

Significant Natural Areas

ACT would:

- Remove the requirement for councils to identify Significant Natural Areas through the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.
- Create a \$10 million fund for local biodiversity initiatives, such as the work undertaken by the Queen Elizabeth II Trust.

The problems with SNAs

The Government's National Policy Statement (NPS) for Indigenous Biodiversity requires councils to identify areas of significant indigenous biological diversity, and restrict activities on them, even on private property.

Despite being a draft NPS, councils have already started identifying Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) across the country.

Under SNAs, landowners will be prevented from developing their land, but they won't be compensated. Landowners will have no ability to contest the creation of an SNA on their land.

This is a massive government land grab and an assault on private property rights.

SNAs also undermine conservation efforts by the people who care most about the environment. Farmers have the biggest incentive to care about the environment because they make a living from it.

When government undermines property rights, there's no incentive to be a conservationist. Countries without property rights are environmental disasters.

There's a better way

Protecting biodiversity is a goal shared by all New Zealanders. But SNAs undermine private property rights and the conservation efforts of the people who care most about the environment.

There's a better way. Landowners, councils and conservationists already work together to protect indigenous biodiversity. Instead of land grabs, the Government should be supporting these pre-existing efforts.

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ACT's vision



ACT believes that the best guardians of land are the people who own it. Biodiversity and property rights go hand in hand. We want a country where landowners are rewarded – not punished – for doing the right thing.

Central and local government should work with, not against, communities to advance conservation across the country in an inclusive and democratic way.

Initiatives, such as the Queen Elizabeth II Trust's work to negotiate covenants with landowners, should be supported.

ACT's \$10 million Biodiversity Fund would represent a significant increase in conservation funding and would mark an important step towards a New Zealand in which protecting our natural environment and upholding private property rights are not mutually exclusive.