



## The Mahia Paper Trail

*(Rocket Lab, Regional Grants, and the "Pest" Economy)*

### TOPIC: THE MONETISATION OF ERADICATION

#### Location Focus: Mahia Peninsula (Onenui Station)

##### 1. The Rocket Lab Connection:

Rocket Lab operates its primary launch complex on [Onenui Station](#), private land owned by the **Tawapata South Incorporation** (Māori landowners).

- **The Revenue Model:** Unlike a standard lease, the landowners receive a **revenue share for every launch**. With over 50 launches to date and a goal of frequent missions, this creates a significant, high-tech income stream for the station.
- **Corporate Branding:** To maintain its "Green & Sustainable" image, Rocket Lab heavily funds regional conservation, including a **\$20,000 annual scholarship** and grants to [DOC](#) for specific bird protections.

##### 2. The \$4.86 Million "Pest" Loop:

The peninsula is home to the **Whakatipu Māhia** project, a massive \$4.86 million initiative funded by a coalition including [Predator Free 2050 Ltd](#), [DOC](#), and the Hawke's Bay Regional Council.

- **The Funding Trap:** In late 2025, an additional **\$250,000 Lottery Grant** and **\$60,000 Community Grant** were injected to "finish" the possum eradication. This funding is contingent on proving that "pests" are being destroyed to protect the "clean" image of the peninsula.

**Respect Life. Respect Nature. Restore the Balance.**  
**NZ-AWA-1999-142**



- **The Jobs Link:** Through the **Jobs for Nature** scheme (nearly **\$178 million** nationally from 2022-2026), local people are employed in "nature-based" roles. These jobs exist *only* as long as there are "pests" to kill, creating a financial dependency on the continuation of lethal culling.

### **3. The Public-Private Blur:**

The government has used public funds to support private infrastructure around the launch site.

- **The \$1 Million Road Grant:** In 2020, the government gave **\$1 million** from the Provincial Growth Fund to seal a private road on [Onenui Station](#) specifically to support Rocket Lab's operations.
- **The Conflict:** While local communities struggle for basic road repairs, millions are spent ensuring a private rocket company and a state-funded "killing industry" can operate side-by-side.

### **THE SGI VERDICT:**

The "War on Cats" on the Mahia Peninsula isn't just about birds; it's about maintaining a high-revenue, corporate-sponsored "predator-free" brand. When killing becomes a condition of funding, compassion is the first casualty.