



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

Corporate Office
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13 May 2020

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RE Official information request WCDHB 9406

We refer to your email dated 13 March 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB regarding clarification of our responses to Official Information Act requests WCDHB 9391 and WCDHB 9394. Specifically related to Buller River 1080 aerial operation November 2019.

May I please ask for this clarification:

- 1. The conditions for permission for use of aerial poisoning in catchments of the Buller river that resulted in carcasses being washed up in public places, were written by the Medical Officer of Health. She did not audit the operation.**

The aerial 1080 operation (Te Maruia Combined, EPA Code 19/1228/CB/GRYPH) did not result in carcasses being washed up in public places. This operation was carried out in the Lewis Pass National Reserve near Maruia. The Maruia River is in the operational area and, while this river eventually flows into the Buller River, the operational area is 140 km upstream from the mouth of the Buller River at Westport where carcasses were found. The Medical Officer of Health did sign off the permission for the Te Maruia aerial operation and you are correct that she did not personally carry out a field audit of the operation.

- 2. Without being present and without an audit, by what means does the HSNO Enforcement Officer know that the conditions of permission were adhered to?**

You have assumed that because a field audit was not carried out, no audit of this operation was done. This is not correct. All operations where public health permission is issued for the use of specified vertebrate toxic agents (VTAs), including 1080, are audited. Our audit begins when the application is received and supporting documentation is checked. The permission itself also specified the additional reporting that is required from the operator, before, during and after the operation is completed. This documentation is reviewed by a public health HSNO officer to check that all permission conditions have been complied with. One incident of breach of conditions for this operation did occur involving the sowing of baits in an exclusion area near a hut. This was fully investigated and reported to the Environmental Protection Agency as required.

3. Who is responsible for ensuring the safety of public health when an aerially dispersed VTA is used, and when effects occur outside the boundaries of the permitted operation?

The VTA operator is responsible for complying with the conditions of their public health permission and the public health service issuing the permission is responsible for monitoring and audit of the operator's compliance with these conditions.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the West Coast DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolyn Gullery', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Carolyn Gullery
Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support