding pines.

“This Government is committed to looking after nature and people’s livelihoods. Today we are supercharging the efforts of iwi, the Department of Conservation and the community to control pests and weeds, restore wetlands and return native bush to health so our natural landscapes and birds like kiwi kaka and kakāriki can thrive.

“Supporting iwi efforts to save iconic North Island forests from collapse because of the impacts of possums, pigs and deer is crucial to helping nature and the climate.

“Much needed pest and weed control led by Land Information New Zealand will be done on Crown land in South Island riverbeds and of aquatic weeds in iconic lakes such as Lake Wanaka,” Eugenie Sage said.

Agriculture Minister Damien O’Connor says wallabies pose a threat, economically and environmentally.

“They are a growing threat to farmers because they compete with livestock for food. Three Bennett’s wallabies can eat the equivalent of one 50kg sheep. They can also destroy agricultural crops and plantation forestry and damage fences.

“Wallaby populations are spreading and increasing rapidly in several regions, which is creating additional pressures for agriculture, forestry and conservation. This initiative will build on existing efforts to knock the wallaby population back,” Damien O’Connor said.

The Government has committed \$100 million of operating funding to tackle wilding pines over the next four years. This funding contributes to a ten-year programme that will deliver a \$6.3 billion benefit to the country, protecting our farmland, water availability and biodiversity and supporting regional communities by creating jobs and stimulating economic activity across a wide range of goods and services providers.

Agriculture Minister Damien O’Connor says people with a range of skills will be required to help with the work.

“Wilding pine control requires different skill sets like on-foot labour, chain-saw operators, heavy machinery, and helicopters. It also stimulates economic activity through increased demand for accommodation, vehicles, repairs and maintenance, food providers, and many others.

“We expect it to provide employment for up to 600 people annually within the programme, and that doesn’t include the flow on jobs from the boost to regional economic activity,” Damien O’Connor said.

More jobs in the regions

\$433 million will be injected into regional environmental projects that will create 4,000 jobs over five years.

Environment Minister David Parker says the programme will deliver huge benefits to local businesses, accelerate regional economic recovery and advance national and regional environmental priorities.

“This initiative has been designed specifically in response to the impact of COVID-19.

“This investment will contribute to improving the health of New Zealand’s waterways and support economic recovery in partnership with local government and farmers.

“It will include restoring mini wetlands, stabilising river banks, removing sediment, and providing for fish passage. The funding will support employment across New Zealand, including the Kaipara catchment.

“This package allows businesses considering redundancies and downscaling to redeploy their staff on environmentally focused activities in their home region. When those businesses are able to rehire again, workers can return to their previous roles,” David Parker said.

“The initiatives will also support the Government’s objectives in its Action for Healthy Waterways to stop further degradation of our precious waterways, make material improvement within five years and restore them to health within a generation.

“These initiatives show how environment-related actions can make a meaningful contribution to the post-COVID-19 economic recovery,” David Parker said.

Jobs for Nature Fund

Budget 2020 establishes a new \$200 million fund to create jobs boosting predator control efforts, restoring wetlands, regenerate planting and improving tracks, huts and other recreational and visitor assets on public conservation land.

Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage says the Department of Conservation will work with councils, iwi and local businesses such as tourism operators to provide nature based jobs.

“We know the pandemic has hit businesses hard and this Government is focused on getting New Zealand working again. As well as getting people back to work, this initiative will support household incomes, and promote mental health and wellbeing for the people involved.

“The funding will enable iwi, businesses, and councils working with government agencies like DOC to employ thousands of people across New Zealand to better look after our natural landscapes, native bush, birds, waterways and coast.

New jobs enhancing biodiversity on public and private land

This initiative will create more than 1800 new jobs across the country.

Eugenie Sage says the jobs will be primarily in the regions through agencies like QEII and Landcare Trust, regional councils and landowner groups.

“The workers will help protect and restore indigenous biodiversity and habitat, help with revegetation of private and public conservation land and undertake riparian planting.

“There is an opportunity in these regions for people who have lost their jobs in other sectors to move into this habitat work, and the four-year investment programme will give businesses the certainty and confidence to invest and build their capacity and capability,” Eugenie Sage said.

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