

# Environmental Defence Society

## Latest News: March 2020

### New Office Arrangements

The EDS office has closed and staff are working from their respective homes in Auckland, New Plymouth and Wellington. We are all set up with good connectivity and are sticking as closely to normal as possible in these unprecedented times. This newsletter will briefly outline key activities underway including policy research aimed at generating helpful reform ideas for when we emerge from lockdown.



### Government reforms

There is considerable uncertainty about the timing for key government reforms. We were expecting the **Resource Management Amendment Bill** to be enacted soon but whether Parliamentary processes will be available to do that is questionable. The **freshwater reforms** do not require Parliamentary approval but do need Cabinet consensus and an Order in Council to create the proposed NPS and NES Freshwater. A similar situation applies to the proposed **NPS Indigenous Biodiversity**. It would be very disappointing if approval of these reforms was delayed significantly given the years of work involved in getting them to this stage. Some timing flexibility could, if necessary, form part of the approved package.

### EDS Policy Team

It's EDS's intention to continue with a number of current and prospective research projects. These include what we are calling **RM3**, a focused look at urban issues in the resource management system and what reforms are required to better address them. That project is due for completion mid-year. We are nearing the end point of a major review of **Landscape Management** in New Zealand. That project includes a number of case studies covering the Mackenzie Basin, Banks Peninsula, the Hauraki Gulf, the Waitakere Ranges and tourism.

Commencing mid-year is our big **Oceans** project, an 18-month review of how we manage the marine environment and what changes are desirable to produce better outcomes. Starting shortly is part one of our review of the range of **Conservation Laws** which will follow a similar approach to our successful RM1 and RM2 Reform projects. Further down the pipeline we'd like to take a close look at the **Land Act and the Crown Pastoral Land Act**. All of this work is designed to inform both current and future governments and ensure environmental outcomes remain priorities in the post-Covid world.

---

## Conferences and events

EDS runs 2 conferences each year. The EDS Environmental Summit theme was **Food for our Future** and was scheduled for August 2020. This has been cancelled and it's our intention to run that event at a similar time next year. Our **Climate Change and Business Conference** is slated for October 2020. We hope to be able to run that event but will see how things play out. Meantime to keep stimulated and informed, we are thinking of running some shorter web-based events, covering both the election campaign (whenever that occurs) and keeping up with the fast-evolving world of climate change policy. We'll keep you posted.

---



## Litigation

Courts and councils are expected to defer hearings for everything except urgent cases. **Simons Pass Station v Mackenzie District Council**, to which EDS is a party, was deferred earlier this week. We have a number of council and court hearings in process and are awaiting a decision of the Supreme Court in **Port Otago Ltd v EDS** which was an application for leave by Port Otago to appeal a case related to the jurisprudence in **EDS v King Salmon** to that Court. Meantime EDS is preparing declaration proceedings relating to what we see as **Tiwai Smelter's** obligations to remove dangerous dross from storage at Maitaia. Those proceedings will be filed shortly, subject to Board approval.

---



### **Covid-19**

In addition to all of the above work we are starting to think creatively about what the post-pandemic world – or our part of it – might look like. It's trite but true to say nothing will be the same again. The challenge will be making the economic and social recovery positive for both people and the environment. It's hard to contemplate that at present with so much being unknown. But at some stage we should start rethinking our future, one in which local might dominate over global; tourism might be low volume and higher value; climate change mitigation targets might be easier to achieve; and a more sustainable world might emerge. Meantime to all our members and supporters – in fact to everyone – stay well, be kind and let's prevail over this thing.