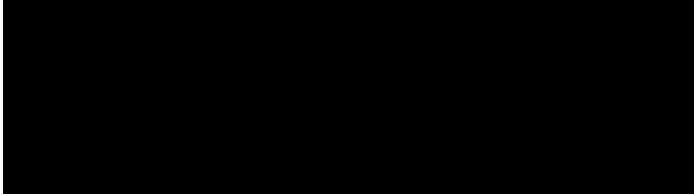




08 July 2022



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Minister of Conservation of 7 June 2022 which was transferred to the Department of Conservation on 9 June 2022, in which you asked for:

*I received a copy of the following letter. I would like to know what your response to this was.*

*Could you please also tell me what funds are collected by Rakiura NP visitors each year. What has been the pre-covid figures compared to covid figures. Noting, of course the number of domestic visitors who use the track.*

*My understanding a portion of the International Visitor Levy is apportioned to maintaining tourism infrastructure.*

*How much of this money has been specifically allocated to Rakiura in the past 5 years and the next 5 years?*

*DOC was applying for 10 years of funding from the [Stewart Island] visitor levy. What funds have been committed to the Rakiura Track for maintenance for the next 10 years. What budget did this money come from?*

*If there are no long term plans, what has been allocated and for how long is the funding been assigned to allow for future planning.*

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *I received a copy of the following letter. I would like to know what your response to this was.*

Our response to the letter that you refer to is summarised as follows:

We are aware of the quality issues of the Rakiura track. A combination of geological and climatic conditions means that the Rakiura Track is particularly difficult to maintain to visitors'

expectations of Great Walk standards. Furthermore, the Rakiura Track has become more popular over the last 5 years and this increase in visitors has put additional pressure on the track infrastructure.

The Rakiura Track has received investment in recent years through the replacement of bridges and improvements to campsites and huts.

In response to the issue of mud and track quality, *in principle* funding of \$300,000 for track upgrades for 2023 has been approved. This will be used to complete Stage 1 of board-walking, particularly for muddy parts of the Track.

The Rakiura Track also has a Capital Expenditure Plan that sets out the desired capital (asset) upgrades until 2030. Funding for this plan is not confirmed beyond 2023 as multiple factors affect available capital expenditure funding each year and funding cannot be confirmed that many years in advance.

2. *Could you please also tell me what funds are collected by Rakiura NP visitors each year. What has been the pre-covid figures compared to covid figures. Noting, of course the number of domestic visitors who use the track.*

We collect funds from Rakiura National Park visitors each year for the Great Walk and receive revenue from Visitor Centre retail sales.

The table below shows the number of visitors and revenue from Rakiura Track Great Walk bookings for the past 5 years. Pre-covid, international visitors made up approximately 40-45% of visitor numbers. Since the closure of the border in 2020 due to Covid, there has been a significant drop in international visitors, however, there has been an increase in domestic visitors, which reflects Stewart Island's increased popularity as a domestic tourism destination since Covid.

Rakiura Great Walk Revenue		Rakiura Great Walk visitor numbers		
Year	Revenue \$	Domestic	International	Total
2018	180990	1,416*	1,057*	2,473*
2019	182349	3,923	3,191	7,114
2020	168167	4,927	2,077	7,004
2021	208974	5,862	527	6,389
2022	247741	5,066**	224	5,290**

Please note: \*2018 data is from 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2018.

\*\* 2022 data is from 1 January 2022 to 22 June 2022.

3. *My understanding a portion of the International Visitor Levy is apportioned to maintaining tourism infrastructure. How much of this money has been specifically allocated to Rakiura in the past 5 years and the next 5 years?*



There have been no International Visitor Levy (IVL) funds allocated to Rakiura in the past 5 years. No funds have been allocated to Rakiura for the next 5 years, however, future funding rounds could allocate funding to Rakiura. There has only been one round of IVL funding to date. You may be interested to look at the IVL funded-projects from this round that are available on the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment website: [Projects funded by the IVL | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment \(mbie.govt.nz\)](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/projects-funded-by-the-ivl)

4. *DOC was applying for 10 years of funding from the [Stewart Island] visitor levy. What funds have been committed to the Rakiura Track for maintenance for the next 10 years. What budget did this money come from?*

DOC does not currently receive money from the Stewart Island Visitor Levy for the Rakiura Track. In 2022 we applied for \$30,000 each year for 10 years from this fund for the Rakiura Track. It is common across the country for DOC to partner with communities, to deliver projects that are important to communities, but may fall outside the Department's available investment. However, this bid was withdrawn once it looked likely that we would be able to secure funding from DOC's Capital Expenditure budget.

Funding from DOC's Operating and Capital Expenditure budgets is allocated across our network of District Offices. Capital Expenditure funding of \$300,000 has been approved *in principle* for Rakiura track upgrades in 2023. Funding has not been committed beyond 2023. Operating Expenditure of approximately \$200,000 per year covers Rakiura's seasonal hut rangers, waste management, heating, gravel track maintenance/repairs, access arrangements, and other maintenance costs such as cleaning.

5. *If there are no long term plans, what has been allocated and for how long is the funding been assigned to allow for future planning.*

Please refer to my answer to Question 4.

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

[Redacted signature area]

Nāku noa, nā

[Redacted name]

Aaron Fleming  
Director Operations Southern South Island  
Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*