

Steve Brightwell

From: Eamonn Whitham
Sent: Wednesday, 5 April 2023 2:27 pm
To: Steve Brightwell
Subject: RE: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Yeah should have read my emails more closely. As soon as I sent it I saw your next email saying you'd already sent it

From: Steve Brightwell <sbrightwell@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, April 5, 2023 2:23 PM
To: Eamonn Whitham <ewhitham@doc.govt.nz>; Karl Beckert <kbeckert@doc.govt.nz>
Cc: Stephane Mino-Vercellio <svercellio@doc.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi Eamonn,
I sent the approved background and Q&As over to Poppy at MBIE at 10.30 this morning.
Steve

From: Eamonn Whitham <ewhitham@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, April 5, 2023 2:19 PM
To: Steve Brightwell <sbrightwell@doc.govt.nz>; Karl Beckert <kbeckert@doc.govt.nz>
Cc: Stephane Mino-Vercellio <svercellio@doc.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Karl did you want one of us to go back to MBIE on this? I see their deadline was midday today.

From: Steve Brightwell <sbrightwell@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, April 5, 2023 10:08 AM
To: Eamonn Whitham <ewhitham@doc.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Yeah I meant PCBU good catch.

From: Eamonn Whitham <ewhitham@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, April 5, 2023 9:51 AM
To: Steve Brightwell <sbrightwell@doc.govt.nz>; Karl Beckert <kbeckert@doc.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Looks good Steve. Thanks. All I changed was PSBU to PCBU. Karl, over to you.

From: Steve Brightwell <sbrightwell@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 2:39 PM
To: Eamonn Whitham <ewhitham@doc.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi Eamonn,
I think this is probably close to what we want.
There is still quite a bit of legal negotiation to be concluded before we will be in a position to consider future uses but the details of that are not for external ears at this stage.
Let me know if you think we need more than this.
Steve

Background

Kah International bought the lease of the Tongariro Chateau property from Tourism Hotels Corporation in 1991. The lease includes the Hotel, more than 20 other buildings, the golf course and other land within Tongariro National Park. While a new lease had been offered to Kah, the original lease expired in 2020 and Kah chose to continue operating the Chateau Tongariro Hotel as a monthly tenant for the past two and a half years.

On 31 January 2023 Kah New Zealand advised the hotel would close on February 5 and the property be handed over to the Department following the notice period. Kah cited a need for earthquake strengthening of the hotel and the uncertain future of the Ruapehu ski fields as the major factors in their decision to close. DOC assumed management of the property on March 9 and, as our first priority, has been getting to grips with what is required to maintain a heritage-listed hotel building.

As could be expected with a 30-lease of this nature, there are still a number of residual matters to be concluded following hand-over. Some of these matters are complex and we do not anticipate them being fully resolved for some months yet. Alongside resolving lease matters, the Department is engaging with the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Land Information NZ and iwi to consider the various options for the Chateau Tongariro Hotel into the future.

Q&A

Why hasn't DOC responded to expressions of interest from potential new hotel operators?

DOC is keenly aware the Chateau is an iconic heritage building sitting at the gateway to the Tongariro National Park, which itself has Dual World Heritage for its natural and cultural heritage. The Department is committed to working with iwi and a range of stakeholders to ensure both the heritage and cultural values of the Chateau Tongariro Hotel property are honoured and respected. We have received inquiries of interest in the Chateau which were expected and welcome. DOC has acknowledged them and explained we are not yet in a position to fully address these approaches. Once we have determined what the long-term future for the property is and have a better idea of our on-going PCBU responsibilities, particularly in regard to seismic risks, we will be in a better position to respond to any suggestions or proposals.

What is known about the seismic risks of the Chateau Tongariro Hotel?

Kah cited issues raised in a Detailed Seismic Assessment as one of the major factors in their decision to close the hotel. The assessment has not yet been shared with DOC or other interested parties. Accordingly, the Department has taken a precautionary approach and implemented a strict safety protocol for the hotel and areas around it which may be vulnerable to falling masonry in the event of a serious earthquake. Detailed seismic assessment of the building is a pre-requisite for the Department to make decisions about future use as a responsible PCBU under the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015.

From: Eamonn Whitham <ewhitham@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, April 3, 2023 1:02 PM
To: Steve Brightwell <sbrightwell@doc.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Great, thanks

From: Steve Brightwell <sbrightwell@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, April 3, 2023 1:01 PM
To: Eamonn Whitham <ewhitham@doc.govt.nz>; Karl Beckert <kbeckert@doc.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Yes can do.

From: Eamonn Whitham <ewhitham@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, April 3, 2023 12:59 PM
To: Karl Beckert <kbeckert@doc.govt.nz>; Steve Brightwell <sbrightwell@doc.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Yep can do.

Steve, are you able to do a first cut for me to review? I note the email asked for both background paras, including current status, and a couple of Q&As. By 9am Wednesday draft to me would be ideal, as I've got a few meetings from 10am.

Ngā mihi,
Eamonn

From: Karl Beckert <kbeckert@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, April 3, 2023 12:39 PM
To: Eamonn Whitham <ewhitham@doc.govt.nz>; Steve Brightwell <sbrightwell@doc.govt.nz>
Subject: Fwd: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hey eamonn. Can you work with Steve to provide me with a couple of paras by Wed morning. Should be able to lift out of Stacey's briefing

K

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From: Poppy Shelton <Poppy.Shelton@mbie.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, April 3, 2023 11:54:45 AM
To: Karl Beckert <kbeckert@doc.govt.nz>; Nyree Hill <Nyree.Hill@mbie.govt.nz>; Murray Beatson <Murray.Beatson@mbie.govt.nz>
Cc: Moriah Osborne <Moriah.Osborne@mbie.govt.nz>
Subject: Preparing Minister of Tourism to visit Ruapehu region [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Kia ora koutou,

We collaborated not too long ago on a Ministerial addressed to the Minister of Tourism about Ruapehu Alpine Lifts and Chateau Tongariro. Thanks again for your help with that work.

The Minister of Tourism is travelling to the Ruapehu region next week, where he is expected to meet with Council, the Mayor, and Visit Ruapehu (the Regional Tourism Organisation). My colleague Moriah and I are preparing an event briefing to support this trip.

As it is likely that both Chateau Tongariro and RAL will come up in the discussions, we want to include some wording from both DOC (re: CT) and Kānoa (re: RAL) to give the Minister up-to-date information and guide his responses to any questions. I'm imagining the briefing will include background on both issues, and an annexed Q+A. Ideally, it'd therefore be great to receive a few background paras outlining each issue and its current status, and a couple of Q+As to address any questions you think are likely to come up.

Unfortunately the Easter holidays have shaved two days of prep time off, so if you are able to provide us with some wording by midday Wednesday, that would be most appreciated.

If you'd like to discuss anything (timings, content, etc etc etc) please feel free to give me a call or Teams.

Thanks,
Poppy

Poppy Shelton (she/her)

SENIOR ADVISER

Tourism Operations and Partnerships Team, LSE | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

poppy.shelton@mbie.govt.nz | DDI: 9(2)(a)

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I work Monday to Thursday. On Fridays, please forward any urgent matters to [Dale Elvy](mailto:dale.elvy@mbie.govt.nz) [dale.elvy@mbie.govt.nz],
Manager Tourism Operations and Partnerships.

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