**4 November 2016**

**Background information Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy launch event**

**Event: Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy (QCC) launch event**

Friday 4 November – 10.30am to 2pm

Mt Lyford Lodge, 10 Mt Lyford Forest Drive, RD1 Waiau 7395

Mt Lyford Lodge telephone: 03-315 6446

(No/patchy cell phone coverage in the area)

**Purpose of the event**

The event launches the Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy (QCC) initiative in New Zealand and celebrates the registration of Mt Terako Covenant, New Zealand’s first Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy open space covenant.

**The QCC initiative**

The QCC initiative was conceived by the Right Honourable Frank Field MP (a British politician) and launched at the Opening of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Malta in November 2015 as a way to mark Queen Elizabeth II’s long reign and dedication to the Commonwealth.

QCC is a partnership between The Palace, the Royal Commonwealth Society, and a rainforest charity called Cool Earth.

It aims to create a pan-Commonwealth network of rainforest and native forest conservation programmes and show that, ‘irrespective of geography, economy, culture or tenure, solutions exist to the threats facing these most critical of ecosystems.’

**What will it do?**

* The QCC is committed to raising awareness, within the Commonwealth, of the value of indigenous forests and to saving them for future generations.
* It will create a unique network of forest conservation projects that brings collective credibility and integrity to individual Commonwealth initiatives.
* It will raise the profile of the Commonwealth, demonstrating the capacity of its 53 member countries to act together as one to ensure forest conservation.
* It will use the Commonwealth network to facilitate a programme of knowledge exchange activities, share best practice, and to create new, collaborative initiatives that contribute to forest conservation across the globe.
* It will create a physical and lasting legacy of The Queen’s leadership of the Commonwealth.

**The QCC in New Zealand**

* All Commonwealth member countries were invited to contribute to QCC and demonstrate that its citizens are leading the world in their efforts to protect native forests.
* New Zealand was one of first countries to support the initiative.
* To support the initiative in New Zealand the Government announced it will spend $1 million over 3 years, allocated to the QEII National Trust to help it extend the network of covenants over native forest on private land.
* The event at Mount Lyford Lodge celebrates the launch of QCC in New Zealand and the registration of Mt Terako Covenant, the first open space covenant to be established with the QCC fund.

**The QEII National Trust**

Queen Elizabeth II National Trust (the National Trust) is a registered charity and an independent statutory organisation with its own Act — Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Act 1977.

It was named in recognition and celebration of the 25th jubilee of the coronation of
Queen Elizabeth II in 1977.

The National Trust was set up in 1977 by farmers for farmers and other landowners at a time when Government subsidies were offered to encourage bush and wetland clearance on farms. These visionaries wanted a way to legally and permanently protect what remained of those features on their properties. They wanted this process to be voluntary. They also wanted to retain ownership of the land they were protecting. The National Trust was established as a mechanism to realise their aspirations.

Protection is achieved primarily with the establishment of QEII National Trust open space covenants over the special natural (and cultural) features and values landowners wish to protect. Open space covenants are indefeasible. They are a permanent legal protection agreement, registered on the land title.

The National Trust is governed by a board of directors and is supported by 16 staff based in Wellington. Part-and full-time regional representatives are contracted to cover 28 geographic regions throughout the country.

Since its establishment in 1977 the National Trust has registered on average two covenants a week. Currently there are over 4500 registered and approved (in the process of being registered) covenants protecting over 180,000ha of land (about the size of Rakiura/Stewart Island).

Landowners are responsible for the management of their covenants. The National Trust operates as a perpetual trustee, making sure the covenant agreement is respected by all landowners through time. It does this by monitoring covenants on a regular basis, and providing support and advice on covenant management. It works in partnership with central and local government and many other groups, organisations and individuals to help landowners look after the values that are protected in their covenants.

**Mt Terako Covenant**

Mt Terako Covenant was established by Sue and Peter Turnbull in partnership with Queen Elizabeth II National Trust.

The 392 ha covenant contains primary montane beech forest, subalpine scrub, shrubland and rockfields, and rupestral (rocky) and alpine herbfields. It protects one of the few larger areas of forest remaining on Canterbury’s modified private land. Protection of the forest is made all the more significant given there are very few forests left that contain primary forest in the whole of the highly modified Canterbury landscape.

The covenant provides habitat for kea (nationally endangered), kaka (nationally vulnerable) and occasionally eastern falcon (declining) as well as *Epilobium forbesii* (an endemic perennial herb that is at risk-naturally uncommon) and the carnivorous snail *Wainuia edwardi* (declining).

The area also has significant landscape values and will extend and enhance habitat options for native species because of its good connectivity to the surrounding protected areas of Snowden Scenic Reserve, Molesworth Recreation reserve and Ka Whata Tu o Rakihouia Conservation Park.

The QCC funding allocation allows the National Trust to establish around 10 more forest covenants a year than it would be able to with its normal level of funding.

**QCC covenants**

To be eligible for QCC covenant status, the proposed areas must contain predominantly closed canopy indigenous forest cover, satisfy one or more of the four national priorities for biodiversity protection on private land, and/or add to a protected corridor or protected landscape.

The National Trust has approved 11 QCC covenant proposals in the first year of the funding allocation. Mt Terako Covenant is the first to be formally registered.