

Getting a return on science investment: Early steps enabling pest wasp control on public conservation lands

Richard Toft ¹, Jo Rees ¹, Nik Joice ², Eric Edwards ^{*3}

¹ Entecol Ltd, Nelson

² DOC, St Arnaud, Nelson

³ DOC, Wellington

Science engagement partners, including Landcare Research, Auckland University, Entecol Ltd, Victoria University and DOC, have refined a bait station method of control for *Vespula* spp. wasps. This is the only tool that has been developed for wide-scale wasp control. A recent licence agreement and cooperation among scientists and partners is enabling a pilot at 5 South Island sites totalling 5000 hectares. Preliminary levels of success will be reported but at the time of writing appear better than 90% target reduction in wasp activity. The science investment for this tool has been more than a million dollars. The return on that effort is likely to make this very worthwhile on public conservation lands but more tools are needed to mitigate wasp impacts at much broader scales than can be achieved by bait stations alone.

