



**Rabobank New Zealand Ltd**

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Ministerial Inquiry Into Land Use  
Ministry for the Environment  
PO Box 10362  
WELLINGTON 6143

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**RABOBANK NEW ZEALAND SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTERIAL INQUIRY INTO LAND USE**

**Introduction**

Rabobank is New Zealand's only specialist food and agribusiness bank. We are part of an international co-operative group based in the Netherlands, with over 500 staff working from 28 offices across New Zealand.

Bringing together our deep connections to the New Zealand rural sector, our specialist research expertise and our extensive international reach, we work closely with our rural and institutional clients under our global mission of 'Growing a Better World Together'.

With our co-operative roots and longstanding relationships with food and agribusinesses, Rabobank takes a long-term view of supporting farmers and food producers, who are critical to New Zealand's wider economic and social success.

This is very much the case across the Te Tairāwhiti, Tūrangānui-a-Kiwa and Te Wairoa regions, which are the focus of this Inquiry.

As part of our active strategy as a food and agri thought leader, we provide constructive feedback and input for policymakers and government agencies, with a view to improving outcomes for our clients and their rural communities.

It is within this context that we welcome the opportunity to make a submission on the Ministerial Inquiry Into Land Use.

## Key issues

As the Inquiry Chair says in her introductory message, the devastation brought on by successive significant weather events - with Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle in this year alone - have caused irreparable damage to people, land, property, infrastructure, and most tragically, took lives and livelihoods.

As the Chair says, it is vital that the collective knowledge and experience of our people, leaders and industries are heard and reflected to ensure we make the strongest and most well-rounded set of recommendations to the Government.

We agree that this is our opportunity to understand exactly how we got to this position and how we can help the affected regions to move forward.

Rabobank New Zealand is pleased that the inquiry is wide ranging. We are encouraged that its terms of reference include investigating the impact of storm damage caused by woody debris (including forestry slash) and sediment on communities, livestock, buildings, and the environment. It will also look at associated economic drivers and constraints.

These are critical issues for our clients in the regions affected by the Cyclone.

In summary, on behalf of our clients Rabobank New Zealand raises the following urgent issues for consideration by the Inquiry:

1. Significant damage has occurred to farmers and growers as a result of slash. This has occurred over multiple weather events, with now large deposits littered along waterways that are expected to continue causing damage in future weather events.
2. Concerns have rightly been raised by our clients regarding who is liable for the clean-up and the damage caused by forestry slash. For example, slash that originated from forestry land has caused considerable damage to permanent orchards, properties assigned to grazing and annual cropping, and inflicted permanent damage to infrastructure (buildings, fences, roading, bridges, and orchard structures are just some examples).
3. Our clients' concerns about who should pay for repairing this damage are consistent with the principle that a landowner is liable for damage caused by livestock leaving the landowner's property – for example, if a resulting road accident causes damage to people or property. Therefore, farmers and growers should not be required to pay for damage caused by material that originated from outside their property.

Rabobank submits that an agreed framework for addressing the cost of these repairs, and the process for completing them in a timely fashion, should be at the heart of the Inquiry's recommendations.

Finally, we encourage the Inquiry to engage with and listen carefully to individuals, communities and sector organisations on the ground in the affected regions. It is important that recommendations to the Government are practical, workable and based on what those

communities, farmers and growers actually need, rather than being driven from the Wellington bureaucracy.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Ministerial Inquiry Into Land Use.

Rabobank New Zealand would be very happy to work with the Inquiry, government agencies and officials in finding workable and durable solutions to the significant challenges being addressed by the Inquiry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Charteris', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Todd Charteris**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Rabobank New Zealand**