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CONTROLLING WILDING PINES

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## Biosecurity Minister announces funding to protect Taharoa Domain from wilding pines

- Date: 27 April 2020
- Media contact: MPI media team
- Telephone: [029 894 0328](tel:0298940328)
- Email: [media@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:media@mpi.govt.nz)

Minister for Biosecurity, Damian O'Connor has announced that \$190,000 is to be provided to protect Taharoa Domain from wilding pines. Taharoa Domain surrounds Northland's iconic Kai Iwi Lakes and is an important site for local iwi, a growing tourism destination and a unique New Zealand landscape.

"In recent years, Taharoa Domain has been increasingly threatened by wilding pines. These self-seeded trees spread quickly, forcing out native plants and animals," says Mr O'Connor.

"The project we have launched today, will remove wilding pines within the domain and reduce the risk of reinvasion in the future".

"The Kai Iwi lakes are probably New Zealand's best known dune lakes," says Don McKenzie, Biosecurity Manager at the Northland Regional Council.

"These highly complex and fragile ecosystems are home to a number of endangered endemic species. These include critically endangered native plants as well as some animal species which are also under threat - the rare dune lake dwarf inanga (a fish), longfin and shortfin eels, the Australasian bittern and the New Zealand grebe."

"Wilding pines are really making inroads into the landscape of Northland. Our communities here see wilding pines as a problem," says Mr McKenzie.

Taharoa Domain has been home to Māori for hundreds of years. The area contains wāhi tapu and is still used as a mahinga kai. Wilding pines threaten both.



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“Wilding pines creep in and cover urupā and wāhi tapu. They are then so hard to remove and the work costs so much” says Mr McKenzie.

“Wilding pines are a significant issue in New Zealand – and not just because of their threat to important cultural sites and the environment,” says Mr. O’Connor.

“These pest trees cost New Zealand millions of dollars – in losses to primary production, resources spent on control and other environmental costs. The National Wilding Conifer Control Programme is bringing New Zealanders together to tackle this significant national problem.”

The National Wilding Conifer Control Programme is run by Biosecurity New Zealand. Over the last three years, the programme and its partners have already surveyed and controlled wilding pines across approximately 1.8 million hectares. Areas include the central North Island, Marlborough, Canterbury, Otago and Southland.

“The work in Northland will be different to the work elsewhere in the country,” says Mr Mckenzie.

“We would like the control work in region to be a ground operation, so we can be mindful of the land both for cultural and waterway protection reasons,” he says.

“Sometimes making that extra effort [to carry out ground-based control] might cost a little more but I think our approach will be very cost efficient.”

“The Taharoa Domain project is a collaboration between Te Roroa (local iwi), Kaipara District Council, Northland Regional Council, the Taharoa Governance Board, the Department of Conservation (DOC) and National Wilding Conifer Control Programme,” says Mr O’Connor.

“It’s important to act early, both here and across the country. Wilding pines spread fast - within 30 years they will cover a more than a quarter of New Zealand. And every year we wait, the cost of removing the wilding pines rises by 30%.”

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## Key facts about Wilding Pines

- Wilding pines are trees which have self-seeded and are growing where they are not wanted - they are the wrong tree in the wrong place. Unlike commercial forests, wilding pines are weeds.
- A conservative estimate is that wilding pines affect at least 1.8 million hectares (almost 6%) of New Zealand's land area. The actual area affected is likely to be much larger.
- Wilding pines spread fast - within 30 years they could cover more than a quarter of New Zealand. They not only threaten our natural environment but also overwhelm farmland, recreational land and areas of cultural importance.
- Around 1.8 million hectares of New Zealand's unique natural environment are infested with wilding pines. This includes some of our most iconic landscapes like Mt Tongariro, the Coromandel, the MacKenzie Basin, and Kai Iwi Lakes in Northland.
- We could lose up to 7.5 million hectares of New Zealand to wilding pine invasion. This would have an economic cost of \$4.6 billion, due to the negative impact of wilding pines on primary production, biodiversity, hydroelectric power generation and irrigation.
- The National Wilding Conifer Control Programme is led by Biosecurity New Zealand, working with the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Land Information New Zealand (LINZ). Other key players include the Defence Force, regional and local councils, local communities, researchers, industry and private landowners.
- So far, the programme has successfully controlled wilding pine infestations across 1.5 million hectares of vulnerable New Zealand landscapes. This active control means we have protected more than 3 million hectares, or just over 11 %, of New Zealand.

More information and media assets are available at [wildingpines.nz](http://wildingpines.nz). Email [wilding.pines@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:wilding.pines@mpi.govt.nz) for details.