

17 March 2026

Conservation House  
18-32 Manners Street  
Te Aro, Wellington, 6011  
doc.govt.nz

Ref: OIAD-6112

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 17 February 2026, in which you asked for:

*Please provide a list of the Maori Rahui's or banning use of land or a resource from that land that Doc is aware of. Stating if Doc supports Rahui or not.*

*Stating who owns that land and what its delegated use is eg nature reserve, scenic reserve?*

*State any easements with regard to that land your aware of?*

*State what section of the Scenic reserve Act 1977 applies to that land?*

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

On 6 March 2026 you clarified and expanded your request to:

*A) Please provide a list of the Maori Rahui's or similar, banning or deterring use of land, use including walking upon that is owned or administer by DOC.*

*B) Please send the earliest date of any staff Doc staff member, where they may have indicated a support of any Rahui or similar.*

*[Location specified to] greater Northland and Taranaki provinces.*

*[Time period specified to] existing RahuIs and any that were removed or ceased within the last two years*

*["Easements" clarified as] any easements or concessions DOC has granted with regard to land owned or administrated by DOC that are recorded*

*Yes please give this general overview [of DOC's role regarding rāhui on public conservation land].*

Local hapū or iwi may place rāhui over areas to protect or regenerate the health and mauri of an area. Reasons for this include if there has been an accident or death, where an area needs protection or regeneration of ecosystems, flora, fauna, water, soil or other aspect of that area. Areas that are wāhi tapu may also be considered restricted in the way of an area under rāhui. This is not an exhaustive list of reasons for rāhui or similar banning use of or activity on land.

DOC does not maintain a formal or centralised record of the rāhui it becomes aware of, due to this not being a function or role of the department and due to the chance of error where the department is not made aware of the rāhui. The instances listed below reflect current or recent rāhui known to staff in the specified areas; however, this should not be considered an exhaustive list.

Regarding easements, our system's search function refines results to the specific area of land named. Therefore, unless an easement explicitly refers to the location of the rāhui, it will not appear in the search results.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *Please provide a list of the Maori Rāhui's or banning [or deterring] use of land [including walking upon] or a resource from that land [that is owned or administered by DOC...within greater Northland and Taranaki provinces] that Doc is aware of [that were removed or ceased within the last two years]. Stating if Doc supports Rāhui or not. Stating who owns that land and what its delegated use is eg nature reserve, scenic reserve? State any easements [or concessions DOC has granted] with regard to that land [owned or administered by DOC that are recorded] you are aware of? State what section of the Scenic reserve Act 1977 applies to that land?*
  - i. Otito Scenic Reserve Rāhui (Northland) – this is Public Conservation Land owned by the Crown. It is designated as a Scenic Reserve. No easements have been able to be located. Section 19 of the Reserves Act 1977 applies here.  
As per the response below, relating to DOC's role regarding rāhui on public conservation land, DOC supports this rāhui.
  - ii. Pukekaroro Scenic Reserve Rāhui (Northland) – this is Public Conservation Land owned by the Crown. It is designated as a Scenic Reserve. No easements have been able to be located. Section 19 of the Reserves Act 1977 applies here.  
As per the response below, relating to DOC's role regarding rāhui on public conservation land, DOC supports this rāhui.
  - iii. Pātāua Island Recreation Reserve (Northland) – this is Public Conservation Land owned by the Crown. It is designated as a Recreation Reserve. No easements have been able to be located. Section 17 of the Reserves Act 1977 applies here.  
As per the response below, relating to DOC's role regarding rāhui on public conservation land, DOC supports this rāhui.
  - iv. Russell State Forest – Punaruku track – this is Public Conservation Land owned by the Crown. It is designated as a Conservation park. Our records do not show any easements over this land. No sections of the Reserves Act 1977 apply to this land.  
As per the response below, relating to DOC's role regarding rāhui on public conservation land, DOC supports this rāhui.

2. *Please send the earliest date of any staff Doc staff member, where they may have indicated a support of any Rahui or similar.*

DOC's support of the rāhui referenced above represents an organisational approach rather than the individual opinion of specific staff members.

3. *Please give this general overview [of DOC's role regarding rāhui on public conservation land].*

Part of DOC's duties under section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 and the Treaty of Waitangi include enabling hapū and iwi to practise their responsibilities as kaitiaki on public conservation lands.

Rāhui are not a legally enforceable decision, and DOC staff do not take any active role in enforcing them, beyond raising awareness of where they have been placed, and raising understanding of what has instigated them.

The ethics of kaitiakitanga includes components of protection, guardianship, stewardship and customary use in relation to ancestral lands, water, sites, resources and other taonga. The focus of kaitiakitanga is manaaki (care) and rāhui (protection). As such, DOC's role regarding rāhui on conservation land is to be supportive of local hapū and iwi placing rāhui to help restore the ecology and mauri of an area.

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 OIA.

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

Nāku noa, nā



Hayden Barrett  
Director National Operations (Acting)  
Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*