

27 March 2026

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 6 March 2026, in which you asked for:

*“... any correspondence between DoC and Oceana Gold relating to the decision to remove, and removal of, the Wharekirauponga swing bridge.”*

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

### Context

After kauri dieback disease was discovered in the Coromandel mid-2010s, DOC implemented a precautionary approach to track management in areas with significant kauri, including the Wharekirauponga track.

In 2018, a closure of the loop section of the track was implemented as a mitigation against the spread of kauri disease in the area. The closure of the loop section meant the Wharekirauponga bridge, which linked the main track with the loop section, no longer connected to an open section of track available to visitors.

As a standalone structure, the ageing bridge requires ongoing safety inspections and maintenance, without providing public access or recreational benefit.

DOC cannot justify the cost of maintaining a bridge no longer serving any functional purpose.

The removal of the bridge is unconnected to Oceana Gold Ltd's (OGL) operations in the area.

### Your request

The information you requested is listed in the table below and accompanies this response. Please note the extracts form part of wider documentation, which is out of scope as it does not concern the Wharekirauponga swing bridge.

Please also note DOC's request (referred to in item 1) to OGL for a memo to outline any operational concerns it may have about the removal of the bridge was not actioned by OGL.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	29 January 2026	Oceana Gold Meeting file note	Released in part
2	4 March 2026	Oceana Gold Meeting file note	Released in part

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documentation listed above, subject to information being withheld under the following section of the OIA, as applicable:

- personal contact details of officials, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people.

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.

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

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tinaka Mearns', written in a cursive style.

**Tinaka Mearns**

Director Hauraki, Waikato, Taranaki

Department of Conservation

*Te Papa Atawhai*