

SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. My name is **Nicholas John Head**. I am the Senior Ecologist at the Christchurch City Council; Parks, Planning and Asset Management. I have a Master of Science (Hons) in plant ecology and almost 30 years' experience working as a plant ecologist throughout New Zealand.
2. I have prepared evidence on behalf of the **Christchurch City Council** in respect of matters arising from the submissions related to Sites of Ecological Significance (SES) Qualifying Matter (QM).
3. Halting the decline of indigenous biodiversity is a matter of national importance, and councils have a responsibility to protect it on both public and private land.
4. The Christchurch District has experienced significant loss of indigenous ecosystems and species. Remaining habitats are typically small, fragmented, poorly protected and at risk of ongoing loss and degradation. A particular concern is that the schedule of SES in the district plan is incomplete, with many sites not included.
5. Owing to the severity of loss, almost all remaining indigenous ecosystems will be significant when assessed in accordance with the criteria in the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS), regardless of typically being modified and degraded.
6. Housing intensification and encroachment into and around SES will most likely cause adverse ecological effects, including habitat loss, fragmentation, and edge effects.
7. It is crucial to include SES as QMs to protect remaining indigenous biodiversity. This is a bare minimum: Qualifying Matters should also include additional sites not currently listed as SES but would meet ecological significance criteria. QMs also need to consider adverse effects from adjoining land use, and the need for buffer zones to mitigate edge effects. However, I understand adding to the list of QMs and protecting SES from edge effects will need to be addressed in future planning processes.

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Nicholas Head