Date: Tuesday 23 June 2020
Time: 1.00pm
Venue: This meeting will proceed via Skype for Business. Either a recording or written summary will be uploaded on the Auckland Council website

Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board
OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS

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Note: The attachments contained within this document are for consideration and should not be construed as Council policy unless and until adopted. Should Councillors require further information relating to any reports, please contact the relevant manager, Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.
Guia Nonoy

From: George Taylor <gtaylor@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2020 4:49 PM
To: Izzy Fordham (Great Barrier Local Board)
Cc: Guia Nonoy
Subject: DOC Update
Attachments: COVID-19 Messaging for Alert Level 1 .docx
Categories: Agenda/Minutes

Kia ora Izzy

Apologies from me for not making the report deadline for your business meeting next week. Please share this message with the board.

There’s a general theme now that level 1 has kicked in. Basically we’re busy doing a lot of work that was planned to go pre-COVID. Some of this work has a timeframe to be delivered by June 30 (end of financial year) so we’re dealing with a compressed period of intensive work while budget funds allow.

Apart from my team being back to business as usual, we’ve managed to lever extra funds to do some quick wins by June 30

- Wilding Pines – Aotea Arb in the Claris Recreation Reserve over the past couple of weeks. This work was enabled by funding aimed at getting the Forestry sector back to work
- Track work – Nick Yates, Trackman working at rerouting Warrens track (close to it’s original alignment pre 2014) using Kauri Protection funding

We’ve also got Black Dog Conservation (Chris and Sarah Giblin) working up at Hirakimata doing the preparation work to install the A24 traps.
We’ve resumed normal maintenance work and I’m still waiting for the go ahead for a contract to do some much needed maintenance on our roads here on Okiwi Station. All this work is focused on using on island contractors

At the budget announcement, DOC were touted to be a main player in the economic recovery packages.

- A $200m ‘Jobs for Nature’ package: DOC and partners to identify and create temporary nature-based jobs through regional hubs using staff from struggling businesses.
- $154m ‘Biodiversity on Private and Public Land’ package: DOC and partners (including QEII and Kiwis for kiwi) to generate jobs via biodiversity projects benefiting landowners and communities— including freshwater and terrestrial habitat restoration and protection for endangered species
- $147m ‘Pests and Predators’ package: DOC and partners (including Predator Free 2050) to generate jobs via landscape scale projects tackling predators and pests. This includes working with iwi and councils on preventing North Island Forest Collapse (through control of goats, deer and possums along with predators such as stoats and rats) and working with Kiwis for kiwi to create predator free corridors in sensitive ecosystems.

I’ve been having a lot of conversations about this subject particularly how business and organisations can benefit from these packages. DOC is currently doing system design to initiate the funding and I haven’t got much more to add to that. The aim is to be ready in some capacity from 1 July so it’s going to be bit frantic once we know criteria and how to apply etc. A lot of the conversations I’ve been having are pre-empting a lot of what may happen but I’ve been cautious not to read too far into it without the necessary information to share.

Also, I’ve been having a few working group conversations for the new fledging project, Tu Mai Toanga which is a project proposed for putting more biodiversity focus in the north of the island. This was primarily conceived at the ACPAC Workshop in February. I understand the plan is to workshop this with the board at some stage.
I’ve attached a document outlining key messages from DOC at level 1. Bit late but hopefully answers some burning questions. I’m also available as well for any queries.

Ngā mihi

George

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Conservation leadership for our nature Tākina te hī, tiakina te hā, o te ao tūroa  

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COVID-19 Messaging for Alert Level 1

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- General
- Golden Rules for Everyone at Alert Level 1

External key messages

- Visitor services and facilities
- Hunting and fishing on Public Conservation Land
- Concessionaires and tourism operators
- Visitor Centres
- Great Walks
- COVID-19 booking issues and cancellation rules

Questions and Answers

Key messages

General

- New Zealand moving into Alert Level 1 sees a return to a life as normal with the lifting of restrictions and a focus instead on the Government’s “Golden Rules for Everyone at Alert Level 1” to keep ourselves and communities healthy and safe.
- We can get back out and enjoy the great outdoors, provided it’s done safely.
- DOC staff can fully resume field work and return to offices to deliver their valuable conservation work.
DOC facilities are now fully open without restrictions - including visitor centres, huts, campgrounds and toilets.

All DOC facilities are displaying the Ministry of Health QR code for contact tracing so that visitors can keep their own record of the places they have visited for contact tracing if there are future COVID-19 cases.

We’re asking everyone to be hygiene conscious when using offices and facilities.

Golden Rules for Everyone at Alert Level 1

There is an expectation that visitors to Conservation Land will take personal responsibility to follow the NZ Government’s “Golden Rules for Everyone at Alert Level 1”:

1. If you’re sick, stay home. Don’t go to work or school. Don’t socialise.
2. If you have cold or flu symptoms call your doctor or Healthline and make sure you get tested.
3. Wash your hands. Wash your hands. Wash your hands.
4. Sneeze and cough into your elbow, and regularly disinfect shared surfaces.
5. If you are told by health authorities to self-isolate you must do so immediately.
6. If you’re concerned about your wellbeing, or have underlying health conditions, work with your GP to understand how best to stay healthy.
7. Keep track of where you’ve been and who you’ve seen to help contact tracing if needed. Use the NZ COVID Tracer app as a handy way of doing this.
8. Businesses should help people keep track of their movements by displaying the Ministry of Health QR Code for contact tracing.
9. Stay vigilant. There is still a global pandemic going on. People and businesses should be prepared to act fast to step up Alert Levels if we have to.
10. People will have had different experiences over the last couple of months.
11. Whatever you’re feeling — it’s okay. Be kind to others. Be kind to yourself.
12. With border controls and quarantine requirements still in place, we remind new arrivals to New Zealand that quarantining is never permitted in any DOC hut or campground.

**External key messages**

**Jobs for Nature**

- Recognising that the economic impact of COVID-19 will be huge with many job losses, Budget 2020 is investing more than $1.1 billion over the next four years in environment-based job opportunities.
- The Department of Conservation has been allocated more than $500m of the package to deliver conservation job opportunities for 6,000 people.
- DOC is working at pace to get job schemes developed to help workers displaced out of tourism hospitality and other severely impacted industries.
- Projects will come online as quickly as possible. Some projects will commence soon after the new financial year in July 2020, while others will take more time to phase in.
- The jobs are being designed to be temporary, with a higher number of people cycling or rotating through them until their previous employment/business recovers.
- The work will include pest control, planting, weeding, restoring rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands on public, private and iwi land.
- DOC is working closely with local iwi, councils, QEII National Trust and other NGOs to employ thousands of people across New Zealand to better look after our natural landscapes, native bush, birds, waterways and coast.

**Visitor services and facilities**

- Put simply, Alert Level 1 is a return to pre-COVID-19 business as usual for all DOC facilities, services and activities. This includes all of DOC’s visitor centres, bookable accommodation, concessionaires and hunting and fishing on Public Conservation Land.
- As per the Government’s “Golden Rules for Everyone at Alert Level 1” all DOC facilities are displaying the Ministry of Health QR code for contact.
tracing so that visitors can keep their own record of the places they have visited.

- There is an expectation that visitors to Conservation Land will take personal responsibility to follow the NZ Government’s “Golden Rules for Everyone at Alert Level 1”

Hunting and fishing on Public Conservation Land

- Hunting on public conservation land is allowed during COVID-19 Alert Level 1. Hunters will need the appropriate hunting permit or hold the required concession and abide by Ministry of Health guidelines.
- Recreational hunters can apply online for an open area hunting permit. Hunters should first check their existing permit as it may still be current.
- The game bird season opened on Saturday 23 May. DOC district offices can issue small game and game bird hunting permits for duck hunting on public conservation land and waters.
- The Government’s COVID 19 website has more information about what other recreational activities are allowed under Alert Level 1.
- For further information see https://www.doc.govt.nz/covid-19-and-hunting

Concessionaires and tourism operators

- DOC is actively encouraging New Zealanders to get out into nature, and to use local tourist operations to make their trips easier and safer, and to support the economic recovery.
- DOC thanks concessionaires for the Ministry of Health measures they took to help New Zealand eradicate COVID-19 during lockdown.
- Under Alert Level 1, it is business as usual, however concessionaires are encouraged to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.
- As a key point of contact with travellers, DOC encourages concessionaires to follow the “Government’s 10 Golden Rules for Everyone at Alert Level 1”. This includes displaying the Ministry of Health QR code for contact tracing.
Volunteers

- Community conservation activities that did not resume under level two can do so now at level one. DOC volunteer projects can be undertaken following the health and safety requirements set out for staff. Volunteers do not need to complete the restart safely training.

Visitor Centres

- Visitors are encouraged to practice safe hygiene standards, use contactless payments, and sign-in using the NZ COVID Tracer QR code when visiting DOC Visitor Centres.

Great Walks

- Most Great Walks are now open for the 2020/2021 season.
- The Milford and Routeburn Great Walks were severely damaged by floods and February this year. Bookings will be open when we have a clear idea of when repairs will be complete. When we know that work completion date, we will provide visitors with two weeks' notice of bookings reopening again for the 2020/2021 season.

COVID-19 booking issues and cancellation rules

- The following Cancellation Rules now apply to all bookings regardless of what COVID-19 Alert Level New Zealand was at when the booking was made:
  - At COVID-19 Alert Level 2, 3 or 4 a full refund will be given when you cancel up to 7 days prior to departure. When you cancel between 0-7 days prior to departure, normal cancellation fees will apply but special circumstances refund requests will be considered.
  - We strongly recommend International customers hold off booking until they are sure they can undertake their travel. Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

COVID-19 Messaging for Alert Level 1 (DCC-833295)
- At COVID-19 Alert Level 1 DOC’s normal Terms and Conditions apply. A link to these Terms and Conditions can be found at the bottom of DOC’s Book Online webpage.

Safety outdoors

- As you get back to nature – Remember that we are heading into Winter and it may have been some time since you were involved in certain types of recreation.
- Follow the Outdoor Safety Code - 5 essential things to do before you go to ensure you have a great trip and make it home:
  1. Plan your trip
     Seek local knowledge, plan your route and allow a reasonable amount of time.
  2. Tell someone your plans
     Let someone know your plans and when to raise the alarm if you haven’t returned.
  3. Be aware of the weather
     New Zealand’s weather can be highly unpredictable. Check the forecast and expect weather changes.
  4. Know your limits
     Challenge yourself within your physical limits and experience.
  5. Take sufficient supplies
     Take enough food, equipment and clothing and emergency rations - plus an appropriate means of communication for the worst-case scenario.

Q&A to answer questions from the public or media

Skip to index of Questions and Answers here

1. What happens if we need to return to Alert Level 2, 3 or 4?

DOC has plans in place to allow it to respond to local COVID-19 outbreaks, or to any change in alert levels if New Zealand suffers a “second wave” of the disease.

COVID-19 Messaging for Alert Level 1 (DOC-6343295)
2. **What happens to hut bookings if we need to return to Alert Level 2, 3 or 4**

If the country returns to a higher Alert Level, earlier restrictions will come back in force and we will notify you of the change. In the case of hut and campsite bookings, this may mean a return to restrictions on numbers. In this case we will honour bookings in the order in which they were booked. For example, if a 50-person hut is restricted to 50% capacity because we returned to Alert Level 2, the first 25 bookings we received will be honoured and the last 25 bookings will be cancelled. Each booking made is timestamped to enable this to happen if required.

3. **I have booked into a DOC hut, do I still need to pack a tent “just in case”?**

There is no limit on gatherings under Alert Level 1. As such, all our huts are now bookable to their maximum capacity. You must book your hut stay in advance at www.doc.govt.nz. Only where camping is permitted, you are free to bring a tent for your own peace of mind.

4. **I am arriving from overseas, can I spend my 14-day quarantine period in a DOC hut or campground?**

Mandatory 14-day Quarantining is never permitted in any DOC hut or campground.

5. **Can I still visit DOC facilities if I am unwell?**

No. As per the Government’s “Golden Rules for Everyone at Alert Level 1” - if you’re sick, stay home. Don’t go to work or school. Don’t socialise.

6. **I had a booking that was cancelled due to COVID-19, do I have priority for rebooking?**

No. Normal booking arrangements apply.

7. **When I visit, do I need to bring special cleaning supplies or practice extra hygiene measures?**

There is an expectation that visitors to Conservation Land will take personal responsibility to follow the NZ Government’s “Golden Rules for Everyone at Alert

Level 1. You will need to bring personal supplies to practice good handwashing and usual cleaning practices.

8. **Why can’t I make a booking on the Milford or Routeburn Great Walks?**

The Milford and Routeburn tracks are still undergoing storm repairs. Bookings for these tracks are projected to open in July/August 2020 but that date is yet to be confirmed.

9. **How is DOC working with the tourism sector/What is the situation for DOC concessionaires/permit holders?**

DOC is mindful of the significant impacts of COVID-19 on many of our concessionaires and permit holders.

Current public sector legislation and instructions mean we must continue to issue invoices to concessionaires/permit holders.

We have received a large number of requests for fee waivers or adjustments. We are assessing the individual circumstances of each request and will be responding to these on a case by case basis.

10. **Why do I need to continue to pay for my concession when I can’t run my business?**

As part of your agreement with DOC, you take on the business risk associated with operating your business on public conservation land. We will continue to work with you, find solutions that suit you and are within our statutory requirements.

11. **Is there Government assistance available if I can’t pay?**

We recommend discussing your financial support needs with MBIE who have prepared a package to help NZ businesses.

12. **Will DOC be allowing fee waivers on a discretionary basis? If not, why not?**

No. DOC will not be granting refunds or fee waivers as per our responsibilities under the Finance Act. MBIE has financial support packages available to support businesses through this difficult time.

COVID-19 Messaging for Alert Level 1 (DOC:6313295)
13. Does this include other government agencies?

No this excludes central and local Government agencies who may have debts with DOC.

14. What if I was already told my fees would be waived?

This advice replaces all previous advice from DOC, staff and officials.

We’re sorry that some of our concessionaires might have been told otherwise, but that was communicated when the country was reorganising itself under Alert Level 4 and before we had the full facts before us.

15. What if I have a concession application that is still in process but cannot see my proposal being viable post-COVID-19?

We are contacting every applicant for applications currently in progress to understand whether they wish to have their application either withdrawn/ placed on hold or continue to process:

- If they elect to withdraw their application because of the impact of COVID-19 we will waive all of their processing fee cost to date.
- If they elect to place their application on hold, they should specify the time period. Application fees will not be invoiced at this stage and the amount charged will be reviewed if the application subsequently proceeds.
- If they elect to continue with the processing of the application, then the usual fees will be payable.

16. Is DOC providing financial relief to concessionaires, permit holders and sponsors?

DOC is continuing to invoice these businesses, as this enables both the business and DOC to maintain accurate financial records. In April we extended the deadline for the payment of March invoices to May, we have now extended the deadline for the payment of April invoices to June. This means an invoice payable on 20 May is now payable by 20 June.

COVID-19 Messaging for Alert Level 1 (DOC-6313255)
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5. Can I still visit DOC facilities if I am unwell?
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