



18-E-0726 – Doccm-5597965

12 October 2018

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), dated 24th September 2018. Your requests and our responses are given below:

“In the event that The Mokihinui-Lyell Backcountry Trust (MLBT) presents DOC with an application to expand the visitor facilities on the Old Ghost Road (OGR), and that expansion includes an application to increase aircraft movements and associated noise levels on the OGR, will DOC recognise and act on the findings of studies such as those in these links (various URL links) which demonstrate the impacts of noise pollution on avian stress levels and breeding success, with particular regard to:

- *the effects of aircraft noise on indigenous birdlife found in the areas traversed by the OGR?*
- *and require an AEE to investigate those effects prior to any consent for expansion being granted? If not, why not?*
- *will the precautionary principle be invoked? If not, why not please?”*

To date the department has not received an official application for widescale extension of visitor facilities or new hut accommodation along the Old Ghost Road. If it does, this request will be considered on its merits and will include an Assessment of Environmental and Cultural Effects (AEE). The only recent minor modification has been to Ghost Lake Hut which has had the veranda closed in, this has been an extension within its current footprint. This has improved the user comfort and user experience in this high altitude hut which has exposure to the elements. The closing in of the veranda has also effectively added 6 additional bunk spaces. It is important to note that the current use levels on a daily basis along the length of the Old Ghost Road is limited by the booking system.

Currently the Mokihinui area is managed via the department’s Irregular Landing Concession control mechanisms. We are working to put in place an Aircraft Access Management strategy that will control aircraft impacts so that they are in keeping with the area. The aircraft strategy is being modelled upon the Kahurangi National Park Aircraft Management Strategy. This approach is accepted as a suitable model to provide adequate control and protection for both natural, cultural and visitor values within a National Park context and setting.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on the department's website.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Davies
Director, Operations
Western South Island
for Director-General