

Kia ora, thank you for inviting me to speak

Sorry to criticise your boss some more but as of April the 7th Nick Smith still says the primary function of the land at Point England is for grazing cattle. The Reserve is used by ten times more shorebirds than cows. The shorebirds are at risk of extinction, the local cows, dogs and people are definitely not. Saying our reserves are for cows is like saying Eden Park is for lawn mowers.

The land at Point England has significant value as open space and I am really surprised the Government wants to destroy children's sports fields. But the environmental loses are what concern me most.

The Wildlife Act protects dotterel from hunting. The maximum penalty for killing protected wildlife is a \$100,000 fine and up to a year in jail. Killing a Northern New Zealand dotterel is an environmental crime. I think destroying their nesting habitat and wilfully putting predators in their midst is even worse because its not killing just one bird but dooming a local population forever.

Is it less of a crime because an iwi might benefit? – I don't know, but if I commit a crime to benefit an iwi it's still a crime. The Point England Development Enabling Bill rezones land that is eligible for internationally recognised protection under the Ramsar convention without any consideration for the environment. Wildlife is not even mentioned. By rezoning the land it commits an environmental crime. Ngāti Pāoa are not environmental criminals, this Government on the advice of this committee is responsible. We can't fine or put our own government in jail for this crime, all we can do is plead our case. Please do the right thing for the nesting dotterel, the future of this species, the roosting shorebirds and the health of the Tamaki Estuary.

This bill sets an ugly precedent, pitting iwi against the environment and the local community. But this select committee could set a precedent itself by advising MPs on the right way for iwi to get fair settlements, communities to keep their recreational areas and how New Zealanders can preserve their special nature reserves.

I think that you could significantly reduce the development area and add a few houses at Point England and at the same time create better habitat for the birds. I just don't see it happening under the current process. It's not just the money required to do the right thing for the birds, but the time it will take to do the experiments properly. And even then, they might fail.

Hau Rawiri told media “We would look to repatriate the place the [dotterel] are originally from through restoration and revitalisation”.

Just in case the Select Committee believes this is possible, it's not! Firstly we do not know where the Point England dotterel were born. Many of them could be second or third generation locals. Secondly you can not tell a Northern New Zealand dotterel where to nest. The most you can do is get permission from DOC, then move a nest a metre or two (usually to avoid a spring tide event). You can use decoys and audio lures to create breeding sites for birds that nest together in flocks. Dotterel do not, they are very territorial because their chicks are precocial (feed for themselves) just like kiwi. Just to be clear – we can not move the dotterel, it's never been done before.

I love making stuff, so I like the idea of creating an artificial roost site for the Tāmaki shorebirds. It would have to be huge to accommodate all the birds and include dotterel nesting islands. It would need tricky resource consents and a hefty maintenance budget for erosion and weeds. It would also need budget to plan for at least 100 cm sea level rise. But once you have spent millions of dollars on it there is no guarantee the birds will come. What would we do then? Not do the development because the birds are still at Point England?

Scientists even doubt the dotterel will respond well to habitat modification at Point England. It is very important that whatever plan you come up with for the birds is peer reviewed by scientists who are much more qualified than me and that you allow a lot of time and money for experiments which would all need a Plan B.

As I stated at the Committee hearing if the Select Committee decides that the need for housing at pace outweighs all the environmental losses it would be pragmatic to look at compensation as per the case study supplied. Any experiments will take up to a decade to do properly and might still fail to sustain or grow the existing population.