



PEST FREE  
**TOKEN**  
Pest eradication made easy

16 June 2025

Department of Conservation  
PO Box 10420  
Wellington 6143  
Attention: PF2050 consultation

By email: [pf2050discussion@doc.govt.nz](mailto:pf2050discussion@doc.govt.nz)

## ***Submission on the Predator Free 2050 Strategy Review: A Call for Innovative Funding and Sustained Commitment to New Zealand's Ecological Future***

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Pest Free Token is pleased to provide this submission to the Department of Conservation on the Predator Free 2050 (PF2050) Strategy Review. As a New Zealand charitable organisation deeply committed to the eradication of introduced pests and the protection of our native birds, we recognise the profound significance of the PF2050 goal not only for our unique biodiversity but also for the very fabric of our national identity and economic prosperity.

We acknowledge the significant progress made over the past five years (2020-2025) in building awareness, developing essential tools, and mobilising community support across the country. These efforts lay a crucial foundation for the ambitious task that lies ahead. However, as we look towards the next five years (2025-2030) and beyond, it is imperative that we confront the persistent challenges, most notably that of sustainable and sufficient funding.

### **The Indispensable Value of Our Nature: Identity and Economic Cornerstone**

New Zealand's nature is, quite simply, special and unique. It is not merely a backdrop to our lives but an intrinsic part of who we are as Aotearoa. Our native birds, forests, and pristine landscapes are interwoven with Māori kaitiakitanga and our national consciousness. The melodic calls of the tūī, the majestic flight of the kārearea, and the vibrant health of our ngahere connect us to our past, define our present, and inspire our future. Losing these taonga diminishes us all.

Beyond our intrinsic connection, New Zealand's natural environment is a powerhouse for our economy. Tourism, our second-largest export, is fundamentally underpinned by the allure of our clean, green image and unique biodiversity. Visitors from around the globe are drawn to the natural wonders that define our country. A thriving, predator-free ecosystem enhances this appeal, securing and growing a vital sector that provides livelihoods for countless New Zealanders. Conversely, a decline in our native species due to unchecked predator populations

directly threatens this economic pillar, making the success of PF2050 not just an environmental imperative but an economic one.

## Funding the Future: Avoiding Short-Term Savings for Long-Term Disaster

The single biggest hurdle to becoming pest-free is limited funding. While there is immense knowledge and energy within New Zealand communities and organisations, the scale of the problem demands a level of sustained investment that traditional funding mechanisms may struggle to meet.

We must caution against any consideration of cutting or stagnating funding for predator control and eradication efforts in the short term. Such a decision, while perhaps appearing to offer immediate fiscal relief, would be a catastrophic long-term disaster for New Zealand. The ecological damage inflicted by introduced predators – responsible for the death of approximately 25 million native birds each year – is relentless. Any pause or reduction in effort allows predator populations to rebound, negating hard-won gains and increasing the eventual cost and difficulty of eradication exponentially. It would be akin to pausing cancer treatment, allowing the disease to spread unchecked, making future recovery far more challenging and costly.

Furthermore, a decline in governmental commitment could erode public confidence and disincentivise the invaluable volunteer and community efforts that have been mobilised. Maintaining momentum requires clear, consistent signals of governmental resolve and a commitment to adequate resourcing. The discussion document rightly identifies "*attract[ing] the funding required to achieve it*" as a key aspect of preparing to accelerate. This cannot be achieved through short-term funding conservatism.

## Creative Solutions: The Pest Free Token Model – A Blueprint for Diversified Funding

The challenge of funding PF2050 requires "thinking outside the box". Pest Free Token was established precisely to address this critical funding gap, contributing towards the eradication of introduced pests in New Zealand through innovative means. Our approach represents New Zealand's first crypto-for-charity initiative and offers a new paradigm for charitable giving and conservation funding.

Our model operates through the \$PFT cryptocurrency, built on the environmentally friendly Polygon network. Here's how it works to provide sustained, independent funding:

- **Automated Funding Stream:** A 3% fee is applied to every sale transaction of the \$PFT token, with 100% of the project's profit dedicated to pest eradication. This fee is automatically distributed, creating a continuous, decentralised, funding mechanism independent of traditional government appropriations.
- **Community Mobilisation and Engagement:** The model actively incentivises community participation. Holders of \$PFT tokens automatically accumulate more cryptocurrency, encouraging long-term engagement. Crucially, individuals who catch pests in our physical PFT traps are eligible for free reward tokens, directly linking real-world conservation action to the digital economy. This directly aligns with the

government's 2025-2030 goal to "Mobilise for action", by providing a novel way for New Zealanders to contribute and be rewarded for their efforts.

- **Transparency and Trust:** Built on blockchain technology, our financial flows are transparent and auditable. All project wallet addresses are published, and our charitable purpose is legally entrenched in our founding documents. This fosters public trust and ensures that contributions directly support pest eradication efforts.
- **Environmental Responsibility:** Recognising concerns around some cryptocurrencies, \$PFT is fully minted and cannot be mined, reducing its environmental footprint. Our focus on conservation efforts ensures a net positive impact on the environment.
- **Scalable Funding Potential:** The global cryptocurrency market is vast, at times worth upwards of \$5 trillion NZD. Even a small percentage of this market could provide significant funding for our national pest problem. This offers a pathway to attract substantial capital beyond conventional conservation funding sources, aiding the "Prepare to accelerate" goal by developing new funding streams.

We are not suggesting that cryptocurrency alone will solve the funding challenge, but rather that it represents a powerful, complementary tool and different way of thinking. By embracing and, indeed, collaborating with such innovative models, the government can leverage new technologies to diversify funding streams, enhance public engagement, and build a more resilient financial foundation for PF2050.

## Strategic Alignment: Fulfilling the 2025-2030 Goals

Our operations directly contribute to the four strategic areas identified for 2025-2030 in the discussion document:

1. **Mobilise for action:** Pest Free Token directly inspires and empowers New Zealanders through its accessible and incentivised engagement model. By allowing individuals to contribute financially and physically (through trapping) and see tangible benefits (token rewards), we foster a broad base of support and direct participation.
2. **Maintain the gains:** The continuous and automated funding stream generated by \$PFT helps sustain the resources necessary for ongoing predator control. This ensures that safe spaces for native species are not only created but can be consistently maintained, improving biodiversity outcomes.
3. **Innovate for eradication:** Our project itself is an innovation in funding conservation. Furthermore, our charitable purpose explicitly includes supporting the development and use of effective technological advances in introduced pest control and supporting research that contributes to bird preservation. This aligns with the need to advance tools and techniques for eradication in all areas.
4. **Prepare to accelerate:** By demonstrating a viable, independent, and scalable funding mechanism, Pest Free Token provides a crucial piece of the puzzle for a clear, evidence-based plan for the future. Our model shows how external funding can be attracted and

harnessed, reducing reliance solely on government allocations and building long-term financial resilience.

## Target Predator Species (2025-2030): Maintaining Focus and Preparing for the Future

We concur with the proposal to maintain the current focus on possums, rats, and mustelids (stoats, ferrets, weasels) for the 2025-2030 period. The insights paper on target pest species clearly articulates the ecological damage these predators cause, their impact on iconic native species, and the challenges associated with their eradication. These species represent the most pervasive and damaging threats to our biodiversity, and dedicating resources to their eradication is a sound strategic choice.

However, while maintaining this immediate focus, we strongly advocate for a proactive approach regarding other significant predators, particularly feral cats. We recognise that the insights paper currently classifies feral cat eradication on the mainland as "beyond current capability." Yet, we believe that this should not preclude their inclusion on the national target species list. Adding feral cats to the list, even if the comprehensive tools for their widespread eradication are still in development, would be a pivotal strategic move. It would send a clear signal of intent, beginning to shift the cultural narrative and public expectation that feral cats, despite their complexity, must ultimately be eradicated. This early inclusion would foster a mindset of problem-solving and innovation, galvanising research and development efforts to overcome current technological and logistical hurdles. It would normalise the idea that no significant predator is exempt from the PF2050 vision.

Furthermore, we encourage continued investment in research and development into other introduced pest species that may pose future threats or become more significant as the primary targets are suppressed. A flexible framework for evaluating and incorporating new target species beyond 2030, based on scientific evidence and evolving ecological understanding, will be crucial.

## Support Needed to Sustain Predator Free Work: Collaboration and Recognition

The success of PF2050 relies heavily on the collective efforts of communities, organisations, and government agencies. To sustain and amplify this work, we submit the following:

- **Recognition of Diverse Funding Models:** The government should actively recognise and, where appropriate, facilitate innovative funding models like Pest Free Token. This could involve exploring pathways for collaboration, providing regulatory clarity, or simply acknowledging their valuable contribution in official communications. Diversifying funding streams is essential to reduce reliance on taxpayer dollars and build a more robust financial future for conservation.
- **Streamlined Collaboration Pathways:** Easier mechanisms for non-traditional charitable organisations to collaborate with government agencies, share learnings, and integrate efforts.

- **Investment in Technological Advancement:** Continued, significant investment in research and development for new tools, techniques, and technologies is vital for scaling up eradication efforts, particularly for hard-to-reach areas and increasingly wary predators. Our country is not going to trap our way out of this problem, and our charitable purpose allows us to support this.
- **Public Awareness and Education:** Sustained campaigns to keep PF2050 at the forefront of public consciousness, highlighting successes, educating about predator impacts, and encouraging participation in diverse ways.

## Conclusion

The Predator Free 2050 goal is more than an environmental target; it is a national aspiration that speaks to who we are as New Zealanders and the legacy we wish to leave. Achieving it demands courage, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to long-term investment. Short-sighted funding decisions now will inevitably lead to greater ecological and economic costs in the future.

Pest Free Token stands ready as an example of a New Zealand-made, community-driven, and technologically innovative solution to the funding challenge. We are committed to working alongside the Department of Conservation and all stakeholders to achieve the PF2050 vision. We believe that by embracing creative funding mechanisms and fostering broad collaboration, we can not only meet but exceed the goals set for 2030 and truly make our beautiful country predator-free by 2050.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Department of Conservation to discuss our submission in greater detail and explore potential avenues for collaboration.

Nāku noa, nā.

Three handwritten signatures in blue ink, arranged horizontally. The first signature is on the left, the second in the middle, and the third on the right.

Patrick Abel, Alex McGregor, and Harrison Bissell  
**Trustees of the Pest Free Token Charitable Trust**