

# Memo

8 September 2016

To: Great Barrier Local Board  
cc: Great Barrier Local Board staff  
From: Jeremy Warden – Biosecurity Officer, Great Barrier  
Phil Brown – Biosecurity Team Manager (North / West)

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Subject: Great Barrier Rabbit control programme for 2016/2017

## Purpose

To update the board on progress against the board's request for 'a rabbit control work plan with outcome indicators and costs of delivery including multi-year' (resolution number GB/2016/105).

## Background

In 2012, the board commissioned a report on the impacts of rabbits. This report by Kurahaupo Consulting (John Parkes) was completed in May 2013 and led to the development of site-specific control plans, and local board funding, for a rabbit control programme as part of the board's 2013/2014 work programme. This programme focused on Kaitoke, Palmers, Awana, Okiwi township, Whangapoua and Whangapoua Spit, with the late one-off inclusion of Kawa, Motairehe and Karaka Bay.

The board has continued to fund rabbit control as part of its environment work programme with an average budget of \$26,000 per annum over the past three financial years. The focus continues to be on Okiwi township, Okiwi airfield and private property to the south, Awana and Kaitoke dunes and airfield.

Methodology is based on best practice using Magtoxin and pindone where possible and night shoots as either a follow-up or primary method of control. Warren ripping with a tractor-sub soiler has been successful in some areas and its application will be looked at some of the sites in the future.

In 2015/2016, implementation of the rabbit control programme was impacted by the following:

- No assessment of environmental effects (AEE) produced for Department of Conservation (DOC) land surrounding our control sites to give us the ability to use Magtoxin and pindone at Kaitoke, Awana, Okiwi township and Okiwi airfield. DOC informed us that they planned to carry out this process but in the end did not have the capacity to complete this. Night shooting was however undertaken on DOC land at Kaitoke and Awana.
- Inability to use pindone within the Claris airfield fan due to harvesting of rabbits for consumption.

Despite this, we have achieved measurable and notable reduction in rabbit numbers in all areas. This is particularly evident around the Okiwi airfield, where a 93% reduction in the rabbit population has been achieved using pindone carrot control methodology.

## Next Steps

A combined meeting recently held between Auckland Council and DOC resolved to review the current Great Barrier site-specific control plans to confirm what tools are needed at each location. The necessary information will then be used to gain permission to use the appropriate tools on DOC land as well as other land that control work is carried out on. Information gathered will feed into a longer term plan in the hope that resources can be secured that will enable more sustained suppression of rabbit numbers.

The board will be updated at the conclusion of these discussions (by June 2017).