
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
TE POU ATAWHAI TAIAO O AOTEAROA

6 November 2020

Hon Kiritapu (Kiri) Allan
Minister of Conservation
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Tēnā koe e te Minita

General Election 2020 – Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Conservation

Congratulations on your appointment and welcome to the Conservation portfolio. The New Zealand Conservation Authority / Te Pou Atawhai Taiao O Aotearoa (the Authority) looks forward to working closely with you.

This is a most extraordinary time to be involved in conservation; a unique period of change in forming the post-Covid Aotearoa. Despite its challenges, Covid-19 provides an opportunity to increase wider recognition of the importance of Papatūānuku to our wellbeing, and as the foundation that underpins all human activity.

The Authority is established by the Conservation Act 1987, with members appointed by the Minister of Conservation (see Attachment 1 for a list of current members). It has a range of functions, but most importantly acts as an independent advisor to you and the Director-General on conservation matters, and approves statutory management plans and strategies.

The Authority also advocates on matters of national significance to conservation and advises the Director-General and senior leadership team on the Department of Conservation's strategic direction and performance. In the last 12 months, for example, we have:

- advised the Minister on priority areas for Predator Free work post Covid-19;
- advocated for investment in nature-based jobs to aid the Covid-19 recovery;
- recommended the control of all tahr in National Parks;
- encouraged an increase in resources for the Department's Kahui Kaupapa Atawhai work programme;
- filed submissions on the *NZ Biodiversity Strategy*, *Action for Healthy Waterways*, *National Plan of Action for Seabirds 2020*, *National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity*, *Improving Whitebait Management*, the proposed *Southeast South Island Marine Protected Areas*, the *Tahr Control Plan 2020-21*, and the *Future of Tourism*.

Momentum gained with the increase in conservation funding through the Kaimahi for Nature initiative, and the release of recent environmental strategies, such as *Te Mana o te Taiao / Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy*, the *National Plan of Action for Seabirds 2020*, and the *National Environmental Standards for Freshwater*, must be continued. The successful implementation of this good mahi is now crucial to ensure tangible results can be seen and felt throughout Aotearoa.

Another of the Authority's roles is to act as a conduit for all fifteen Conservation Boards of Aotearoa (see Attachment 4) to report on the implementation of conservation management

strategies and conservation management plans, and to raise conservation issues relating to any area within their rohe. Conservation Boards have a regulatory function in monitoring the use of and access to the public conservation land that covers one-third of Aotearoa. The relationship between Conservation Boards and the Authority is enabled through liaison roles, an annual conference, and regular reporting.

The Authority's **strategic priority areas** for its current term are to:

- ensure the partial reviews of the *Conservation General Policy* and the *General Policy for National Parks* are completed to accurately give effect to the Treaty of Waitangi / Tiriti o Waitangi. The Authority expects that enhanced conservation outcomes should flow from strong Māori-Crown partnerships.
- approve well developed, timely statutory planning documents that are developed with full public consultation, and to encourage the implementation of these documents.
- continue to mitigate and adapt to climate change by better understanding and managing effects on biodiversity, anticipating extreme weather events in Department management plans, and in seeking an environmentally sustainable future for tourism.
- advocate for marine protection in such matters as the Marine Protected Areas Reform, seabird conservation, and exploring the possibility of Marine National Parks.
- advocate for urgent reclassification of "Section 62 Stewardship land", and the implementation of the Government's commitment to end mining on public conservation land.

We will also engage with the Department of Conservation on:


- 1. Kahui Kaupapa Atawhai and Ngāi Tai ki Tamaki Decision implications:** Following the *Ngāi Tai ki Tamaki* case in December 2018, we are focused on the partial reviews of the conservation general policies, and on the implications for the Department in the need to give effect to Treaty principles in all aspects of conservation work.
- 2. Conservation Management Strategies (CMSs) and National Park Management Plans (NPMPs):** The Authority is continuing to work with the Department to ensure the most robust protection for the conservation land of Aotearoa. We view the CMSs and NPMPs as key statutory documents to guide the management of our public conservation lands. We expect to finalise the new Bay of Plenty CMS within the next year and are currently formulating a report on the performance of the Department's management planning processes, that will contribute recommendations to improve the protection and management of public conservation land.
- 3. Growing sustainable partnerships:** The Kaimahi for Nature initiative has provided conservation efforts with an unprecedented increase in funding. The Authority is concerned with the sustainability of such an investment in community conservation, and will seek to monitor the Department's achievements against their Stretch Goals, and Long-Term Investment Plan.
- 4. Implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy:** The Authority understands that for *Te Mana o te Taiao / Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy* to be achieved, there will need to be a range of implementation measures across Government, across land tenures, and across domains (marine, land, and freshwater). We will advocate for the Department to champion the changes required to ensure that the new Biodiversity Strategy succeeds. The implementation measures will also need to be suitably resourced and accurately monitored. In order to ensure true measurement and success, further commitment to scientific research will be required.
- 5. Predator Free 2050:** The Authority will encourage the Department to consider all options for achieving Predator Free 2050, to adequately resource existing predator control operations, and to expand predator control operations to new areas.

I have found regular meetings with the Minister to be mutually helpful and suggest that we continue this tradition to keep abreast of the matters each of us may be considering. You are invited to all Authority meetings, the details of which can be found in Attachment 3; the Authority would value a regular exchange of views on issues of significance to conservation.

The Authority would like to meet with you as soon as is convenient to introduce ourselves and to learn about your priorities. To this end, we do hope you will be able to attend our meeting in Wellington on 10 and 11 December. I look forward to speaking with you, perhaps for a conversation over dinner on the Thursday evening.

No reira

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Ellison', enclosed in a light blue rectangular border.

Edward Ellison ONZM
Chairperson NZCA

Membership of the New Zealand Conservation Authority as at 31 October 2020

In consultation with the Minister for Māori Development

- Nicole Anderson of Kerikeri (*1 June 2018 to 30 June 2023*)
- Puke Timoti of Hamilton (*7 August 2020 to 30 June 2023*)

In consultation with the Minister of Tourism:

- Maxine Shortland of Russell (*7 August 2020 to 30 June 2023*)
- Vacant position

In consultation with the Minister of Local Government:

- Penny Hulse MNZM of Auckland (*7 August 2020 to 30 June 2023*)

On the nomination of Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu:

- Tāne Davis MNZM of Invercargill (*1 October 2018 to 30 June 2023*)

On the recommendation of Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand:

- Sally Gepp of Nelson (*7 August 2020 to 30 June 2023*)

On the recommendation of Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand:

- Robin McNeill MNZM of Invercargill (*7 August 2020 to 30 June 2023*)

On the recommendation of the Royal Society of New Zealand:

- Wendy Nelson MNZM of Wellington (*7 August 2020 to 30 June 2023*)

From public nominations:

- Edward Ellison ONZM of Dunedin (Chairperson) (*1 January 2019 to 30 June 2023*)
- Robyn Jebson of South Westland (*1 July 2017 to 30 June 2022*)
- Tony Lepper ONZM of Alexandra (*1 July 2017 to 30 June 2022*)
- Viv Shaw of Te Anau (*7 August 2020 to 30 June 2023*)

The bios for all the members can be found at this web page:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/nz-conservation-authority/membership/current-members/>

The New Zealand Conservation Authority's Strategic Priorities

STATUTORY ROLE FOR MANAGEMENT PLANNING AND LAND STATUS
A. Conservation Management Strategies
B. National Park Management Plans
C. Land status recategorisation e.g. stewardship land
D. Treaty of Waitangi and post-Treaty settlement conservation management
INFLUENCE AND 'STEP CHANGE' OPPORTUNITIES
E. Strategic advice to the Minister and DG in the context of conservation in today's economy, the governance requirements, and strategic advice on public policy documents and legislation
F. Opportunities for step change in conservation
G. Visitor management on public conservation lands and waters
ADVOCACY ON NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FOR CONSERVATION
H. Climate change adaptation and mitigation
I. Rivers and freshwater ecosystems
J. Marine ecosystems and protected areas
MONITORING AND EVALUATION
K. Effectiveness and efficiency of the Department's conservation management
L. NZCA's performance

The full details for these priorities, including the Goals and Actions, can be found at this web page:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/nz-conservation-authority/strategic-priorities/>

NZCA meetings 2020-2021

The Authority generally meets on the third Thursday – Friday of every second month. The confirmed meeting dates through until the end of 2021 are:

10 and 11 December 2020 in Wellington

18 and 19 February 2021 in Wellington

15 and 16 April 2021 in Napier

17 and 18 June 2021 in Wellington

19 and 20 August 2021 in Wellington

14 and 15 October 2021 in Tauranga

9 and 10 December 2021 in Wellington

Two of the six meetings are held outside of Wellington and include a fieldtrip on the Thursday, to allow for interaction between the NZCA, the regional conservation board, and Department staff, and to provide an appreciation of management issues facing individual conservancies.

On the Thursday evening of each Wellington meeting, we invite the Minister of Conservation, the Director-General of Conservation, and the Department's senior leadership team to dinner with the Authority.

Attachment 4 – Conservation Boards in Aotearoa

