

Myrtle Rust SSAG meeting – November 2019

It was agreed that *Te Tira Whakamātaki*, Māori Biosecurity Network will lead development of a national germplasm and seedbanking strategy, in partnership with the Department of Conservation which will coordinate the government's work in this area.

Myrtle Rust Strategic Science Advisory Group Chair and Department of Conservation Chief Science Advisor Ken Hughey advised the SSAG that DOC has \$80,000 in operational funding for the current 2019/20 financial year, some of which will be used for further seed collection in vulnerable areas.

The meeting received an update on the \$13m Beyond Myrtle Rust research projects being led by Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research. The SSAG asked BMR to highlight the links between their research and other research, especially where it builds on completed work such as the MPI-funded projects completed in June 2019.

The Challenge programme Ngā Rākau Taketake updated the meeting on its priorities-based investment plan and its investment of surge funding in urgent research work. This includes a stocktake of myrtle rust research which will be publicly available. The SSAG would like to see a 'roadmap to tangible progress', including details of what the Challenge expects to achieve from its research investment and by when.

The SSAG agreed it was important to keep communicating research progress and achievements with all stakeholders.