



**Masters Scholarship Project: 'Completing the arsenal for possum and TB control' (CAPTB) MBIE research  
Programme: Harmonisation of Communities and Ecosystems**

**Developing 'community-based indicators' for conservation**

This research programme is focused on reducing possum populations and TB spread to achieve the vision of a New Zealand where native plants and animals are recovering from the impacts of these animal pests. The programme develops new control tools and is also interested in monitoring approaches that can help assess the efficacy of those tools. Given the important role that iwi play in supporting conservation in New Zealand (both on their own lands, and in partnership with other multi-stakeholder initiatives), the programme acknowledges an explicit role for monitoring approaches that recognize iwi measures of success.

This Masters project will involve the successful applicant in looking at a number of community conservation projects in NZ to better understand their use of indicators, and the wider planning, monitoring and evaluation systems in which these are used.

The successful applicant will be working within an interdisciplinary team to survey a range of conservation initiatives to identify common attributes which can be applied to a general monitoring and evaluation framework. Attention needs to be paid to identifying a range of indicators that collectively not only address environmental outcomes, but also enable the stakeholders involved to assess progress across related cultural, social and economic outcomes. Effective indicator packages are likely to have a number of key characteristics including but not restricted to, being: directly relevant to project decision-making; easily comprehended by relevant local communities (for cultural and/or other reasons); and scientifically robust. They will also be focussed on community-defined outcomes, while recognising the need to assess conservation progress along different timescales. It is hoped that this work will begin to provide a picture of the extent to which community-initiatives use these indicators (and the tools to develop them). The work may also be able to identify common barriers and success pathways that inhibit or facilitate the use of effective monitoring and evaluation systems in community-based conservation initiatives.

This project is explicitly interdisciplinary, and therefore could be of interest to students from a wide range of disciplines. The project will look at conservation initiatives across a range of outcome areas – ecological, social, cultural and economic. Supervisory oversight will include interdisciplinary support.

Key players in this project are:

- CAPTB programme at the Centre for Wildlife Management and Conservation (CWMC)
  - Supervisory oversight and project collaboration from Helen Blackie, Shaun Ogilvie, Will Allen
  - Fees covered
  - Stipend of \$14,000 (approximately \$270/week)
  - Ngā Matapopore connection facilitated (Maori Advisory Committee)
- Lincoln University
  - Supervision from Dr. Simon Lambert
  - Departmental coverage of expenses (\$2,000)