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Media Release

EDS and Forest & Bird call for greater environmental protection for the High Country

In a comprehensive joint submission on the Government's discussion paper on future management of Crown Pastoral Land, EDS and Forest & Bird have called for greater environmental protections after tenure review.

"The Government intends to discontinue tenure review in the High Country and has proposed a range of new or improved approaches, many of which we support," said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

"However we do suggest some strengthening of the accountability and transparency arrangements for the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who is currently the most unaccountable civil servant in the land.

"Those arrangements should be bolstered by implementing improved law that makes it clear that environmental bottom lines must be met and significant inherent landscape and ecological values protected as a primary responsibility.

"Other key points made by the Societies include:

- A suggestion that the Nature Heritage Fund is strengthened and funded with \$200 million to enable the acquisition of valued leasehold land
- Inclusion of requirements to manage wilding conifers and other biodiversity threats on Crown pastoral lease land
- Proposals to enhance public input into decision making
- Entrenching DOC technical advice as a mandatory consideration in the discretionary consent process
- Creating better alignment with RMA consenting processes.

"Strong support for the Mackenzie Drylands Heritage Area was reiterated."

"The Societies consider that if the correct framework can be put in place, ecological and landscape values can be safeguarded to ensure New Zealand's nationally treasured landscapes are available for future generations to enjoy," Mr Taylor concluded.

The joint submission is available [here](#).