

Indigenous Vegetation Issues and Options

Significant Indigenous Vegetation (SIV)

Council has been working with landowners over the last two years to undertake a district wide review of areas of SIV. This process has almost been completed and it is likely these areas will be included in the District Plan.

What are we doing?

We're currently reviewing the District Plan and looking at what works well and what needs to be changed.

The District Plan contains a number of rules intended to protect indigenous flora and fauna. These rules were largely the result of Environment Court appeals on the 1995 District Plan.

Since then provisions requiring the protection of indigenous vegetation have become standard and are common in most district plans.

The Current Situation

There are rules controlling the clearance of indigenous vegetation in the Rural zone.

Although the rules refer to indigenous vegetation, the purpose of these rules is to protect both indigenous flora and fauna.

The current rules in the Rural zone include:

- a general rule requiring assessment of applications to clear areas of indigenous vegetation,
- a rule requiring assessment of applications to clear areas of indigenous vegetation or plant exotic trees or shrubs above 1070 m above sea level, and
- a rule requiring assessment of applications to clear areas of indigenous vegetation that have been assessed as being Significant Indigenous Vegetation (SIV). This usually means areas where flora or fauna are rare or threatened.

The complete set of the current objectives, policies and rules for the clearance of indigenous vegetation can be seen at www.qldc.govt.nz/district_plan



Proposed Changes

While rules are useful in helping to protect indigenous biodiversity, the on-going cooperation of both landowners and the community is also required. We'd like to acknowledge the way in which landowners have worked with the Council to make the implementation of the current rules more practical.

The current rules are generally working, however there may be an opportunity to simplify them and make them more consistent. The following are possible changes for consideration:

- 1 Grouping the rules together to make the relationship between them clearer
- 2 Rewriting rules and assessment matters in a simpler and clearer manner making them easier to understand
- 3 Clarifying exceptions to the rules

A number of exemptions to the general clearance rules could also be applied to areas of SIV and in alpine environments, for example:

- maintenance of existing roads, tracks and fence lines
- the clearance for the establishment of public walkways
- removal of trees that are wind thrown or dead standing as a result of natural causes and which have become dangerous.

This would enable current farming activity in these areas to continue without need for resource consent to maintain them.

What do you think?

What do you think of these proposed changes?

Please send your comments to:
Policy & Planning
Queenstown Lakes District Council
Private Bag 50072, Queenstown 9348

Email services@qldc.govt.nz

Or comment online at
www.qldc.govt.nz/district_plan_review

Comments should be received by 30 November 2012 although feedback on these issues will be welcome at any time during the review process.



Photo by Peter Johnson courtesy of Project Gold