

16 May 2023

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 17 April 2023 requesting information relating to a filming application. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 ('OIA').

You requested the following:

*Just reaching out to see if someone of relevance from DOC can give me some comments on the controversy up at Kauri Mountain. As I understand it there has been some contention around the filming of Jason Mamo'a's new series Chief of War at the location.*

*I understand DOC received a filming application in November, which was passed on to Ngati wai, however, Te Waiariki believes they should have also been consulted.*

*As I understand it (please correct me if I'm wrong) DOC received a statement of intent from Te Waiariki two months before the filming application was received by DOC. They are stating it was unclear why the filming application was not sent to them. The hapū iwi trust has called the actions "gross negligence" on DOC's behalf.*

*In reference to these statements, I have the following questions:*

- What has been the outcome since the public meeting earlier this month, where Te Waiariki made their position known? Has filming been pulled from the location? If filming has been pulled, what is the impact of this on the region, in DOC's opinion?*
- How does DOC feel about the comment of "gross negligence" ? about the consultation around the filming application?*
- Was there ever a meeting between DOC and Te Waiariki, as stated in their memorandum why/why not?*
- How do filming applications work? What is the correct tikanga when consulting with Iwi around filming at locations, etc?*
- Has DOC had much correspondence with the film production since the controversy began? What has been the impact? Please illustrate in as much detail as you can*
- When the application was sent to Ngati wai, what was the outcome? I assume it was successful given the fact that structures were erected. Did they have any concerns with filming at the location? If so, what were they?*

The Department of Conservation ('the Department') received a one-off filming concession application for an Apple TV series called, 'Chief of War', inspired by the true story of a Hawai'ian warrior named Ka'iana.

Your questions and our responses are listed below.

1. *What has been the outcome since the public meeting earlier this month, where Te Waiariki made their position known?*

The Department was not invited or present at a public meeting on 2 April 2023 at Parua Bay School Hall. A memorandum was sent to the Department by Te Waiariki/ Ngāti Kororā/ Ngāti Takapari Hapū Iwi Trust on the 6 April 2023. The memorandum provided an overview of the proposed filming and events. It included the topics discussed at the public meeting and reinforced the Trust's stance on the filming proposal and works. The Trust's position was officially made known to the Department through the memorandum.

2. *Has filming been pulled from the location?*

The production company has advised the Department that they are not wishing to continue filming at the location.

3. *If filming has been pulled, what is the impact of this on the region, in DOC's opinion?*

The Department has not measured the impact of the filming being pulled. Furthermore, under the OIA, we are not required to form an opinion or create information to respond to an official information request.

4. *How does DOC feel about the comment of "gross negligence"? about the consultation around the filming application?*

As noted in our response to question three, the Department is not required, in accordance with the OIA, to form an opinion or create information to respond to an official information request.

5. *Was there ever a meeting between DOC and Te Waiariki, as stated in their memorandum why/why not?*

Yes. A meeting took place with Te Waiariki/ Ngāti Kororā/ Ngāti Takapari Hapū Iwi Trust at the Department's Whangārei office on the 11 April 2023 at 11am. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the concession and to form a working relationship.

6. *How do filming applications work? What is the correct tikanga when consulting with Iwi around filming at locations, etc?*

Please see the below points, detailing our process relating to concession applications:



- The Department reviews an applicant's submitted documentation, identifying any critical issues linked to the application, and involving any technical advisors that understand the activity and its potential impacts.
  - We then engage with iwi and hapū, by providing the application documents, and any additional information which may have been sourced, for example, feedback from technical advisors, and/or any additional information received from the applicant.
  - The Department provides the opportunity for iwi and hapū to ask questions following their review of the application. These questions may be for the Department to respond to, or for us to ask the applicant. In some cases, our Treaty partners may want to be connected to directly to the applicant.
  - The Department provides iwi and hapū the chance to share any comments, concerns, and/or guidance relating to the application.
  - The Department's Decision-Maker then reviews any technical advice, iwi and hapū advice, to inform their decision on whether to grant the application.
7. *Has DOC had much correspondence with the film production since the controversy began? What has been the impact? Please illustrate in as much detail as you can.*

The film production company phoned the Department on the 19 April 2023 to discuss the concession and their withdrawal. This was followed up with an email from the company on the 20 April 2023, officially withdrawing from the concession.

8. *When the application was sent to Ngātiwai, what was the outcome? I assume it was successful given the fact that structures were erected. Did they have any concerns with filming at the location? If so, what were they?*

The Department had engagement with Ngātiwai throughout the process. The iwi had some concerns regarding wāhi tapu (sacred sites) and the number of visitors for the filming that they were managing directly with the production company.

Taking iwi perspectives into consideration, a concession was granted to the filming company for use of the location.

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 area]

Sue Reed-Thomas  
Director Operations  
Northern North Island Region