

08 July 2021

Official Information Request No. 8140008820  
(Please quote this in any correspondence)

Matt Munro

By email: [fyi-request-15799-88441545@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-15799-88441545@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Matt

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**Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987**

**Re: Kauri Dieback**

Thank you for your email, received on 15 June 2021, requesting further information about Kauri Dieback. I have liaised with members of the Environmental Services department and they have provided the following information. Your specific questions are answered in the response set out below.

Auckland Council has recently confirmed a long-term framework for monitoring kauri dieback disease prevalence and incidence expanding on previous surveys. This revised framework is currently being implemented currently within the Waitākere Ranges. Information on the design and information that will be gathered from this are explained in a recorded webinar using the following link: <https://conferencelive.watch/kauri/>

**1) Is it true that the last survey of the Waitākere Ranges found that “70% of infected trees are within 50 meters of a track” or “70% of the (Kauri Dieback) problem is within 50 meters of tracks”?**

This statement is incorrect. The Waitākere Kauri Dieback Report 2017 (*copy attached*) states that “There is a close relationship between kauri dieback zones and their proximity to the track network, with 71% of kauri dieback zones and 56% of possible kauri dieback zones within 50 m of a track”.

The Waitakere Ranges Report analysis used a spatial representation (i.e., zones) and not an individual tree calculation. This means that an individual site or data-point may represent multiple trees in a stand.

**2) Did the last survey of the Waitākere Ranges provide evidence that the rate of infection close to tracks is significantly higher than in general?**

There has been no attempt to calculate rate of infection on a tree-by-tree basis. This would require surveying all (or a large, representative sample of) the symptomatic trees and the healthy trees in the Waitākere Ranges at an individual tree level.

**3) Is it true that (in the last survey of the Waitākere Ranges) only from 25% of Kauri trees which were assessed as having Kauri Dieback PTA spores could be retrieved from the tree or from the soil around them? That information was found in a book about Kauri by Joanna Orwin.**

The prior Waitakere Kauri Dieback Survey (conducted in 2015/ 2016) assessed disease symptomology of trees, with soil sampling undertaken selectively for a subset of those trees to understand if *Phytophthora agathidicida* (*p.a.*) was present within sites or catchments where it had not been confirmed prior. For that reason, it would be incorrect to state that only 25 per cent of trees that were assessed as having kauri dieback symptomology, returned soil samples positive for *Phytophthora agathidicida* as the team did not soil sample 100 per cent of the trees assessed. This was not the purpose of the surveillance design although the council is undertaking diagnostic test performance evaluation as part of the 2021 Kauri Dieback monitoring framework which will improve our understanding of the sensitivity and specificity of current and new diagnostic tools.

**4) Had the Waitākere Kauri Dieback Report ever a positive external peer review? If so, who was the reviewer and can you please provide his assessment.**

The Waitakere Ranges 2017 Report was externally peer reviewed by Tony Beauchamp, Planning and Intelligence workstream member for the Kauri Dieback Programme and Technical Support Officer Ecology & Environment at the Department of Conservation. *(Please find copy attached).*

**5) Was the Waitākere Kauri Dieback Report 2017 ever orderly published in a scientific journal?**

No. The purpose of the 2017 report was to inform operational management of kauri dieback disease in the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park. It was not intended to be a scientific research paper and was not published in a scientific journal.

**6) Was the closure of the Waitākere Ranges based on hard evidence (that people walking the tracks indeed significantly contribute to the increase in Kauri Dieback) or based on a precautionary approach?**

The 2017 report examines disease distribution from a spatial perspective (defines kauri dieback zones, where disease symptomology is present and then overlays this relative to where kauri areas are). This was then used to calculate the kilometres of track passing through the diseased zones. While the data within the 2017 report did not set out to measure prevalence of disease which would determine whether the area near to the track network was any more or less diseased than other areas in the Waitākere Ranges, it did demonstrate that a large portion of the track network passes through symptomatic forest and therefore represents a likely disease vector pathway. This provided the rationale for upgrading the track network to reduce soil-borne spread of kauri dieback disease both within the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park itself and further afield to other forested areas with stands of kauri. This is often referred to as the precautionary approach.

Decisions relating to the information that is being released to you were made by **Rachel Kelleher General Manager Environmental Services.**

Should you believe Auckland Council has not responded appropriately to your request, you have the right by way of complaint, under section 27(3) of the LGOIMA, to apply to the Ombudsman to seek an investigation and review of the decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you have any further queries, please contact me on 09 301 0101 quoting official information request number 8140008820.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Hare', written in a cursive style.

Angela Hare  
Senior Privacy & LGOIMA Business Partner  
Governance Services