

# Helicopter application of diquat at Te Henga, Bethells Beach

Report on the operational requirements and delivery, 22 April 2015

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1. The helicopter operator runs a very professional operation and meets all of the requirements to undertake this type of work:
  - a. The operator is fully Growsafe trained, registered and accredited.
  - b. The operator is Aircare Accredited. Aircare is an industry standard developed by NZ AAA (Association of Aerial Applicators). This is now a requirement of the Auckland Council Plan.
  - c. They are Noise Abatement compliant which is a component of the Aircare programme.
2. All commercial aerial operators in New Zealand are routinely audited by the Civil Aviation Authority and must comply with strict rules and regulations. The operator used at Te Henga meets all of these requirements. An inspection of their facilities strongly supports the idea of a professional and capable business. This is further supported by the equipment they bring to the job as noted below.
3. On the day of application, the operator provided their ground support vehicle, along with a portable weather station and communication equipment so all parties could talk to each other. They had spill equipment on site (independently checked), went through an induction for the operation, a health and safety briefing and confirmed again the products to be used, the application rate and the methodology to be used. All staff involved signed off the induction forms. Staff used appropriate Personal Protective Equipment when handling chemicals and were clearly professional and efficient in their operations. All equipment was in very good order, vehicles and helicopter were clean – all of which tells a story about the type of operation.
4. A health and safety briefing was also carried out with operational ground staff in relation to safety around helicopters and other safety matters.
5. The road to Bethells is narrow and winding. There is almost no opportunity to park on the side of the road due to the width, and few places to pull off the road. The helicopter operation had, to my knowledge, three vehicles in use at various parts of the day. One vehicle was parked inside a gate on private property for the entire duration of the operation, a second (AsureQuality) vehicle was also mostly parked on private property alongside the vehicle above, and later in the day (just before completion of the helicopter operation) a third vehicle that carried the water sampling team. This was also on private property for some of the time until the team headed off to carry out their

work. While not being able to say categorically that no vehicles were on the road, it is extremely unlikely that there was any blockage to traffic.

6. The response team checked with Auckland Council to see if a traffic management plan was required for this and future helicopter treatments. According to the Auckland Council Plan, a traffic management plan for operations of this nature is not required.
7. During the whole operation, the helicopter crossed the road on three occasions. All chemical was discharged over the wetlands and on no occasion was chemical discharged over or immediately adjacent to the road. For the majority of the operation, the helicopter was operating over the wetland, which is below the height of the road. There was no sign of spray drift.
8. Throughout the operation until the last load, there was a light katabatic wind. This is in effect cold air draining down the valley. In turn this would also have meant air draining from above the road down towards the water. Therefore, there is very little likelihood of spray moving uphill against the wind towards the road.
9. Throughout the operation measurements of wind and other parameters were undertaken. These were recorded in a report presented to MPI and available upon request.
10. The Auckland Council Plan requires notification of the neighbours prior to spraying being carried out. The eradication programme has carried out extensive public notification so this requirement has been met.