



9th July, 2018

Dr Mike Pole
Queensland Herbarium
Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha,
Toowong QLD4066
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mike

Your letter to the Division of Sciences was passed on to me for comment. As you know, the student concerned has been working as a postdoctoral fellow at the Lamont-Doherty Laboratory, University of Columbia, New York since soon after the paper in question was published in early 2015. It would have been helpful to have had these matters raised with either Dr Reichgelt or me directly, at the time the paper was published.

In retrospect, there are some shortcomings in this paper that were not addressed by either the authors or reviewers. In particular, I realise that it would have been more appropriate to refer to Douglas (1986), rather than Douglas (1985) in this and other papers. I have just discovered this past week, via Dr Donald MacFarlan, that it is now possible for researchers in New Zealand and, more importantly, overseas, to access the Douglas (1986) publication on line, something that I and other co-workers were not aware of.

Similarly, the caption to Fig. 2 in the Reichgelt et al. (2015) paper did not make it clear which two of the four columns in Figure 2 were redrawn from Douglas (1986). This error will be addressed in any future publications. We regret that Dr Douglas was not clearly acknowledged for his comprehensive work on the stratigraphy of the Manuherikia Group sections, and in particular the Vinegar Hill and Lauder sections.

The sentence in Reichgelt et al. (2015: 353) which reads: "The sections of the Manuherikia Group investigated for this study span about 3.6 million years (Mildenhall 1989; Raine et al. 2012)" was a general comment, and does not, in retrospect, clearly express the uncertainty inherent in determining the ages of many early to mid Miocene terrestrial sediments in New Zealand.

The age range of 18.7-15.1 Ma is derived from the NZ standard time scale for the time relevant to this study based on palynology which we accept cannot be more precise than Altonian to Clifdenian. This age range was given to indicate to an international readership the general early Miocene age of the sediments of the study in a New Zealand context.

I trust we have addressed your other concerns in the accompanying response. Finally, as the publications from members of our research group demonstrate, we carefully read and regularly cite your papers where relevant and will continue to do so in any future publications. We fully acknowledge your immense contribution to our current understanding of New Zealand vegetation history.

Yours sincerely

Daphne Lee