



22 September 2023

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Tēnā koe [Redacted]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 26 July 2023 and clarified on 3 August 2023, in which you asked for:

*Could you please supply me with all the written material, including emails, signed agreements, letters and text messages **regarding Ulva Island tracks and infrastructure funding** including discussions **relating to the island's track and wharf infrastructure** for the past 3 years please.*

The track I would be referring to would be the tracks or proposed tracks connecting the beach/wharf to the main tracks.

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

On 31 August 2023, we extended the timeframe to respond to your request to 6 October 2023 due to the third-party consultations necessary.

The Ulva Island Wharf project is a Southland District Council (SDC)-led project that the Department of Conservation has been engaging with since early 2020.

The wharf, which is solely owned by SDC, is coming to the end of its operational life, and the Council have been investigating future options.

The Council's preferred option is constructing their new wharf at a new location on the island. This would require the construction of an additional 400 metres of track across the DOC-administered public conservation land, to link to the extensive existing DOC track network.

DOC has provided in-principle support for this proposal; this means that on the basis of the information available, we support the Council to undertake further investigation, and feasibility on what would be required to progress this option. DOC has provided the Council with all requested documentation.

Crucially, DOC has also always been clear with the Council that while we support them to progress with their planning, we are unable to provide funding to construct their new track.



DOC already pays for and maintains an extensive network on Ulva Island, and constructing an additional track is not a priority for us at this time.

The Department has outstanding questions that require clarification, including a request for a formal project plan and costings, before we can commit to any ongoing ownership and maintenance of the track asset. DOC remains open to working through this with the Council but ultimately the future of the Ulva Island Wharf will be a decision made by SDC.

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed below, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act, as applicable:

List the withholding ground, for example:

- personal contact details of officials, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people,
- free and frank expression under section 9(2)(g)(i) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs,
- confidential information, under section 9(2)(j) – to enable the Crown to negotiate without disadvantage or prejudice.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

As discussed with you via email, I am declining all internal (between DOC staff members) emails under s18(f) as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research as it involves complex third-party consultation. I trust that the information released provides you with the information you seek.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

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

Nāku noa, nā



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

Table 1 - Schedule of documents

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
<i>Item no.</i>	<i>Full date of document</i>	<i>Name of document. If a series of emails refer to it as emails on the topic</i>	<i>Released in full / Released in part -</i>
1	March 2020 – July 2023	Southland District Council and Department of Conservation email correspondence	Released in part
2	February 2023	Excerpts from Kaitiaki Rōpū ki Murihiku hui agenda and minutes	Released in part
3.	July 2023	Excerpt from DOC status report for the Minister of Conservation, week beginning 17 July 2023	Released in part.
4.	April – May 2023	Internal text messages	Released in part.