

28 March 2018

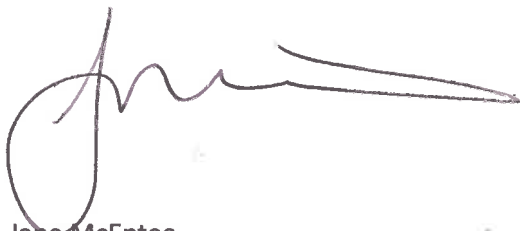
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**Submission on the Proposed Regional Pest Management Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity for Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) to provide a submission on the Proposed Regional Pest Management Plan.

The following submission represents the views of ARPHS and does not necessarily reflect the views of the three District Health Boards it serves. Please refer to Appendix 1 for more information on ARPHS.

Yours sincerely,



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**Medical Officer of Health**  
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### **Organisms representing a human health risk**

Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) has an interest in organisms that are potentially harmful to humans, whether or not they are officially pest species. This became strikingly apparent in recent years when dog deaths were happening after exposure to an unknown cause, on beaches. The public health concern was that children playing on beaches, in particular, were likely to be exposed to the same causative agent as the affected dogs. Fortunately, the source was quickly found to be an otherwise undistinguished organism, the grey side-gilled sea slug, *Pleurobranchaea maculata*, that was found to be producing tetrodotoxin, an extremely potent toxin. Mechanisms were established to warn the public and manage reports of sea slug findings on beaches. Consequently, there were no human deaths attributed to this organism.

ARPHS requests that there be a prominent flag in the Regional Pest Management Plan to the effect that ARPHS is immediately notified of any emerging issue involving an organism that might present a human health risk. This may be, for example, via a New Zealand species not previously known to be in the region, or an exotic species inadvertently introduced, or an endemic risk species for which there has been a change of characteristics or habitat, and therefore exposure risk.

Designation as a pest species is only likely to be the end result of an emerging issue and applied retrospectively after due consideration. ARPHS requests to be involved at the earliest stage of deliberation to address any associated human health risks. Global warming adds emphasis to the need for public health involvement, as we are more likely to see invasive (and harmful) species to which our population has not previously been exposed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Proposed Regional Pest Management Plan.

## **Appendix 1 - Auckland Regional Public Health Service**

Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) provides public health services for the three district health boards (DHBs) in the Auckland region (Counties Manukau Health and Auckland and Waitemata District Health Boards).

ARPHS has a statutory obligation under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities in the Auckland region. The Medical Officer of Health has an enforcement and regulatory role under the Health Act 1956 and other legislative designations to protect the health of the community.

ARPHS' primary role is to improve population health. It actively seeks to influence any initiatives or proposals that may affect population health in the Auckland region to maximise their positive impact and minimise possible negative effects on population health.

The Auckland region faces a number of public health challenges through changing demographics, increasingly diverse communities, increasing incidence of lifestyle-related health conditions such as obesity and type 2 diabetes, infrastructure requirements, the balancing of transport needs, and the reconciliation of urban design and urban intensification issues.