

04 September 2023



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 7 August 2023, in which you asked:

Why has the Department of Conservation closed all Toyota Guardian Walks;

Why is Doc removing the signage from the walks;

Would it be possible to leave the maps online and keep the tracks marked; and

Would it be possible to maintain a digital certificate online that parents could print off when a child completes a walk?

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

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. Why has the Department of Conservation closed all Toyota Guardian Walks?

While the Toyota Kiwi Guardians (TKG) programme has come to an end, the Department has not closed the walks that were promoted via the programme.

The TKG programme included interactive walks (“TKG adventures”), highlighting existing paths throughout the country, with more than half of these on Public Conservation Land. With the ending of the programme, only the associated digital and physical infrastructure such as the TKG signage, maps and medal reward scheme have stopped.

It is important for DOC to target its efforts towards addressing the big conservation challenges New Zealand is facing and concentrate on DOC’s priority biodiversity work. After careful examination, it became clear the way the programme and its associated medal reward system was structured was not sustainable in the future and did not align with the Department’s strategic priorities.

All walks promoted via the TKG programme continue to be open for the public to explore, unless closed for safety or other reasons as outlined on our website:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/alerts/>.

The Department has identified over 150 family-friendly walks and tramps which are great options for getting outdoors with children. All walks are listed by region and the Department encourages children and their families to continue exploring new parts of Aotearoa:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/walking-and-tramping/family-friendly-walks-and-tramps/>.

2. Why is Doc removing the signage from the walks?

DOC is removing TKG posts from walks. The posts include a branded plaque. Keeping the posts in place would give the impression that the programme is still running.

3. Would it be possible to leave the maps online and keep the tracks marked?

The TKG maps feature shared intellectual property between DOC and Toyota. Keeping these available would require rebranding them. There are costs and resourcing associated with the retrieval, supply and rebranding of the maps that the Department is not able to provide.

As noted in our response to your previous question, keeping the TKG posts in place would give the impression that the programme is still running.

4. Would it be possible to maintain a digital certificate online that parents could print off when a child completes a walk?

TKG branded digital certificates have been produced for those who did not receive medals before stocks ran out. Since these are TKG branded, they include shared intellectual property between DOC and Toyota and may not be used beyond the conclusion of the programme. Keeping the digital certificates in place would give the impression that the programme continues.

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

Nāku noa, nā



Fiona Weightman
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Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai