

Speaking notes for Richard Clayton, Te Papa Atawhai Department of Conservation. Proposed Timaru District Plan, Hearing D Eco Chapter. 12th November 2024.

1. Kia ora, I am a terrestrial ecologist having spent 25 years studying and practicing conservation management in New Zealand. My comments about the Timaru District are based on relevant ecological literature and also through my experience of working in uncommon and threatened ecosystems, such as braided rivers, limestone ecosystems and the numerous features associated with coastal and dryland parts of the district.
2. My evidence provides information about:
 - a. the rare and uncommon ecosystems of the Timaru district and discusses some of the most threatened species associated with these areas (Examples are plant and vertebrate species around South Canterbury limestone bluffs; braided rivers and wetland birds; and the skinks of the inland foothills).
 - b. the many examples of threatened species that are on private land outside the protected lands network and outside mapped SNAs.
 - c. the remnant biodiversity that is frequently present as part of a mosaic on farmland, which provides remnants of habitat for indigenous fauna that was once widespread.
3. I would like to acknowledge the benefits of work undertaken to complete SNA surveys in the district and endorse the rules that apply to managing them, giving a degree of certainty to all parties. However, I note that many areas of indigenous biodiversity which remain scattered throughout private lands have not been identified or mapped in the district plan.
4. Despite our knowledge about the importance of protecting and maintaining indigenous biodiversity, the compounding pressure of more intensive land use, environmental changes and invasive species continues to occur and has caused attrition and ongoing biodiversity loss.
5. Many of the areas of remaining biodiversity, in all parts of the district, occur within a mosaic of 'improved pasture'. While those areas may not qualify as SNAs, they need to be managed appropriately if the district is to retain its indigenous biodiversity.

Thankyou for your time