Tree Policy Council Submission

1. The "Purpose" is presumably the goal, objective, target of the Policy. As such it lacks important direction. The Council has declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, but there is no reference to this. International scientific research now indicates that 30-50% of all land in temporate climatic regions, such as NZ, should be returned to natural ecosystems to ensure the survival of the human species. There is now an international movement to pursue this objective. The "Purpose" has no regard to this. The "Purpose" should state a target of planting and maintaining at least 30% of Council land in indigenous vegetation as habitat for local ecosystems.

2. Policy 1.3 should be amended to state that there will be preference given to local native trees, because these are the ones which belong in NZ and are most compatible with our other native vegetation, our climate, soils, micro-organisms, insects, reptiles, birds, bats etc. The colonial thinking of bringing a bit of everything to NZ has been disastrous for our unique and indigenous flora and fauna and must stop. The protection and care of our indigenous species should be a priority as a matter of national, even international importance.

3. On that subject, the planting of Norfolk Id pines in the coastal corridor from Ferrymead to Sumner is quite inapproriate, and annoying to many people. These trees belong in Norfolk Id. They should be replaced with appropriate local native species such as totara, kahikatea, ngaio etc.(and pohutakawa are not local!). The Commemorative Norfolk Id pines at Sumner Beach are an unfortunate choice, and should not be used as a precedent for elsewhere. People who fancy exotic trees are able to plant them on private land. Public land should be for mainly native trees, they are our heritage and for future generations. An increasing number of New Zealanders are proud of our native heritage and spend much time caring for it.

4. Policy 1.4 should not be just limited to existing sites of "ecological significance", but should be providing for many more new sites, to create more areas of ecological significance.

5. There should be a further policy to generally provide associations of other native plants with any tree planted. This would give the trees a better chance of survival, make better provision for habitat for native fauna and may even reduce maintenance requirements around the tree drip-line.

6. We support the provisions for community involvement in planting and caring.

7. With Commemorative trees, Council should give preference to local natives.

8. We support the Ecological Improvements Policy.

9. There do not appear to be any provisions to deal with unauthorised damage or removal of trees. It should be clear that such actions will not be tolerated and prosecutions will be pursued and restoration costs sought.

10. Council should also from time to time, promote the importance of native trees to our ecology and heritage and that they should be cared for and not damaged without Council approval.