greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Report **05.290**
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Committee **Landcare**
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Pakuratahi Forest: GNS Application

1. Purpose

To consider an application by the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences (GNS) to erect a Global Positioning System (GPS) site at Mt Climie to monitor geological movement and change.

2. Significance

The matters in this report do not trigger the Council's significance policy or section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

GNS has approached Greater Wellington to install a continuous GPS monitoring station along the Mt Climie Ridge. The proposed site is between Climie No 1 and No 2 and is within the area used by BCL and the Police for communication equipment (see Attachment 1). Management of the area is governed by the Regional Forest Lands Plan: Future Water Collection Areas.

4. GNS Proposal

GNS require a site approximately 2.5m x 4m to locate a monitoring station comprised of a deep drilled monument and a cabinet with solar panels. The total height of the structures will be approximately 1.5m. A cable will be buried in a narrow trench connecting the two structures. Attachment 2 shows the structures.

The application states that the purpose of the station is to provide detailed and accurate data for research on tectonic deformation. This site is part of the 'GeoNet Programme' of 60 planned installations, which allow deformation changes in an earthquake cycle to be detected in real time. GNS requests a licence duration of 20 years.

5. Plan Assessment

GNS has assessed the effects of the proposal per the Regional Forest Lands Plan. An assessment is provided below, as well as suggested conditions, should Council decide to grant a licence. GNS has reviewed the conditions below and finds them acceptable.

The proposed site is located in an area already disturbed by an underground water tank, with ground cover predominantly grasses, including tussocks. The equipment will be positioned with a mobile drilling rig and construction work will take days, rather than weeks to install. Any disturbance is likely to be confined to the immediate site and construction effects include the removal of plants, topsoil, and a very small loss of habitat. Surplus material will be removed off site. Any effects are likely to minor and temporary.

The applicant states that this site is the preferred location as the site satisfies all the criteria for the GeoNet programme. "In particular it is correctly positioned relative to other existing sites in the region, it has an unobstructed view of the sky in all directions, and it is on good bedrock". In addition, site preparation is minimised as the site has already been disturbed. Access for the public or other lessees in the area will not be affected.

Cumulative effects may include the appearance of more structures in the area. Council indicated in the recent plan review that new utility structures should be located outside Council lands. However, the structures are small and unlikely to result in any significant change to the area's character.

Research policies within the plan are primarily focussed on research and information benefiting future water collection areas and also require a copy of the research to be provided to Council. These structures are for a national research programme aimed at improving the accuracy of earthquake risk assessment models. GNS notes that any data or information will be made freely available to the Wellington Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group.

The site is located on lands held under the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972. Any activity must not affect the purpose for which the lands are held. It is extremely unlikely that this proposal would affect any water supply values.

Suggested conditions:

1. GNS will, at their cost and to the satisfaction of Council, reinstate any damage to the access road or site resulting from the installation. Disturbance to vegetation is to be kept to an absolute minimum. Excavated areas are to be returned to their former condition including the restoration of disturbed vegetation.

2. Any excess material excavated from the site and not required for site remediation will be removed from the site at the cost of GNS.

3. Access to the other Mt Climie communication sites is to be maintained at all times.

4. Resource and Building consents are to be obtained as necessary. Copies of consents obtained and the Code Compliance Certificates for the work to be provided to the Regional Council.

5. The installation to be in compliance with all other relevant Statues and Bylaws.

6. On completion of the job, "as built" drawings are to be provided to the Regional Council.

7. Copies of relevant research obtained from data at the site shall be provided to the Regional Council.

8. Structures are to be removed from the site on expiry of lease/licence

Council policy to date has been to charge market rental for any leases or agreements. GNS states that they have paid between $300-500 per annum for agreements over private land, although they do not normally pay rental on any public lands. They request that this be taken into consideration.

Council property managers recommend a peppercorn rental with an application fee of $1,000, reflecting the time Council Officers have spent with GNS and assessing the application.

6. Communication

No further communication is considered necessary at this point in time.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee recommends that Council:

1. ***Receive*** *the contents of the report.*

2. ***Note*** *the contents of the report*

3. ***Grant*** *GNS a licence to occupy a site along the Mt Climie access road, subject to appropriate conditions, for 20 years.*

4. ***Instruct*** *the Manager, Parks & Forests, to enter into a formal licence with GNS on behalf of the Council for peppercorn rental with an application fee of $1,000.00 (incl. GST).*

Report prepared by:	Report approved by:	Report approved by:
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Attachment 1: Site map
Attachment 2: Structure photos