

18208 (2023). Hon Scott Simpson to the Minister for Biosecurity

Home » Parliamentary Business » Order Paper & Questions » Written questions

Metadata

Published date: 19 Jun 2023

18208 (2023). Hon Scott Simpson to the **Minister for Biosecurity** (19 Jun 2023): Is the Minister confident the Government has allocated adequate resources and funding to address the Exotic Caulerpa outbreak, and, if not, what steps will the Minister take to ensure that sufficient resources are available for effective management and control of the situation?

Hon Damien O'Connor (Minister for Biosecurity) replied: A full Biosecurity New Zealand response, in partnership with mana whenua, Department of Conservation, local community, district and regional councils has been operating since July 2021.

I am advised that the resources allocated to manage this response have been appropriate, and I am confident in the work that has been done to date. This includes the use of regulatory tools (Controlled Area Notice), customary tools (rāhui), public education and awareness, pathway management, the application of science and mātauranga and on-going research to slow the spread of exotic Caulerpa.

I am advised that the plan is for these actions to continue, but also that a number of important additional approaches are underway. A technical advisory group (TAG) has been established to thoroughly examine suction dredging as a control tool. A second TAG is also being formed to examine on-going options for the control of exotic Caulerpa now that we have had two years' experience of it in Aotearoa New Zealand and understand more about how it behaves in our conditions. Resulting advice from these TAG's will inform any future management and controls and relating resource allocation.

Written Questions

Reply details - 20736 (2023) - Replied

Member

Simpson, Hon Scott

Reply Due

18 Jul 2023

Portfolio

Biosecurity (Hon Damien O'Connor)

Lodged

18 Jul 2023 5:08 PM

Question

Does the Government have a long-term strategy for preventing future outbreaks of Exotic Caulerpa or similar invasive species; if so, what is an outline of that strategy, and what changes, if any, are being considered to that strategy to further mitigate risk?

Reply

I am advised that there are several pieces of work underway relating to biosecurity (legislative or regulatory) changes that provide strategic direction for preventing future outbreaks of marine invasive species such as Caulerpa. These include:

- A National Marine Programme being established to minimise the spread and impacts of marine invasive species via domestic vessel movements
- The Craft Risk Management Standards (CRMS) that apply to international vessels, the CRMS for Vessels and CRMS for Biofouling, has undergone a merge and review and the new CRMS for international vessels is soon to be issued;
- The Aquaculture Strategy which has led to the establishment of an Aquaculture Biosecurity Work Programme;
- A Top of the North Pathway Management Plan which is an important step towards an improved national regulatory framework for marine pathways management;
- The Marine High Risk Site Surveillance (MHRSS), which while not a regulatory tool, is an ongoing national programme of surveys at High Risk Sites across New Zealand targeted for early detection of High Risk marine non-indigenous species (NIS) listed on the Unwanted Organisms Register.

I have been advised that a Strategic Direction Technical Advisory Group has also been formed to assess Biosecurity New Zealand's response to exotic Caulerpa to-date, and to provide strategic direction for the long-term management of exotic Caulerpa.

Signed

Hon Damien O'Connor

18 Jul 2023 5:08 PM

Printed on: 19 Jul 2023 12:16 PM

Written Questions

Reply details - 18209 (2023) - Replied

Member

Simpson, Hon Scott

Reply Due

27 Jun 2023

Portfolio

Biosecurity (Hon Damien O'Connor)

Lodged

19 Jul 2023 2:24 PM

Question

Why did the Government not pursue an elimination strategy from the beginning of the Exotic Caulerpa outbreak?

Reply

I am advised that early in the exotic Caulerpa response, Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) engaged a technical advisory group (TAG) comprising scientific experts on invasive marine algae and mātauranga Māori specialists. The TAG provided independent, scientific and technical advice on methods/tools (particularly where these methods may be new or emerging) to manage exotic Caulerpa at Aotea Great Barrier Island. The methods/tools included coarse salt, sodium hypochlorite, dredge spoil, UV-C light, augmentative biocontrol, invasive species displacement, heat treatment, matting on the bottom, and copper-impregnated mesh netting. Subsequent independent, scientific and technical advice on methods/tools (particularly where these methods may be new or emerging) to manage exotic Caulerpa at Aotea Great Barrier Island from a technical advisory group (TAG) comprising scientific experts on invasive marine algae and mātauranga Māori specialists concluded that eradication was not considered feasible due to the extent of the spread, the limited control tools available to deal with marine invasive seaweeds, and the biology of exotic Caulerpa. Additionally, small scale treatment trials using salt, considered the most feasible of the available treatment methods, found that while initially effective, it was not scalable and exotic Caulerpa quickly reinvaded treatment sites. The secondary impacts of the various management methods/tools to manage exotic Caulerpa also have to be taken into account. Due to the habitat range of exotic Caulerpa in New Zealand and the non-select nature of these methods/tools, their use is likely to harm non-target species, including taonga species. This secondary impact is considered alongside the benefits and challenges of each treatment method/tool. A TAG has been established to thoroughly examine suction dredging as a control tool as this method has had some recent positive impact overseas. I expect the TAG to examine this option and develop advice, considering the different conditions of those international incursions compared with those we are currently experiencing in New Zealand. A second TAG is being formed to examine on-going options

for the control of exotic Caulerpa now that we have had two years' experience of it in Aotearoa New Zealand and understand more about how it behaves in our conditions.

Signed

19 Jul 2023 2:24 PM

Printed on: 19 Jul 2023 3:11 PM

18210 (2023). Hon Scott Simpson to the Minister for Biosecurity

Home » Parliamentary Business » Order Paper & Questions » Written questions

Metadata

Published date: 19 Jun 2023

18210 (2023). Hon Scott Simpson to the **Minister for Biosecurity** (19 Jun 2023): What date was the Minister first made aware of the presence of Exotic Caulerpa, and can the Minister clarify whether the severity and potential consequences of this situation were clearly communicated at that time?

Hon Damien O'Connor (Minister for Biosecurity) replied: I was advised of the presence of exotic Caulerpa in New Zealand on 26 July 2021. The advice I received highlighted the invasive nature of exotic Caulerpa and the ecological and economic impacts that have been experienced in several countries.

Subsequent independent, scientific and technical advice on methods/tools (particularly where these methods may be new or emerging) to manage exotic Caulerpa at Aotea Great Barrier Island from a technical advisory group (TAG) comprising scientific experts on invasive marine algae and mātauranga Māori specialists concluded that eradication was likely not feasible due to the extent of the spread, the limited control tools available to deal with marine invasive seaweeds, and the biology of exotic Caulerpa. Additionally, small scale treatment trials using salt, considered the most feasible of the available treatment methods, found that while initially effective, it was not scalable and exotic Caulerpa quickly reinvaded treatment sites.

I am advised that Biosecurity New Zealand has been using regulatory tools (Controlled Area Notice), customary tools (rāhui), public education and awareness, pathway management, the application of science and mātauranga and on-going research to slow the spread of exotic Caulerpa. I am advised that the plan is for these actions to continue, but also that a number of important additional approaches are underway including the establishment of a Suction Dredging TAG and a Strategic Direction TAG to investigate new methodologies for removal and to continue evaluating all options.

Written Questions

Reply details - 18207 (2023) - Replied

Member

Simpson, Hon Scott

Reply Due

27 Jun 2023

Portfolio

Biosecurity (Hon Damien O'Connor)

Lodged

13 Jul 2023 9:24 AM

Question

What steps, if any, are being taken to engage and support communities affected by the outbreak of Exotic Caulerpa, including marine and tourism industries?

Reply

I have been advised that since exotic Caulerpa was discovered at Aotea Great Barrier Island in 2021, at Ahuahu Great Mercury Island in 2022 and most recently at Te Rāwhiti in the Bay of Islands, Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) has been working in partnership with mana whenua, Department of Conservation (DOC), local community, district and regional councils to help prevent and slow the spread of exotic Caulerpa. Communications and comprehensive community engagement have been key to this. Community Board representatives are on the Governance Boards of Aotea and Ahuahu Islands and a Governance body is being established for Te Rāwhiti which will also include community representation. Local government representatives are also at the Governance table. A Fishers' Working Group has met to provide advice on Controlled Area Notice (CAN) provisions for Aotea and Ahuahu Islands as they relate to the fishing sector. BNZ has arranged and attended numerous public meetings, one-on-one meetings with key community members, and hui on Aotea, Whitianga and across the Bay of Islands to provide information and receive feedback from those affected communities. Since exotic Caulerpa was first detected in New Zealand at Aotea Great Barrier Island, multiple channels have been used to reach specific audiences in the upper North Island, particularly boat and marine users in affected communities and those who use the waters at the locations concerned. BNZ been careful to communicate through local platforms such as community-run social media pages, leafletting on ferries and local airlines and having local people out in local chartered vessels, delivering messages about the CAN rules, keeping vessels and equipment clean and, also, looking out for exotic Caulerpa and reporting it. An extensive and successful public awareness campaign has been running at Aotea and Ahuahu which has directly engaged and involved local communities. Flyers, posters and pamphlets are present at key locations across Aotea, Whitianga and across the Bay of Islands. An Ambassador programme has been stood up at each of the affected areas utilising locals providing information and awareness to both local residents and visitors in the affected areas. A public information campaign and Ambassador programme was also run in the Bay of Islands over Kings Birthday Weekend with one social media influencer (Matt

Watson, ITM Fishing) receiving over 80,000 likes and over 26,000 shares for his posts on looking out for and reporting exotic Caulerpa. This approach is continuing with a new campaign underway in social and digital channels, local press and radio to ensure people are aware of the new CAN and rāhui in the Bay of Islands. This will include, once again, the use of local ambassadors speaking with and providing information to others in the local community. Finally, BNZ has established three Technical Advisory Groups whose membership includes individuals with expertise in the marine research and marine industries. Along with partners in this response, BNZ continues, every day, to actively engage with affected communities and businesses in dealing with this exotic Caulerpa outbreak.

Signed

13 Jul 2023 9:24 AM

Printed on: 19 Jul 2023 12:09 PM