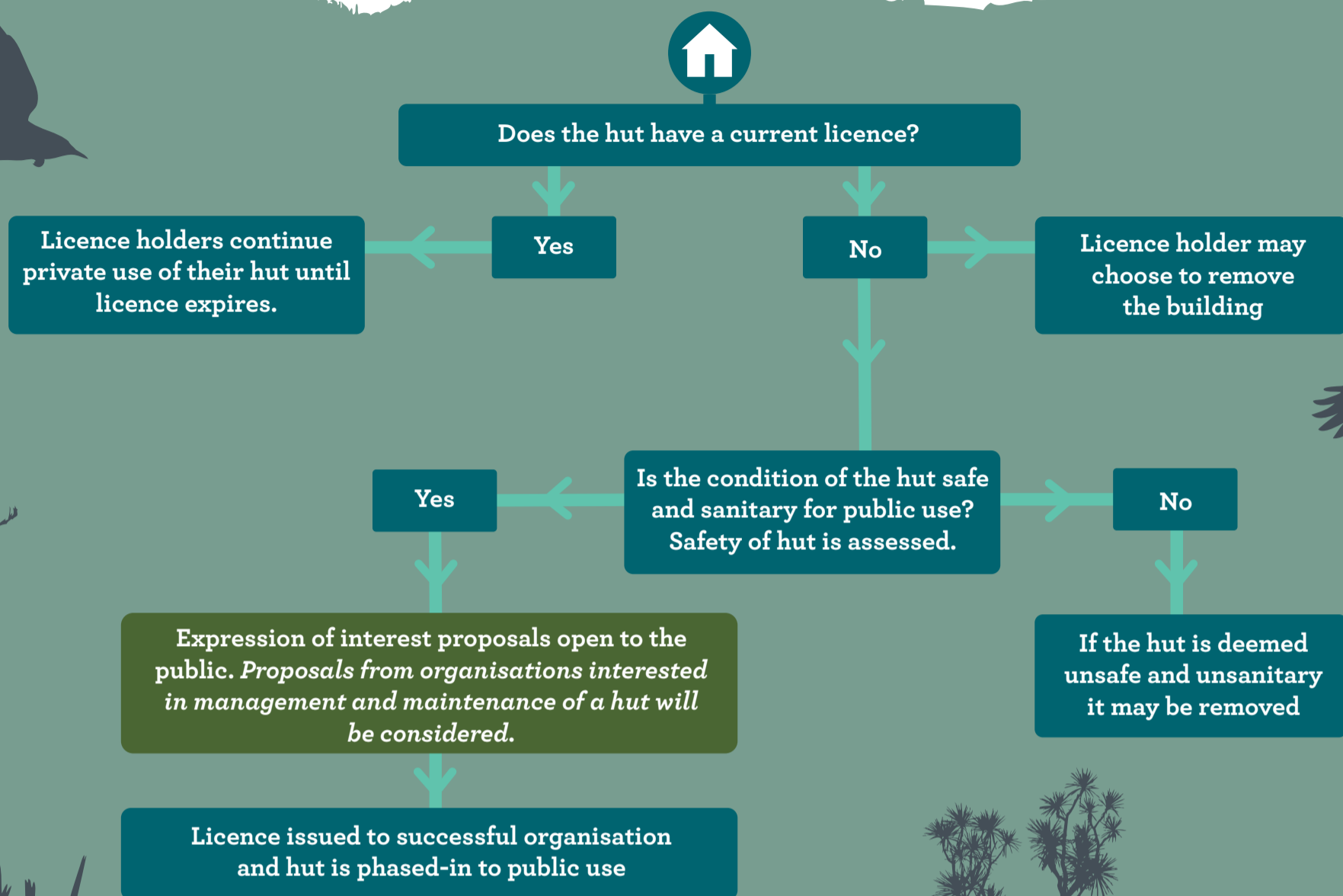


Ōrongorongo private hut phase-in to public use process



We're working with the Ōrongorongo Club Inc to phase in public access to private huts in the Ōrongorongo Valley when the current licences expire.

Private huts in the Ōrongorongo Valley were built and licenced prior to the area becoming public conservation land. Some huts date back to the 1920s and over 50 private huts are left in the valley today. The huts have a unique historical character and are examples of great kiwi ingenuity. At the time the huts were built, licensees were issued with legally binding agreements to use their huts.

Some of the private hut licences are beginning to expire and because the huts are on public conservation land the licences cannot be transferred or renewed. One of the principles of public conservation land is open access to the public and privately owned huts sit at odds with this.

Many families and extended whānau have enjoyed backcountry experiences in the huts over several generations. Making them publicly accessible will open the unique experience to more people.

Hut owners will continue to retain private ownership until their licence expires. All licences expire by December 31st 2050, so the phasing-in process will take some time to fully implement.

Expressions of interest proposals to obtain a licence for the management of a hut (or huts) will be opened to the public once a hut licence has expired. Proposals will be assessed against selection criteria, which will include a requirement that the huts will be publicly bookable.

The diagram overleaf outlines how the process will work. More details are on the DOC website: www.doc.govt.nz/orongorongo-private-huts/

Further information

EMAIL: orongorongohuts@doc.govt.nz
www.doc.govt.nz/orongorongo-private-huts/
www.orongorongoclub.org.nz/

Cover photo:
Ōrongorongo Hut

Published by:
Department of Conservation
Kapiti-Wellington
District Office

Design:
Jasmine Horton
Creative Services

Editing:
Huia Gray

This publication is produced using paper sourced from well-managed, renewable and legally logged forests.

New Zealand Government

KAPITI/WELLINGTON

Ōrongorongo Valley

Phasing in of public access to private huts





FAQ's

Why are the private huts there in the first place?

Private huts located in the Ōrongorongo Valley, Remutaka Forest Park, were built before the valley became public conservation land. Some huts date back to the 1920s and provide unique historical, cultural and social character to the valley. They were legally established at the time they were built, when the land was under the stewardship of the Wellington City Council and when anyone could apply for a licence.

When the Ōrongorongo Valley became public conservation land, DOC issued licences to hut owners to enable continued use of the huts. The licences are not transferable and will expire when the last licence holder passes away or on 31st December 2050.

Why are the private huts being phased into public use?

The Ōrongorongo private huts are on public conservation land. One of the principles of public conservation land is open access to the public and private huts sit at odds with this.

Under current Conservation General Policy and the Wellington Conservation Management Strategy (WCMS) 2019, private structures on public conservation land are to be re-purposed or removed depending on suitability for public use.

Under the old WCMS, private huts in the Ōrongorongo Valley would have been entirely removed upon expiry of the licence. The WCMS review acknowledged the private huts contribution of heritage and culture within the valley and special connections many people have with them.

The new WCMS (2019) enables the huts to be retained under a public use model. This WCMS became operative in January 2019 after an extensive public consultation process.

DOC worked with the Ōrongorongo Club Inc throughout the WCMS review (2016-2018) to collaborate on a phase-in process for private huts into public use upon their licence expiry.

Enabling public use provides increased opportunity for members of the public to access, enjoy and experience the unique heritage and culture of the valley.

Do I have to phase my hut into public use?

Licence-holders can continue to privately use their huts as normal, until the licence expires.

Is it possible to keep our private hut?

Licence holders can privately use their hut until the licence expires.

The licence expires when the last licence holder passes away or on December 31st 2050, whichever comes first.

All licences will expire by December 31st 2050.

Expressions of interest proposals to obtain a licence for the management of a hut (or huts) will open to the public once a hut licence expires. Proposals will be assessed against selection criteria, which will include a requirement that the huts will be publicly bookable.

What are the requirements for a private hut to become public?

Huts will need to be available for members of the public to book via an organisation that provides public membership.

The DOC 'Basic Hut Standards' will be used as baseline standards to be adhered to. There will be some flexibility to ensure the unique heritage and character of the huts is preserved, while ensuring huts will not pose a health and safety risk to the users.

What criteria does a hut have to meet to be suitable for public use, and what will happen to those that aren't deemed suitable?

Full criteria are still being developed, however, will include:

- The style and character of the huts must remain essentially unmodified.
- Huts will need to be available for members of the public to book via an organisation that provides open membership.
- Huts need to meet basic hut standards - primarily that the hut is safe and sanitary and will not pose a health and safety risk to the users.
- If the huts are deemed unsafe and unsuitable for public use, they may be removed subject to any heritage considerations.

Will the unique character of the huts be maintained?

The WCMS recognises the historic, cultural and social values of the huts. Conditions to phase-in public use require the style and character of all buildings and floor areas and/or building footprints to remain essentially unmodified.

Who will manage the huts when they become public?

Huts will be managed and maintained by an organisation that is granted a licence to do so.

DOC will manage licences and licence obligations for the huts through standard licensing agreements.

Huts will be made available for members of the public to book via an organisation who manage the huts and is open to the public to join.

Who can submit 'expression of interest' proposals to manage a hut?

- Any organisation who can demonstrate they fulfill criteria and will provide public membership to book the huts.
- They must be able to demonstrate they have appropriate resources to bring the hut(s) up to standard and provide for ongoing maintenance and management.
- DOC will take into account wishes expressed by family or caretakers with connections to the Ōrongorongo hut(s), when considering proposals.

There will be conditions requiring licence holders to submit booking information to DOC.

Will there be fees for using the new huts?

Organisations who manage the huts when they become public will be able to receive fees from those who use them, to help with maintenance. DOC will require a percentage of revenue received, which will be outlined in the licence granted to the organisation.

