

# Visitor impacts on Tāne Mahuta: or - from a small seed grows a great challenge

Ken Hughey

Chief Science Advisor, Department of Conservation, Wellington;  
Professor of Environmental Management, Lincoln University

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Session: SEA for tourism, conservation and recreation

# Tane Mahuta – an icon of New Zealand but also a metaphor for the really big issues

Some assumptions:

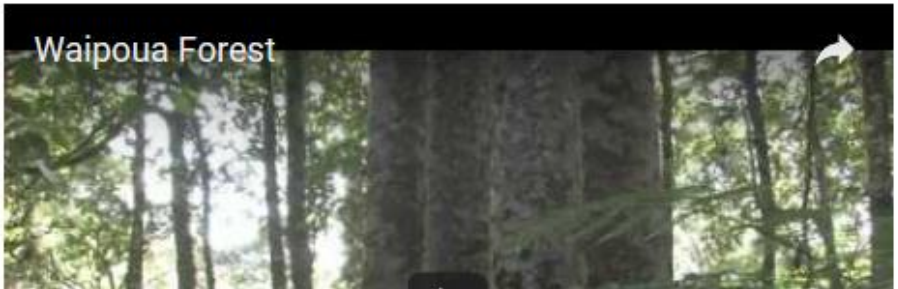
- We are all visitors to Aotearoa
- Some visits are long (Maori), some shorter (pakeha), some very short (tourists)
- All visits are associated with a range of activities – economic, social (recreational), cultural: all have some environmental impacts
- Some of these impacts are small and sum are big – cumulatively they trend towards big



# Tane Mahuta Walk

Located in [Waipoua Forest](#) in the [Northland](#) region

*Visit Tane Mahuta, our largest known living kauri tree. This is an easy access track with a boardwalk, so suitable for children and pushchairs.*



Waipoua Forest



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# Lets talk about the actual Tane Mahuta

- What: NZ's largest and oldest kauri tree
- Where: Northland
- Values: tourism, botanical, cultural (taonga to Maori), economic (tourism)
- Visits: thousands per annum as tree alongside highway
- Threats: ...



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STOP KAURI DIEBACK DISEASE SPREADING **KIA TOITU HE KAURI**

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They are dying of kauri dieback disease. Act now to help stop it.

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# Threat response: the Keep kauri standing programme

- Strategically reactive is how I would describe it:
  - Detect a problem – phytophthora infection of kauri
  - Monitor and determine it is really significant
  - Figure out how it is spread – humans and ...
  - Determine what to do and do it:
    - Develop a new visitor management programme – board walks, behaviour modification, treatment
    - Investigate solutions to solve the dieback
    - Work together – DOC, MPI, RCs, Iwi, researchers
- But is it strategic and is it working?
  - Urgency inhibitors
  - Institutional arrangement inhibitors
  - Patch protection inhibitors
  - Other inhibitors

# And how do these insights help with other visitor at scale issues

- Are we learning from our Tane Mahuta problems?
- Are we investing in preventative measures that try to foresee and proactively respond to these at scale, highly likely and highly damaging sorts of issues?
- Does SEA have a role in assisting with this strategic thinking?
- In other words – what is happening out there in the government of ‘new SEA land’?

# Where care needs to be taken, in 'new SEAland'

- There are happenings; at least one is absolutely secret but if implemented will be very helpful!
- The not so secret are incrementally occurring, like a slow earthquake
- Perhaps the two I am best equipped to talk about are:
  - The NRS
  - The government's science roadmaps



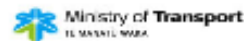
# Natural Resources Sector

HOME ABOUT THE NRS FOCUS AREAS NATURAL RESOURCES FRAMEWORK NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS

*New Zealand's natural resources are central to our economy and our way of life.*

*The Natural Resources Sector brings together government agencies with a shared goal to improve the productivity of New Zealand's resource-related industries while reducing their environmental impact.*

*We work across central government and with local government, business, iwi/hapū and communities to tackle the issues and opportunities none of us can take on alone.*



[newzealand.govt.nz](http://newzealand.govt.nz)

## Focus Areas

1. Maximise the productivity of agricultural and horticultural land while reducing environmental effects

2. Provide more flexible governance options for Māori land

3. Encourage regional development

4. Improve efficiency of freshwater allocation and usage within limits and encourage investment in water storage and irrigation

5. Develop our aquaculture, fisheries and other marine resources, while maintaining marine biodiversity and sustainability

6. Improve energy efficiency and use of renewable energy



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# So, why talk the NRS?

- Well the NRS is joined at the hip with the BGA (Business Growth Agenda), the cabinet ctte for which is chaired by Minister Joyce)
- The NRS represents the joined up thinking that is responsive to but proactive with other BGA committees
- And it is this joined up thinking that is encouraging ministers and ministries and departments to properly work together
- And it is this proactive thinking that is changing the nature of the focus areas – those being discussed and agreed to in 2016/17 are far more strategically environmentally friendly than those listed
- Specifically what does this thinking result in?

# New NRS joined up initiatives

- A government demonstrably more interested in the environment, not just for economic value but for a range of other services
- A government explicitly stating expectations linked to land use sustainability, freshwater, and coastal and marine resources
- A government working together to make those expectations clear in key strategic documentation ...

# The government's science roadmaps

- 20 year visions of what the government sees as the research needed to support its responses to major policy/management problems
- Ignore the science system institutional constructs, well largely, and concentrate on what needs to be done
- Cuts across constructs – CRIs, NSCs, COREs, etc
- The first – the Conservation and Environment Science Roadmap – a joined up inter agency initiative sponsored by the PMCSA's office and the Ministers of Conservation and Environment, and led by their CSAs
- Nearing completion and should be approved for public release early in the new year
- Reflects a combination of bottom up research input and top down policy oversight to the reach ...

# And what is this likely to lead to ...

- More strategic joined up government focus on some of the big policy and related research questions
- A responsive research sector that is reading the signposts
- A NRS responsible for implementing the Roadmap, responsible for monitoring its implementation, and responsible for its periodic review
- Government agencies co-investing in research priorities
- Hopefully better policy informed by better science

And if I could I would talk about the 'new  
SEAland' ..... , but I can't sorry!

# Some insights

- When we focus on an individual tree we sometimes lose sight of the forest, but sometimes we need to see the tree in order to maintain the spirit of our focus – Tāne mahuta is not just a metaphor – it is really important
- But generally speaking are we looking at the trees and the forest and thinking strategically about what links them all together?
- We are starting to and the revised impetus within the NRS, within the science roadmaps, and elsewhere in government should give us some hope, but not too much in my view