

Department of Conservation Status Report

for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 7 March 2022

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Kiri Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6936262

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2. Jobs for Nature dashboard
3. Summary of active legal matters
4. Civil litigation in the senior Courts

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary:

- As of 1 March, six projects are completed, 196 are in delivery and five are in the contracting/legal phase (including the Ngā Whenua Rāhui allocation).
- Several projects are in the process of closing. We are working to ensure output data and learnings for these are captured, and that all payments have been made and obligations fulfilled.
- We are currently working through funding agreement variations for a small number of projects that are within their first six months. Generally, milestone payment schedules need to be realigned to budgets now that projects have had more time to develop and establish.
- We have previously updated our COVID-19 guidance for projects operating under the red status of the COVID-19 Protection framework, including encouraging project partners to seek financial support through the Ministry of Social Development COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme if employees are required to self-isolate and cannot work. Project partners have requested additional guidance on paying employees, and we are consulting with DOC's legal team to ensure that guidance provided is consistent with project partner employment obligations.
- SLU Minister paper BRF-113 was sent to your office from the Secretariat on 28 February and includes recommendations for decisions sought concerning the Māori Land Fund.
- The papers also included a copy of the Benefits Survey developed by the Secretariat, for noting. We provided input during the development of the survey and are supportive of the survey content in that it will help support telling the story of the wider social and human benefits of the programme.

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities:

- We are preparing a media release to mark the start of Te Pēwhairangi Marine Kaitiaki Training JFN project. The project had previously invited you to attend the opening event on 7 March. Please note that you announced this project last year.

Contact: Reg Kemper, Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature: 9(2)(a)

1.2 RMA advocacy

No items this week

1.3 Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

Monthly item – no update this week.

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2 Updates

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9(2)(a)

2.2 Rekohu/Wharekauri/Chatham Islands Conservation Management Strategy

- Following your visit to the Chatham Islands, this item provides context about the Chatham Islands Conservation Management Strategy (**CICMS**).
- The CICMS was approved in 1999 and remains operative until formally reviewed. Although the CICMS is an older document, it is still considered fit for purpose in terms of supporting statutory decision-making at place.
- The CICMS is not currently programmed for review. It sits alongside other conservation management strategies of a similar age needing review (such as Nelson/Marlborough: 1996 and Whanganui: 1997).
- We are aware of some frustration, including amongst Conservation Boards, about the age of many of our statutory planning documents.
- We will engage with the Chatham Islands Conservation Board (**the Board**) to understand their aspirations for a future review and identify any pre-work the Board can do now (similar to initiatives occurring with the Northland and Taranaki-Whanganui Conservation Boards).
- 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
- We prioritise future reviews based on several factors, including the extent to which the document remains fit for purpose. Considerations include specific challenges or issues the existing document doesn't address (e.g. managing drones or e-bikes), or has created (e.g. inability to upgrade visitor infrastructure). We are not aware of such issues for the CICMS.

- We will keep you informed of progress with the Board.

Contact: Natasha Ryburn, Director Planning Permissions and Land:

9(2)(a)

2.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

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[redacted] 9(2)(a)

2.6 Eastern South Island – Te Manahuna Ki Uta

- We have a key role in Te Manahuna Ki Uta/Destination Mackenzie, a long-term destination management process led by Mackenzie District Council (MDC) and funded through the Provincial Growth Fund.
- You have responded to multiple WPQs on this project since August 2021.
- 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]
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[redacted]
- MDC will undertake a second round of public engagement in April 2022 relating to the work of the DMP. Given the high interest in the Mackenzie Basin, this is likely to lead to correspondence with you and DOC.
- When the project agrees on specific outcomes and actions, we will provide you with an update.

Contact: Claire Spencer, Regional Visitor Planning Manager: 9(2)(a) [redacted]

2.7 Dead kororā found in water at Kennedy Point Marina, Waiheke

- On 23 February security staff at Kennedy Point notified us of a dead kororā/little blue penguin found floating in the water at the site. Marina staff retrieved the dead bird and sent it to us for a necropsy.
- Necropsy results show that the kororā weighed 658 grams (water-logged skin/feathers) and was in poor body condition, with reduced pectoral muscle mass and minimal body fat reserves.
- Due to decomposition, the sex and age of the penguin could not be confirmed. The stomach contained a small amount of black fluid (melena) which is commonly seen in birds in reduced body condition. There were no signs of trauma to the skeleton.
- DOC technical staff advised that the cause of death is unknown, but malnutrition was a factor. It is unclear if the penguin died of starvation due to lack of available food, or if it had an injury that prevented it from feeding.
- We will continue to investigate any incidents of kororā death or injury at the Kennedy Point Marina development site.

Contact: Andrew Baucke, Director Operations Auckland: 9(2)(a)

2.8 Health, Safety and Wellbeing

- On Monday 28 February several DOC offices around the country were served 'notices' by unknown individuals, being a 'proclamation of Oranga Tonutanga O Te Ora 2022', demanding that the CEO 'vacate immediately' so that DOC can be taken over by a 'coordinator'. All interactions with the individuals to date have been peaceful and non-aggressive.

Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response

- We made the transition to Phase 3 from midnight 24 February without any significant impact on business delivery.
- A small number of specialist teams (e.g. the Aoraki Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team) have been approved into the Close Contact Exemption Scheme, to enable them to maintain key staff on response rosters.
- Business Continuity Plans (**BCPs**) are ready for enactment across the organisation should delivery of specific business units be threatened by staff absences. No BCP plans have been enacted to date.
- We are working with Te Kawa Mataaho to clarify access to RAT testing kits for use by staff.

Vaccine Mandates

- The process to develop options for the future employment of unvaccinated staff progresses. Approximately 75 unvaccinated staff received letters last week outlining the options that will be recommended for their particular situation.

Contact: Harry Maher, Director Health & Safety: 9(2)(a)

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

3.1 Western South Island: Event to bless new Kapitia Scientific Reserve

- The Hokitika District team have confirmed that the official opening of the Kapitia Scientific Reserve will now occur on Wednesday 23 March 2022.
- The new Scientific Reserve features a predator free fence around one hectare of suitable habitat for the Nationally Critical "Kapitia skink".
- You have previously been invited to attend this event, however it was postponed. The new event date is entered in the annual calendar. If you decide to attend, Te Runanga o Ngaiti Waewae will provide the Poroporoaki.

Contact: Mark Davies, Director Operations Tai Poutini/Western South Island,
9(2)(a)

4 Director-General Engagements

March

11 March	AirNZ/DOC Senior Leaders Strategy session, MS Teams
16 March	DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, DOC Wellington
22 March	Forest and Bird/DOC half day hui, DOC Wellington
25 March	10th Anniversary Project Janzsoon/Signing of Tomorrow Accord, Nelson
31 March	Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards, Auckland

April

4–5 April	NZ Conservation Authority, Tauranga
20 April	Allen & Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists, Wellington
21 April	Northland Regional Council, MS Teams
28 April	Cave Creek Anniversary, West Coast

May

19 May	DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, DOC Wellington
26–27 May	Public Service Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge Martinborough

5 Appendices

The following appendices are provided to support this status report:

- Appendix 1 – Cabinet Paper Report (regular item)
- Appendix 2 – Forthcoming items (regular item)
- Appendix 3 – Jobs for Nature dashboard (regular item)
- Appendix 4 – Summary table of Civil Litigation in Senior Courts
- Appendix 5 – Summary of active legal matters

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2. Jobs for Nature dashboard

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary:

- We are awaiting final decisions from SLU Ministers on recommended projects for the Māori Land Fund contained within paper BRF-113 after which we will begin contract negotiations.
- Monitoring, assurance and payment work are currently a main focus within the JFN unit. We are continuing to make milestone payments to projects with milestones due in December and January.
- Some staff have tested positive for Covid-19, and we have now deployed the JFN business continuity plan. There are nominated acting staff holding authorised financial delegations to ensure payments to projects continue to be made, and secondary/support staff identified to ensure every project and their respective Delivery Managers have a key contact within the Unit.
- We have been working to provide updated guidance for paying staff to project partners. The guidance encourages partners to seek financial support through MSD's Covid-19 Leave Support Scheme (LSS) when required to isolate. The LSS covers up to \$600 per week for full-time workers. To ensure project partners can meet their employment obligations, we are permitting the use of JFN funding to top up the LSS to enable staff to be paid in line with their employee agreements. We will update your office once new guidance has been finalised.
- We have prepared a schedule for reinstating Deep Dive Learning Reviews across projects, with staff based on both islands visiting regional projects. These will resume once the peak of the Omicron outbreak has passed, with visits currently being scheduled for mid-April.

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities:

- In the week of 14 March your office will be issuing media releases to announce the Te Papa Paorooro (JFN0058) in Bay of Islands and Manaaki Whenua (AL10.4) in Tongariro National Park.

Contact: Christine Officer, Acting Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature: 9(2)(a)

1.2 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions:

Te Tai o Poutini Plan, combined District Plan for the West Coast

- The Te Tai o Poutini Plan Committee is seeking community comments on a pre-formal notification 'exposure' draft of the combined district plan for the three West Coast district councils.
- We intend to provide the committee with comments before 11 March 2022.
- Key areas of interest are how the plan provides for the maintenance and protection of indigenous vegetation and habitats for indigenous species, management of land use activities in the coastal environment of these districts, and appropriate zoning and provisions that apply to land managed by DOC.

- Of note, the draft plan contains enabling provisions for development of mining activities within specific areas zoned for this purpose, which includes some areas of public conservation land. Comments will also seek that, within mining zones, the plan appropriately maintains and protects indigenous biodiversity values.

Appeals:

Southland Water and Land Plan appeal update

- The proposed Southland Water and Land Plan (pSWLP) was appealed to the Environment Court by several parties, including DOC in 2018. We also joined other appeals as a s274 party.
- The Environment Court has managed the appeals process through a hearing and issuing of decisions on matters in 2019 and 2020. Many matters have been agreed through mediation or subsequent negotiation, including some of DOC's appeal points, with consent orders having been filed.
- We have recently filed evidence, and hearings will start from 14 March and continue through to August.

Appeal on an abatement notice: Dillon v Tasman District Council (TDC)

- We joined an appeal on an abatement notice by Mr Dillon in December 2021.
- Mr Dillon has partially erected a seawall in Awaroa Inlet in the Abel Tasman area without obtaining an RMA consent.
- The seawall is partially in the Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve jointly managed by the DOC and TDC, and has cultural values.
- Confidential mediation has recently been held with the appellant and the owners of two other seawalls constructed without RMA consents. 9(2)(ba)

(ii)

Appeal on the Waikato District Plan

- We submitted on the Waikato District Plan in 2018 and staff appeared at five hearings. We sought improvements to the plan relating to the provisions of the natural environment and rural chapters, kauri dieback, protecting bat habitat, wind farms, indigenous vegetation clearance, and criteria and mapping for Significant Natural Areas, biodiversity offsetting and environmental compensation, and natural features and landscapes.
- The Council's decision largely accepted DOC's submission but rejected some important points and made some changes in response to other submitters that were opposed by us.
- In response, we appealed the Council's decision in relation to:
 - the deletion of several Significant Natural Areas and the lack of protection for significant vegetation and habitat that is not included in the maps
 - a lack of policies and rules to address kauri dieback
 - an inaccurate definition of biodiversity offsetting and compensation.
- We are reviewing which other relevant appeals on the plan to join with.

Contact: Trevor Ellis, RMA Manager: 9(2)(a)

1.3 Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

- We are working with your office to plan the launch event for the first ANZBS Implementation Plan. Five locations close to Wellington (Matiu/Somes Island, Mana Island, Pūkaha Mt Bruce, Wairarapa Moana and the Miramar Peninsula) have been identified as potential sites for a launch and we have given your office details. We will provide you with speech notes and key messages ahead of the launch.
- We will proactively release the Implementation Plan Cabinet paper on the DOC website at the same time as your launch of the Plan.

- 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]

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Contact: Mark Fitzpatrick, Director Te Mana o te Taiao Implementation:
9(2)(a) [Redacted]

1.4 9(2)(g)(i)

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2 Updates

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2.2 Northern North Island – Te Matakīrea o Pātaua

- On the 27 February you were copied into a letter from Te Matakīrea o Pātaua, to DOC, which asserted that DOC and the Whangarei District Council (WDC) have been slow to progress a mana enhancing agreement for management of Pātaua reserves, and to resolve several roading matters. The letter also sought improved communication and engagement between DOC and Te Matakīrea o Pātaua.
- We responded to the letter on 3 March, committing to meet with Te Matakīrea o Pātaua to progress development of the agreement within the next month.
- The response updates the group on work under way in conjunction with WDC to address roading issues.
- To improve communication, DOC will maintain regular communication with 9(2)(a), and ensure that Te Matakīrea o Pātaua receives written updates going forward.

Contact: Sue Reed-Thomas, Director Operations Northern North Island:
9(2)(a)

2.3 9(2)(g)(i)

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2.9 Lower North Island: Boundaries East Coast Hawkes Bay and Bay of Plenty Conservation Management Strategies

- On 18 February in Wairoa, you met with Tatau Tatau o Te Wairoa (TToTW) (22-M-0025 refers). TtoTW considers that various parcels of Public Conservation Land on the Eastern boundary of Te Urewera should be contained within the East Coast Hawkes Bay Conservation Management

Strategy (CMS) and not the Bay of Plenty CMS (where they currently lie). Both CMSs are currently in draft.

- Changing the existing boundaries will require a decision by you as Minister of Conservation to amend the boundaries of the respective conservation boards. There are several matters that need to be considered, including consultation with other iwi and with both conservation boards.
- We will initiate this work and provide you with a briefing in the week of 11 April.
- We have advised TtoTW that we are working on this.

Contact: Jack Mace, Director Operations Lower North Island: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2.10 Southern South Island: use of mist netting to deter small birds in Central Otago orchards

- DOC has undertaken an investigation into the use of mist netting in Central Otago orchards.
- A Central Otago cherry orchard worker observed and reported orchardists using mist nets strung between trees to capture (and kill) small birds, e.g., sparrows and silvereyes. Small birds have an economic impact on the orchardists as they eat and damage the fruit.
- The Wildlife Act (s.5) enables landowners to "hunt and kill" partially protected wildlife (Sch. 5), e.g., silvereyes "where any injury or damage to any land or property arises from the presence of the wildlife (abridged)". The cherry trees are considered property, therefore no offence was committed by the orchardists, although the activity is upsetting to many people. There is no suggestion protected wildlife were caught in mist nets on orchards in Central Otago over the summer.
- We could not verify the observations as the cherry-picking season was over by the time we received the report.
- Summerfruit NZ, the umbrella group for fruit growers, believes the use of mist netting is not a widespread practice across the country, and we have not received any other such complaints from fruit growing districts this summer.
- Summerfruit NZ has asked DOC to share information with their growers and we will support the group's communications to the fruit growing sector. We will also liaise with MPI's Animal Welfare team to ensure humane methods of bird deterrence are implemented in orchards.

Contact: Aaron Fleming, Director Operations Southern South Island: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2.11 Southern South Island: Rakiura Ulva Island incursion response

- Staff on Rakiura are undertaking a rodent incursion response on the pest-free Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara sanctuary in response to the initial detection of a rat on the island on 13 February.
- The response is ongoing, with no set end date.
- Fourteen rodents have been caught in kill traps since the response was initiated (to 7 March).

- Ground-based poison operations were initiated on 3 March.
- At least one breeding pair of adult rats remains uncaught.
- If ground-based control methods are insufficient and the rodent population becomes widespread across the island, it is likely that aerial poison operations would be necessary to re-eradicate the rats.

Contact: Aaron Fleming, Director Operations Southern South Island:
9(2)(a)

2.12 Southern South Island: Subadult male sealion – aggressive behaviour toward sealion pups

- There is a Threat Management Plan in place for sealions. A small population of sealions has established in the Catlins. Pup production in the Catlins is low but slowly increasing as young females are recruited to the population and reach breeding maturity at about four years of age. We are aware of six pups being born this year in the Catlins.
- A four-year-old male sealion, "Wero", has been observed acting in an unusually aggressive way towards sealion pups. Wero was observed killing a sealion pup from the current season in early January at Hayes Gap, Kaka Point. A further two sealion pups were found dead in the Catlins in late January with one being considered to have been "killed by a male sealion" – the inference being Wero. These two pups are awaiting necropsy at Massey University to confirm cause of death.
- DOC staff in the Catlins observed Wero's aggressive behaviour in early March when he was seen stalking a pup for one hour before grabbing the pup by the neck.
- Another pup was found dead at the same beach and "degloved", a mechanism used by sealions to kill prey. Only two of the six known pups born in the Catlins this year are still alive (both of them females).
- The young sealion has also shown aggressive behaviour towards humans and we are concerned that he could become more aggressive toward members of the public. It is unclear how long this behaviour may last.
- Subadult male aggression in sealions is not uncommon. Research in 2008 in the Auckland Islands showed that trauma is a significant cause of mortality in New Zealand sealion pups, and much of this is believed to be caused by adult and subadult males.
- DOC has met with Ngāi Tahu to discuss how to manage this situation. We are preparing an options paper with a view to protecting the remaining female pups in the Catlins from an aggressive subadult male. An analysis of the following options is under way:
 - do nothing
 - euthanise
 - various translocation and release options for Wero
 - removal of remaining pups and mothers
 - castration
 - administer anti-testosterone injection.

- There is potential for significant interest from mana whenua, the public, external groups and the media and we will keep you updated as we work through these options with Ngāi Tahu.

Contact: Aaron Fleming, Director Operations Southern South Island:
9(2)(a)

2.13 Southern South Island – Operation Endurance

- The annual Operation Endurance expedition to the Subantarctic Islands is facilitated by the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and includes Government agencies with an interest in research and/or operational requirements in the Subantarctics.
- Operation Endurance was originally scheduled to depart on 31 January, returning 18 February. Due to the NZDF response to unrest in the Solomon Islands, and the Tonga volcanic eruption and tsunami in December 2021, this trip was postponed until 12 March.
- As part of this operation a team of DOC staff planned to undertake a range of work on Campbell and Auckland islands, including heritage and visitor work, infrastructure maintenance, and asset inspections.
- Ngāi Tahu representatives, MetService and The Sir Peter Blake Trust were also involved in the planning of Operation Endurance 2022.
- By mid-February, however, MetService and The Sir Peter Blake Trust had withdrawn from Operation Endurance, primarily due to the impact of Covid-19 in the community and associated logistical challenges with the trip.
- Following the withdrawal of these agencies we deemed DOC's reduced workplan not be of a high enough priority to warrant the substantial resources required to undertake the operation. We subsequently withdrew from Operation Endurance, and it was then cancelled by the NZDF. Ngāi Tahu also supported the cancellation.
- The DOC work programme for the Auckland Islands can be completed alongside our cat monitoring and bait trials throughout the year.
- We understand you are interested in visiting the Subantarctic Islands. Below are further opportunities for your consideration:
 - Snares Island – Buller's albatross research – 25 March – 8 April
 - Auckland Islands - Southern right whale research – July/August 2022(final dates to be confirmed)
 - Bounty/Antipodes Island - Erect crested penguin research – 1 November – 21 December
 - Operation Endurance with New Zealand Defence Force – January 2023.
- Further opportunities will come up as we work through business planning, and we will keep your office informed of these.

Contact: Aaron Fleming, Director Operations Southern South Island:
9(2)(a)

2.14 9(2)(g)(i)

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9(2)(a) [Redacted]

2.16 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response:

Omicron

- To date approximately 45 DOC staff have advised that they have tested positive for COVID-19. A similar number of staff are isolating as Household Contacts.
- Business remains largely ‘as normal’, although the Whanganui Journey was closed for several days after a positive case was reported at one of the camps. The Journey has now re-opened. Positive tests for visitors were also reported on the Kepler and Milford Great Walks. Those Great Walks did not have to close.
- DOC will supply RAT testing kits to a small number of specific groups of staff, where the nature of their work means that access to the normal public distribution system is problematic e.g., rangers who live on offshore islands. Other staff will access the testing kits through their normal community supply networks.

Vaccine Mandates

- Approximately 75 unvaccinated staff received letters last week outlining the options that will be recommended for their particular situations.
- Decisions on each case are now being considered.

Contact: Harry Maher, Director Health & Safety: 9(2)(a) [Redacted]

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

3.1 Wellington - Celebrating 30 years of the Great Walks

- 2022/23 marks the 30th season of the Great Walks.
- We are using this opportunity to run an awareness campaign designed to get more people out into nature on public conservation land.
- The campaign is funded from Budget 17 Tourism Infrastructure and Growth Funding Initiative. It delivers on two of the fund's objectives - *connecting people with nature* and *spreading the load* by inspiring people to connect with nature throughout the country, outside of peak times and not just on the Great Walks.
- The campaign is called "Get to greatness" and will feature real New Zealanders and their stories and experiences on the Great Walks and elsewhere in New Zealand's nature.
- We are working with partners to increase the reach and impact of the campaign. Tourism New Zealand and Air New Zealand are investing resources into promoting it domestically and internationally as they develop activity to coincide with borders reopening.
- We are also engaging with other partners such as Sport NZ and Regional Tourism Organisations to align with their marketing and campaign work.
- The campaign will start in April to align with the opening of bookings for the 2022/23 season and will run until March 2023.
- It will include a mix of print, digital, and media channels. The exact distribution plan is still under development.
- The first phase of the campaign will include a call out to New Zealanders to share their personal stories about achievement and wellbeing from their Great Walk experiences. We will then select several people to feature in the second phase of the campaign where we will promote their stories to inspire others.
- Relevant issues will be considered as the campaign is developed and implemented, such as managing demand at specific sites.
- Since the campaign centres around people sharing their Great Walks stories, there may be an opportunity for you to share your own Great Walks experience during the campaign period.
- Further information can be provided if required.

Contact: Vicki Connor, Director Customer Engagement: 9(2)(a)

3.2 Tuwharetoa Māori Trust Board Ministerial Forum

Tuwharetoa Māori Trust Board Ministerial Forum:

- You have been invited by the Prime Minister and the Hon Willie Jackson to attend the inaugural Tuwharetoa Māori Trust Board Ministerial Forum on 22 March.
- The forum is to approve the three-year work plan under the Taupō Waters and Waikato River Accord.
- DOC has a lead role in the Accord due to Taupō fishery responsibilities and assisting the Taupō Nui-a-Tia Management Board.
- DOC will provide you with a memo (22-M-0050 refers), together with talking points by 15 March.

IN-CONFIDENCE

Minister of Conservation, Minister of Conservation's Office, and Department of Conservation Eyes Only.

- A multi-agency ministerial briefing is being drafted by Te Puni Kōkiri and will be sent to you as soon as finalised.

Contact: Damian Coutts, Director Operations Central North Island: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

4 Director-General Engagements

March 2022

16 March	DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington
22 March	Forest and Bird/DOC half day hui, Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington
25 March	Pike River handover event, Hokitika
31 March	Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards, Auckland

April 2022

04-05 April	NZ Conservation Authority, Tauranga
20 April	Allen & Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists, Wellington
21 April	Northland Regional Council, MS Teams meeting
28 April	Cave Creek Anniversary, West Coast

May 2022

19 May	DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington
26-27 May	Public Service Leadership Retreat, Brakenridge, Martinborough

5 Appendices

The following appendices are provided to support this status report:

- Appendix 1 – Cabinet Paper Report (regular item)
- Appendix 2 – Forthcoming items (regular item)
- Appendix 3 – Jobs for Nature dashboard (regular item)

IN-CONFIDENCE

Minister of Conservation, Minister of Conservation's Office, and Department of Conservation Eyes Only.

Department of Conservation Status Report

for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 21 March 2022

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Kiri Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6946864

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Manual transmission	May be carried by ordinary postal service or commercial courier firm as well as mail delivery staff in a single closed envelope. The envelope must clearly show a return address in case delivery is unsuccessful. In some cases, involving privacy concerns, identifying the originating department may be inappropriate and a return PO Box alone should be used.
Storage and disposal	IN CONFIDENCE information can be secured using the normal building security and door-swipe card systems that aim simply to keep the public out of administrative areas of government departments. Must be disposed of by departmental arrangements.

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1. Cabinet Paper Report
2. Jobs for Nature dashboard

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary:

- We have received the final decision from SLU Ministers on the Māori Land Fund approvals. We have communicated approval in-principle with successful applicants by phone and will send them confirmation letters. We will also call all unsuccessful applicants by the end of the week of 14 March, and plan to send decline letters by 23 March.
- Monitoring, assurance, and payment work remains a focus of the Unit. We are continuing to make milestone payments to projects with milestones due in December 2021 and January 2022.
- Updated guidance for project partners on paying staff required to isolate due to Covid-19 was sent to partners in the week of 14 March. A copy of this guidance has been delivered to your office. In short, the guidance encourages project partners to seek financial support through MSD's Covid-19 Leave Support Scheme (LSS) when required to isolate, and notes that JfN funding can be used to top up the LSS to ensure project partners are able to meet their employment obligations.

Contact: Reg Kemper, Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature: 9(2)(a)

1.2 RMA advocacy

No items this week.

1.3 Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

Monthly item – no update this week.

1.4 9(2)(g)(i)

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2 Updates

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2.2 Te Awa Tupua - Te Heke Ngahuru Strategy meeting

- DOC is attending a Te Kōpuka meeting on 25 March, alongside the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and other member agencies.
- Te Kōpuka is the entity formed under the Te Awa Tupua settlement to develop a 10-year strategy for the Whanganui River/catchment, called Te Heke Ngahuru.
- Te Kōpuka has developed draft objectives which it will be approving during the 25 March hui, following which a strategy development process can begin.
- A joint briefing paper for you and Minister Parker is currently being finalised by DOC and MfE (22-B-0160 refers).

Contact: Damian Coutts, Director Operations Central North Island: 9(2)(a)

2.3 9(2)(g)(i)

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[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

2.7 Fish and Game Council - resignation of Acting CE

- An Acting Chief Executive of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council, Di Taylor, has been in place since July 2021, following the resignation of Martin Taylor in December 2020.
- Ms Taylor filled this position to provide continuity through the 2021 Fish and Game electoral period.
- DOC has been notified that Ms Taylor has resigned 9(2)(a) [Redacted]
- The Chair of Fish and Game, on behalf of the Council, has commenced a recruitment process to fill this vacancy with a permanent chief executive.
- During this period Brian Anderton, General Manager, Governance, Corporate Service, Strategic Engagement has stepped up to act as Chief Executive.

Contact: Ngaire Best, Director Governance: 9(2)(a) [Redacted]

2.8 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response:

Omicron

- To date 76 DOC staff have advised that they have tested positive for COVID-19. 54 staff have advised that they have had to isolate as Household Contacts.
- Business remains largely 'as normal', and no services have been disrupted over the week of 14 March.

Vaccine Mandates

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- The underlying risk assessment and associated vaccine mandate policy have been updated to reflect updated health advice and the recent Yardley court decision. These reviews have not changed the vaccine mandate position significantly.
- Out of the approximately 3,500 DOC permanent, fixed term and casual employees, about 70 are not vaccinated. Most of the unvaccinated staff have agreed to either work from home or take leave without pay for the next four months.
- The unvaccinated staff received letters in the week of 14 March outlining the decisions that will apply for their particular employment situations.
- None of DOC's permanent staff have been dismissed as a result of the vaccine policy. Four casual workers (three fixed term and one contractor) were due to have their contracts expire within the next four months and alternative work was not deemed to be an option.
- A small number of people have decided to pick up the option of having the Novavax vaccine as an alternative to Pfizer.

Contact: Harry Maher, Director Health & Safety: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

No items this week.

4 Director-General Engagements

March 2022

22 March	Ngāti Tuwharetoa Inaugural Ministerial Forum (TBC)
25 March	Pike River handover event, Hokitika
31 March	Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards, Auckland

April 2022

04-05 April	NZ Conservation Authority, Tauranga
20 April	Allen & Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists, Wellington
21 April	Northland Regional Council, MS Teams meeting
28 April	Cave Creek Anniversary, West Coast

May 2022

19 May	DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington
26-27 May	Public Service Leadership Retreat, Brakenridge, Martinborough

June 2022

16-17 June	NZ Conservation Authority (TBC)
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5 Appendices

The following appendices are provided to support this status report:

- Appendix 1 – Cabinet Paper Report (regular item)
- Appendix 2 – Forthcoming items (regular item)
- Appendix 3 – Jobs for Nature dashboard (regular item)

Department of Conservation Status Report

for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 28 March 2022

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Kiri Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6955505

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1. Cabinet Paper Report
2. Jobs for Nature dashboard

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

- Both the successful and unsuccessful applicants for the Māori Land Fund have now been notified by phone and letter. We are working through negotiations for Funding Agreements with successful applicants.
- We are continuing to make milestone payments to projects with milestones due in December 2021 and January 2022.
- Recruitment for current vacancies is underway. All staff previously affected by Covid have now returned to work.
- In alignment with the Secretariat's approach, monthly employment reporting requirements will no longer apply from 1 April. This will reduce the burden on partners for reporting. Quarterly reporting across all indicators remains.
- The unit is working with MartinJenkins to develop an approach for assessing sustainability of JFN outcomes. This is likely to take a regional approach, looking at the opportunities within each region, and where support will be required. Scoping for this task is underway and will seek contributions from wider DOC, including the Operations and Partnerships Groups.
- We have provided draft responses for 18 written parliamentary questions, many focussing on the ongoing work to sustain outcomes.
- We are preparing recommendations for your review for a potential visit to Auckland and Waikato on 26 and 27 April to announce outstanding projects.

Contact: Reg Kemper, Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature: 9(2)(a)

1.2 RMA advocacy update and submissions

Further submission on Hamilton City's Peacocke Structure Plan

- On 5 November 2021 we made a submission to Hamilton City Council on Plan Change 5 (Peacocke Structure Plan) to ensure conditions applying to the Weston Lea subdivision provide minimum standards for subdivision within the Peacocke area, particularly in relation to the protection of long-tailed bats. A landscape-wide approach is required for the protection of this threatened nationally critical species.
- There were 58 submitters on the plan change. Submitters, including commercial developers, have suggested a reduction in the corridor of space dedicated for protection of the long-tailed bats, while others including Kāinga Ora and Transpower have requested provisions that may not adequately provide for bat protection.
- Corridor protection is important for the survival of the small population of long-tailed bats present in this area. The area currently available to long-tailed bats will be greatly reduced to make way for medium- to high-density housing.
- We have lodged further submissions in reply to 32 of the 58 Submitters, to provide for additional scope at the Council hearing.
- No date has been set for the Council hearing. We anticipate this plan change may become politically elevated nearer the time of the Council hearing.
- As Minister of Conservation, you may be approached by commercial entities or by other Ministers to consider development of housing over conservation

values. The Director-General's submission specifically states that we recognise the need for, and are not opposed to, housing. The intent of the Director-General's submission and further submissions is to achieve workable provisions that enable housing to proceed in the Peacocke Structure Plan Area, whilst preserving corridor areas for long-tailed bats.

- We will continue to update you on this process.

Decision made not to submit on the Coromandel Marine Farming Zone and Pare Hauraki Kaimoana's application to develop aquaculture

- Pare Hauraki Kaimoana has lodged a private plan change to the Waikato Regional Coastal Plan (**WRCP**). This accompanies their consent application to farm kingfish, mussels, and other species within the Coromandel Marine Farming Zone.
- We lodged a submission on the consent application seeking improved environmental performance, but not opposing the development of the Zone for aquaculture.
- The private plan change seeks to amend a rule in the WRCP to allow anchor lines and blocks to extend beyond the boundary of the zone by up to 150 metres.
- Our technical review of the plan change concluded it will not make any material difference to the scale or intensity of environmental effects that will be generated. Any concerns regarding the use of the Zone for aquaculture can be addressed through the consent application.
- On receiving this advice, the Director of Operations for Hauraki, Waikato and Taranaki, made a delegated decision not to lodge a submission. Had a submission been lodged, it would have been in your name as it concerned a plan change to a regional coastal plan.
- Once this private plan change has gone through the submissions and appeals process, it will come to you for your approval under clause 19 of Schedule One of the RMA 1991. Clause 19 allows you to amend a coastal plan before approving it, but not in a way "that is in conflict or inconsistent with any direction of the Environment Court, unless the Minister [you] made a submission on the provision concerned when the provision was referred to the Environment Court".
- We consider the likelihood of you needing to amend this private plan change before approving it to be very low because of the minor nature of the amendments to the WRCP.
- We will monitor the progress of the plan change. If appeals are lodged on it, you have the option to lodge a section 274 RMA 1991 notice to join those appeals in your name because you are "a person who has an interest in the proceedings that is greater than the interest that the general public has".

Director-General appeals on the Waikato District Plan

- We submitted on the Waikato District Plan in 2018 and staff have appeared at five hearings. We sought improvements to the Plan relating to the natural environment and rural chapters, Kauri dieback, protecting bat habitat, wind farms, indigenous vegetation clearance, criteria and mapping for Significant Natural Areas, biodiversity offsetting and environmental compensation, and natural features and landscapes.
- The Waikato District Council's decisions largely accepted our submission but rejected some important points and made some changes in response to other submitters, that we oppose.

- In response, we appealed the Council's decision in relation to:
 - Significant Natural Areas (**SNA**) – there is a lack of robust SNA mapping and criteria to ensure protection of habitat for threatened or at-risk species (e.g. exotic trees can be significant roost sites for bats);
 - kauri dieback – this is an important and complex biosecurity issue. District plan provisions are one tool. We want to be consistent with what we have negotiated in other upper North Island planning documents; and
 - biodiversity off-setting – minor changes are needed to provisions to make them more robust. We expect to settle this in mediation.
- There are three appeals by others that we are joining. These are:
 1. Waikato Regional Council – focusses on the SNA mapping and the removal of criteria from the definition. This mirrors our appeal and joining will emphasise our concerns.
 2. Bathurst Mining – This appeal requests less stringent provisions for coal mining and coal mining exploration.
 3. Raglan Collective – Requests more permissive provisions for hard protection structures/seawalls which is contrary to the NZCPS policies 24-28. We have a role in ensuring the NZCPS is complied with.

Contact: Natasha Ryburn, Director Planning Permissions and Land:
9(2)(a)

1.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

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9(2)(a)

2 Updates

2.1 Recent Hector's Dolphin deaths

- On 19 March a member of the public discovered a dead adult male Hector's dolphin on New Brighton beach in Christchurch.
- We collected the dolphin and shipped it chilled to Massey University in Palmerston North for necropsy. The dolphin was relatively fresh with no obvious marks on the body to suggest a cause of death. Massey University will undertake a necropsy in coming days to try to determine cause of death.
- This is the twelfth Hector's dolphin found dead around the South Island since early November 2021, eight of which were calves. The decomposing and scavenged remains of a Maui dolphin were also found at Muriwai on Christmas day but not recovered.
- Over half of the dead Hector's have been found on the West Coast, but there have also been dolphins from South Marlborough, Christchurch, Oamaru, and Invercargill.
- We don't yet know why so many dead dolphins have washed up within this short time period. Of the necropsy results received to date, natural causes have been the likely cause of death.
- We actively encourage beach goers to report dead dolphins as quickly as possible to ensure we can collect the body while it is still fresh, which increases the volume and value of the information we can obtain. It may be that increased beach visitor numbers over summer have led to an increase in discovery and reporting of dead dolphins.
- Maternal separation has been cited as the possible cause of death of three calves, and age-related disease of an adult female found near Hokitika. Maternal separation could be attributed to a number of reasons, such as nutritional stress, predation, storm conditions, poor health of the mother, poor health of the calf, or disease.
- We are unlikely to identify if there are environmental conditions impacting calf survival, but through the necropsy process we will look for signs of disease, malnutrition, and trauma, for example.
- It may be that the reason for this cluster of deaths will remain unclear.
- All information will be made publicly available over the next few months on DOC's Hector's and Maui dolphin incident database on our website.

Contact: Elizabeth Heeg, Director Aquatic: 9(2)(a)

2.2 Recent whale strandings and beachcast marine mammals

Golden Bay District – Farewell Spit Mass Stranding

- At 6:25pm on 17 March Takaka District staff received a call from the DOC hotline alerting them to a mass stranding event on Farewell Spit.
- Two DOC staff arrived at the site at approximately 8pm and found 36 stranded pilot whales, of which nine were alive and 27 were dead.
- The nine alive whales were in poor condition and two of these were euthanised that night.
- Staff returned to the site at approximately 7:15am the next morning (18 March). Staff counted 34 pilot whales, of which 5 were alive and 29 were dead.

- All five live whales were refloated by DOC staff and Project Jonah volunteers on the 11am high tide. Only one of these five refloated whales swam off strongly. The other four failed to reorientate themselves and were likely the same four whales stranded after the tide receded. Three of these four were euthanised and one died naturally.

Auckland & Christchurch – Beachcast marine mammals

- On 19 March a deceased common dolphin washed up on Red Beach in Auckland and was reported to the Department.
- It appears as though the dolphin had been dead at sea for some time before washing ashore. The dolphin has been collected by Massey University in Albany who are doing work on microplastics and toxins in New Zealand cetaceans.
- On 20 March we were informed about a beachcast beaked whale mother and calf at Southbridge, just west of Lake Ellesmere, Christchurch. These have subsequently been identified as Andrew's beaked whales, a reasonably rare species, classified as Data Deficient under the New Zealand Threat Classification System, that have only been found beachcast on four other occasions within the last decade.
- The whales have been buried but mana whenua are in conversations with Te Papa about adding the specimens to the national collection.

Contact: Elizabeth Heeg, Director Aquatic: 9(2)(a)

2.3 9(2)(g)(i)

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[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

2.4 Game Animal Council

- We received the Game Animal Council's Q2 report on 14 February. The Council has worked closely with us over the quarter regarding Te Ara Ki Mua and hunter-led game animal management and has sent you several letters (CORM-615 refers).
- The Council's Statement of Performance Expectations requires that it advise you on the expected timing and introduction of the Game Trophy Export Levy by November 2021. The Council is yet to provide this advice.

- 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- We have provided the Council with \$80,000 for the recruitment of two policy advisors, to support deer control initiatives in 2021-22. We are working with the Council to set measurable deliverables for this funding.
- 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]

Contact: Ngaire Best, Director Governance: 9(2)(a) [Redacted]

2.5 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]

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2.6 Releasing the Long-term Insights Briefing (LTIB) Submission Analysis Report

- DOC and LINZ are working together to produce a LTIB in line with the requirements of the Public Service Act 2020 [21-B-0691 refers]. A similar update on our progress is being sent to the Minister for Land Information.
- Public consultation on the proposed LTIB topic ran from 18 October to 14 November 2021.
- The submission report has now been finalised, and we expect to publish it on the DOC website on 30 March 2022. We can provide a copy to your office upon request.
- Submitters were broadly supportive of the proposed topic. Some submitters were opposed to the use of biotechnology, but most did not object to exploring the topic. Concerns raised primarily pertained to the 'genie out of the bottle' risks of biotechnology. These risks will be explored in the LTIB.
- In light of the outcomes of this process, DOC and LINZ have decided to proceed with the topic: *How can we help biodiversity thrive through the innovative use of information and emerging technologies?*
- Our next steps will be:
 - researching and writing the draft LTIB;
 - consulting on the draft LTIB in June and July; and
 - requesting that you table the final LTIB in Parliament.
- We will keep you apprised of future updates through the Status Report.

Contact: Kayla Kingdon-Bebb, Director – Policy; 9(2)(a)

2.7 9(2)(f)(iv)

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2.8 Land Safety Forum (LSF)

- On 13 December 2021, we established the LSF to lead collaboration across the search and rescue sector and aim to reduce search and rescue incidents over the New Zealand land environment.
- Membership to the LSF includes a wide range of organisations primarily involved in search and rescue in outdoor, (non-commercial) land-based recreation in a non-urban environment. This includes DOC, NZSAR, Police, LandSAR, Federated Mountain Clubs, Game Animal Council, Mountain Safety Council, NZ Deerstalkers Assoc, ACC, Auckland City, Marlborough District Council, Walking Access Commission, Recreation Aotearoa and Sport NZ.
- We provide leadership and project management to the LSF, as part of its Visitor Safety Team functions. We also advocate for sector collaboration through the development of shared work programmes, some of which may be led and/or championed by DOC.
- Iwi membership has not yet been resolved. Te Arawhiti were approached, and Rob Hewitt is currently bringing a Te Ao Māori perspective to the LSF.
- The LSF is funded from Fuel Excise Duty under the Land Transport Management Act, in three-year cycles. Future funding for the next round in 2023 will be dependent on the progress of the Recreational Safety and Search and Rescue Review (below).
- The LSF uses sector collaboration and shared expertise (e.g. data sharing) where it did not exist before, to identify issues and opportunities for improvement through the development of strategies and shared work programmes. An example of this is the recent Personal Locator Beacons campaign. LSF is also collaborating with a multi organisation firearms safety group which Police lead, all members of which are on the LSF which ensures strong connectivity.
- LSF is developing a three-year strategy and terms of reference which are ready for sign out as at the last meeting of 15 February. It is also developing a data and insights working group, to support the standing up of other work programmes detailed in the three-year strategy. DOC will support this work by providing administrative assistance to the forum in addition to being a stakeholder in this work.

Contact: Alex Hardy, Senior Land Safety Forum Advisor, 9(2)(a)

2.9 Recreational Safety and Search and Rescue Review

- The Ministry of Transport (the Ministry) is undertaking a review of Recreational Safety and Search and Rescue processes.
- The Ministry will collaborate with relevant stakeholders and will invite focused input from organisations and individuals as appropriate. To support the review's approach the Ministry has established an advisory group of key government and non-government organisations.
- We have been invited to participate in the advisory group, assisting the Ministry with the assessment, recommendations and implementation of the review outcomes. We have an interest in Search and Rescue and maintain a full time SAR team based at Aoraki/Mt Cook.
- The review will perform several functions, including:
 - assessing the health and performance of New Zealand's recreational safety and search and rescue systems;

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- preparing recommendations for consideration by the Minister of Transport and other key Ministers, as appropriate, to ensure the systems are fit-for-purpose, meeting current and future community and national needs; and
- considering implementation matters necessary to give effect to the recommendations.
- The review is scheduled to report final recommendations to the Minister of Transport, and other Ministers as appropriate, by the end of June 2023.

Contact: Alex Hardy, Senior Land Safety Forum Advisor, 9(2)(a)

2.10 Western South Island Region: Update on Dolomite Point Redevelopment Project (DPRP) Punakaiki Paparoa National Parks

- Following your approval of the Detailed Business Case and financial delegation concerning the Dolomite Point Redevelopment Project at Punakaiki [21-B-0643 refers], we completed a successful tender process for the remaining construction elements and project management decisions.
- We are now at the award stage of the main construction contract, with the Canterbury division of construction company, Naylor Love.
- There is an opportunity for you to participate in an event to “turn the first earth” and begin construction, on either 28 or 29 April 2022, by which time we expect Naylor Love to be established on site, and be preparing for construction of the Experience Centre.
- We can arrange the date around your availability, and will seek further advice from your office on your attendance.
- Thursday 28 April also marks the 27th Anniversary of the Cave Creek Tragedy. Cave Creek family members will be at Punakaiki for this day and the Director-General along with Deputy Directors-General Ginny Baddeley and Mike Slater will be meeting with them.
- On Friday 29 April there is a West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board meeting in Westport.
- MBIE has updated the Minister for Economic and Regional Development on progress and extended the event invitation, and we plan to share event information with the West Coast/Tasman MP, Hon Damien O'Connor.

Contact: Mark Davies, Director Operations Tai Poutini/Western South Island, 9(2)(a)

2.11 Western South Island Region: Haast Cattle Grazing Concession Cattle Removal

- We cancelled a concession to graze cattle in the Haast River Valley in mid-2021 after it was evident cattle could not be contained in the licence area.
- The grazing licence was originally granted to 9(2)(a) in February 2020, subject to a number of special conditions to manage the impact of cattle on the adjacent Mt Aspiring National Park and conservation areas. 9(2)(a) has now accepted that the Haast grazing opportunity is not available 9(2)(a)
- We have been working with 9(2)(a) on an agreed timeline for the cattle to be removed from the area. This was timed around the calves being weaned (late March early April 2022)
- 9(2)(a) has recently confirmed that the cattle will be removed "as soon as they can get this done". 9(2)(a) had booked cattle sales and abattoir space for the sixty cattle, but there has been a significant impact on the workforce in these areas due to the recent Omicron outbreak. Transportation and cattle sales dates have been moved out a number of times, which is beyond his control.
- We have conveyed 9(2)(a) we understand the current Omicron context and are mindful of the stresses in the systems across the agriculture sector, accepting that a delay of a week or so is understandable in this daily changing context.
- We have worked with 9(2)(a) over the last 8 months, clearly outlining 9(2)(a) obligations to remove the cattle when this year's calves are weaned.
- There is significant interest in the cattle removal, from interest groups and national stakeholders and they are likely to raise a delay in removal date in the media. We will continue to work with 9(2)(a) closely on this and can respond to media enquiries.

Contact: Mark Davies, Director Operations Tai Poutini/Western South Island, 9(2)(a)

2.12 Southern South Island: Kākāpō Breeding Season

- The 2022 kākāpō breeding season is in full swing at three southern sites - Whenua Hou, Pukenui, and Te Kākahu-o-Tamatea.
- This is the first breeding season in three years and is a significant opportunity for population growth of the critically endangered kākāpō, which numbered 201 individuals at the start of 2022.
- 60 chicks have hatched to date; 36 from Pukenui (where breeding commenced earlier) and 24 from Whenua Hou. None of the eggs laid on Te Kākahu-o-Tamatea were fertile.
- Three of the chicks have subsequently died (one from a bacterial infection at 8 days old, one was euthanised immediately after an assisted hatch due to a severe deformity and another due to causes unknown). This leaves 57 chicks across the three islands.
- This is the first year nesting has occurred on Te Kākahu-o-Tamatea, after breeding birds were established here in 2020 via the International Visitor Levy-funded Kākāpō Expansion Project. Given the importance of understanding more about Te Kākahu-o-Tamatea as a reduced management breeding site, we transferred three fertile eggs from Whenua Hou, giving one to each nesting mother. From our latest visit, we saw that

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two of the chicks hatched. Our remote monitoring data suggests that the third chick also hatched, and all three nests are progressing.

- One nesting female on Pukenui, Jemma, was flown to Dunedin Wildlife Hospital recently after her activity levels dropped suddenly, and her two chicks lost weight. Jemma died several days later, and final necropsy results show she had severe aspergillosis.
- This is a significant concern to us, given the outbreak we experienced in 2019. Genetic sequencing results should inform us if this is the same virulent strain of aspergillus that we dealt with in 2019, and we can assess our management options.
- In mid-February, as Omicron began to spread rapidly, we made the decision to lock down Whenua Hou, leaving a team in place for up to 6 weeks until the last chicks had hatched. Constant roster changes in response to people being close contacts etc, has kept us on our toes, but we have managed to get through the main hatching periods without major impact.
- We will keep in contact with your office on a potential visit for you to Whenua Hou during the breeding season, working with Ngāi Tahu to firm up arrangements.

Contact: Aaron Fleming, Director Operations Southern South Island:
9(2)(a)

2.13 Update on the COVID-19 pandemic response

Omicron

- To date 123 DOC staff have advised that they have tested positive for COVID-19. A further 91 staff have advised that they have had to isolate as Household Contacts.
- Specific groups of staff are being supplied with KN95 equivalent masks and RAT testing kits, mostly frontline staff and staff in remote locations.
- Business remains largely 'as normal', and no services have been disrupted over the last week.

Vaccine Mandates

- We are waiting on Wednesday 23 March announcements of Cabinet decisions on the future of vaccine pass and mandate systems under the COVID Protection Framework.

Contact: Harry Maher, Director Health & Safety: 9(2)(a)

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

3.1 Ngāti Maru ki Taranaki Settlement Claims Bill – 3rd Reading

- The Ngāti Maru ki Taranaki Settlement Claims Bill 3rd Reading has been scheduled for 3:00pm on 29 March.
- Ngāti Maru are the last of the eight iwi of Taranaki to settle their historical Treaty of Waitangi claims.
- The conservation redress package was designed to meet Ngāti Maru's significant aspirations related to regaining a footprint and being enabled to express kaitiakitanga within their rohe and includes:
 - 16 sites for transfer (both unencumbered and with conservation protections);
 - statutory acknowledgements and deeds of recognition;
 - a cultural materials plan; and
 - a relationship agreement.
- We have provided a memo and proposed speech notes to support your attendance (22-M-0057 refers).

Contact: Jim McKenzie, Director Treaty Negotiations, 9(2)(a)

4 Director-General Engagements

April 2022

4-5 April	NZ Conservation Authority, TBC
20 April	Allen & Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists, Wellington
21 April	Northland Regional Council, MS Teams
28 April	Cave Creek Anniversary, West Coast

May 2022

19 May	DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, DOC Wellington
26-27 May	Public Service Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge Martinborough

June 2022

16-17 June	NZ Conservation Authority, TBC
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5 Appendices

The following appendices are provided to support this status report:

- Appendix 1 – Cabinet Paper Report (regular item)
- Appendix 2 – Forthcoming items (regular item)
- Appendix 3 – Jobs for Nature dashboard (regular item)