

## Ashburton Biodiversity Strategy – feedback & comments

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I would like to be heard in support of my submission.

### General comments:

1. I have read the Strategy and congratulate ADC on its proposals to protect biodiversity in our district.
2. Native biodiversity is in crisis in the Ashburton District, and so it is extremely important that ADC recognises that because there is so little native habitat left in the Ashburton District that **all remaining** native vegetation should be protected.
3. This should go further than what is already outlined in the District Plan (eg, no removal of native vegetation on the Canterbury Plains), it should include actions on the ground to protect remnants, such as fencing off roadside vegetation, weed and pest control and restoration such as enhanced planting to provide a habitat rather than just a remnant.
4. In the foothills, there is more remaining native vegetation and habitat for native fauna than on the plains and coast, but it is increasingly encroached upon by agricultural development, and forestry that has the potential to become weeds, and pests that threaten native remnants.
5. In the high country, weeds and pests are serious issues. Working with other agencies on the eradication of goats, deer and tahr must be high priority as these pests are seriously reducing biodiversity values as high country vegetation and foothills forest understorey are eaten out.
6. Improvements in native biodiversity also offers the opportunity for enhanced carbon sequestration. Thriving wetlands, forests, estuaries and coastal lagoons capture and store large amounts of carbon as well as being valuable biodiversity hotspots.
7. Biodiversity protection cannot be seen in isolation: the huge loss we have seen in the district over the last twenty years has largely been the result of agricultural development, so policies must be aligned so that biodiversity protection is considered at every decision in all departments.
8. Funding is crucial: the monitoring and compliance department must be adequately resourced to uphold the provisions of the District Plan, and the funding of protection, restoration, and weed and pest control must be taken seriously.

### Specific comments:

Goal 1: Protect and maintain

1.1 D The Hinds Drains are the only specific place mentioned and this area is already well surveyed by the Water Zone Committee. There are many other

important biodiversity areas such as wetlands, foothills water races and streams, coastal dongas and hapu that are more worthy of survey.

1.4 Impact of use and development: I support reviewing and strengthening the vegetation clearance rules in the District Plan, and proper resourcing so that rules can be enforced. Much native vegetation has been sprayed in the hill and high country without consequence. The remaining matagouri and “grey scrub” is all valuable and should not be removed to allow farm development.

## Goal 2

2.2 Biodiversity corridors should be encouraged on all farmland, not just “unproductive farm blocks”.

2.4 Facilitating ecotourism should not be a priority. There are downsides – e.g., disruption of nesting birds, increased traffic in the backcountry that is valued for peace and quiet, jet skis and boats disturbing birds on lakes and rivers.