

## ***4 Park Policies***

The policies that follow have been prepared in terms of the National Parks Act 1980, the General Policy for National Parks 1983, other legislation listed in section 1.2 and the *Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy*. The General Policy has been applied and where necessary, its application to Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park has been specified, expanded or interpreted.

**Whilst individual policies may be read in isolation, it is necessary to read them together with their associated method statements and within the context of the Plan as a whole to gain a comprehensive understanding and to note that all policies in this Plan will be implemented and applied consistently with all other policies in the Plan.**

The following conventions, with respect to the Department implementing policies or methods, have been used within this Plan:

- policies or methods where legislation provides no discretion for decision-making state that a particular action or actions 'will' be undertaken;
- policies or methods that provide for strong guidance on decision-making, without diminishing the roles of the Minister and other decision-makers, state that a particular action or actions 'should' be undertaken; and
- policies or methods specifically intended to allow flexibility in decision-making state that a particular action or actions 'may' be undertaken.

## 4.1 HERITAGE PROTECTION

### ***4.1.1 Indigenous Plants and Animals***

#### *Policies*

##### **4.1.1(a)**

**To preserve indigenous plants and animals of the Park, as far as possible, in their natural state.**

##### **4.1.1(b)**

**To take special measures to protect threatened plants and animals.**

##### **4.1.1(c)**

**To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu with taonga species and when managing indigenous plants and animals have particular regard to the Department's Protocols with Ngāi Tahu for freshwater fisheries and culling of species and to the Deed of Recognition for Aoraki.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.1.1(a)** - Preservation of indigenous (native) plants and animals, as far as possible, except where the New Zealand Conservation Authority otherwise determines, is a requirement of the National Parks Act 1980 (Section 4(2)(b)). Any cutting, destruction or taking of plants is an offence (Section 60(1)(d)), unless the approval of the Minister of Conservation has been obtained in advance. Any disturbance, trapping, taking, hunting or killing of indigenous fauna requires the approval of the Minister of Conservation and the Director-General of Conservation, in terms of the requirements of both Section 5 National Parks Act 1980 and Section 53(1) Wildlife Act 1953 respectively. Indigenous fauna includes bird, fish, reptile and invertebrate life.

The indigenous plants, vegetation and animals of the Park are well described in Dennis and Potton (1984) and in Wilson (1976 and 1996). The species and vegetation are typical of the eastern Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana and threatened species found in the Park are not confined to it. The Park however, does have the distinctive aspect of better-preserved vegetation extending into the high valleys, relative to areas outside the Park. This preservation is due to a combination of earlier cessation of stock grazing and burning, stronger action to protect the area (see 1.3.4.1), and more rigorous wild animal control. Ongoing preservation is inherent throughout the Plan - for example through avoiding visitor pressure on the east Hooker Valley vegetation, better 4WD vehicle control in the Godley Valley and protecting indigenous vegetation in Aoraki/Mount Cook Village.

Preservation cannot be an absolute. Sometimes vegetation needs to be cut, such as along tracks or to provide a site for a public building. Also in the course of cutting vegetation or controlling or eradicating exotics (see 4.1.4 Introduced Plants), specimens of indigenous animals may become casualties. Particular care needs to be

used when undertaking these activities within the Park. Adverse effects on native plants and habitats should be avoided. Consent must be sought where applicable, in terms of sections 5(1) and 5(2) National Parks Act and the Wildlife Act 1953.

To a large extent, the survival of species of indigenous plants and animals depends upon the good health of their habitats (see 4.1.4 Introduced Plants, 4.1.5 Introduced Animals and Domestic Animals, 4.1.3 Water, Snow, Ice and Riverbeds).

The Department has rated the Tasman riverbed as a wildlife habitat of very high value and national importance for braided river bird and invertebrate species. It will be an aim of Park management that the wildlife value of this area is retained. The Tasman riverbed outside of the Park is one of the areas identified for consideration as a national park addition (see 4.1.9 Boundaries and Land Additions).

The Department is confident that grazing will soon cease on the Birch Hill Flats (see 4.3.8 Grazing). Monitoring of the vegetation response to this is desirable to identify any management action needed regarding introduced grass competing with native species.

For the collection or cutting of indigenous species as part of an approved programme of scientific research see 4.3.11 Research.

Ngāi Tahu traditional use of indigenous plants and animals is specifically addressed in policy 4.3.1 of this Plan.

**4.1.1(b)** – Within the Park and its immediate vicinity one plant species *Olearia fimbriata* has been identified (Molloy et al, 2001) as in ‘serious decline’; two plant species, *Ranunculus grahamii* (an alpine buttercup) and *Ranunculus godleyanus* (yellow mountain buttercup) are ‘range restricted’; and *Epilobium purpuratum* (a willow herb) is ‘sparse’.

*Olearia fimbriata* is under active management (monitoring, possum control, plant propagation); the other plant species are being monitored.

Within, but not confined to the Park, the birds kea and New Zealand falcon/karearea are ‘nationally endangered’ and rock wren is ‘nationally vulnerable’. Periodically within or near the Park black stilt/kaki is ‘nationally critical’; wrybill/ngutu-pare are ‘nationally vulnerable’; and black-fronted tern/tarapirohe are ‘in serious decline’. Management of these birds is in accordance with national priorities, as set out in section 5.2.6 Indigenous Species in the *Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy* (2000). Black stilt/kaki have a threatened species recovery plan to achieve a population recovery and kea have a management strategy (Grant, 1993), primarily focused on kea and human interactions to reduce disruptions to kea behaviour.

**4.1.1(c)** - Ngāi Tahu has a cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association with indigenous plants and animals. The Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 recognises this relationship in sections 287 to 296 “Taonga species”. Schedules 97 and 98 of the Act list those indigenous plants and animals that were included in the settlement as taonga species (see Appendix E).

Under section 293 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 the Minister of Conservation is required, with respect to taonga species, including those species subject to recovery plans or species recovery groups, to advise Ngāi Tahu in advance of any reviews or preparations of statutory or non-statutory management

documents. The Minister is required to consult and have particular regard to the views of Ngāi Tahu when making policy decisions concerning the protection, management or conservation of taonga species.

Under section 294 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 the Director-General of Conservation, in respect of any taonga species that is or becomes subject to a recovery plan or species recovery group, is required to provide Ngāi Tahu with copies of the proceedings and publications relating to the species. The Director-General is required to consult with and have particular regard to the views of Ngāi Tahu when making policy decisions concerning the protection, management or conservation of all taonga species subject to a species recovery group. The Director-General is also required to provide Ngāi Tahu with an opportunity to nominate a person to join a species recovery group for certain species.

Section 304 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 states the specific obligations for consultation with Ngāi Tahu regarding taonga fish species, as set out in schedule 98 of the Act. The Freshwater Fisheries Protocol also applies. Refer to Appendix D for this Protocol.

In addition to these provisions, there are other species that are of special significance to Ngāi Tahu that may not be included in schedule 97 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. The Department should, in accordance with section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987, where appropriate and to the fullest extent practicable, take active steps to protect the interests of Ngāi Tahu in these other species.

The Protocols deal, for example, with the management of freshwater fisheries, culling of species and various matters under the Resource Management Act 1991 that are likely to be relevant when managing indigenous plants and animals. Refer to Appendix D for these Protocols.

The Deed of Recognition for Aoraki, under sections 212 – 213 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, also applies. The Director-General is required to provide relevant information and consult with Ngāi Tahu and have particular regard to their views in relation to any programme to identify and protect indigenous plants or wildlife within the Tōpuni area.

### *Methods*

#### **4.1.1(a)**

**1. Indigenous plants that have been grown from seed or cuttings collected in the Park and its vicinity by Park staff may be planted in the Park (see 4.1.2 Landscape Management).**

**2. Prior to grazing ceasing on the Birch Hill Flats an environmental monitoring programme will be established. This will include an assessment of changes to native vegetation composition and diversity, from current baseline studies. This will provide factual information to assess the impacts of grazing in the Park.**

#### **4.1.1(b)**

- 1. Consent may be granted for the trimming or cutting of indigenous vegetation which is endangering the survival chances of threatened species of flora and fauna, provided that environmental protection procedures have been complied with (see 4.1.10 Environmental Protection).**
- 2. Records will be kept of the distribution of threatened plants and animals, so that changes can be monitored and the location of populations of such species can be avoided in the provision of public facilities and services.**
- 3. Threatened species management will be undertaken in accordance with national priorities.**

#### **4.1.1(c)**

**The Department will consult with tākata whenua and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values in relation to indigenous plants and animals. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act mentioned in policy 4.1.1(c).**

## **4.1.2 Landscape Management**

### *Policies*

#### **4.1.2(a)**

**To preserve the natural landscapes of the Park as far as possible, including avoiding interference with natural processes.**

#### **4.1.2(b)**

**To design and locate facilities to minimise their impact on the landscape and apply landscape restoration techniques where necessary to land that has been damaged during the provision of facilities and services.**

#### **4.1.2(c)**

**To recognise and restore where practicable the State Highway and Aoraki/Mount Cook Airport Park entranceway landscapes.**

### *Explanation*

**4.1.2(a)** - The National Park is renowned for its high quality alpine and high country scenery. Most of this can be preserved with indirect management to prevent deterioration (see 4.1.4 Introduced Plants, 4.1.5 Introduced Animals and Domestic Animals, 4.1.8 Fire Control).

**4.1.2(b)** - Active management of landscapes is usually needed only where there are intrusions in the natural scenery in the form of facilities and services for the use and enjoyment of the Park. Sensitive siting, design and landscape construction can avoid many of the potential natural landscape impacts.

**4.1.2(c)** – Both the State Highway approach into the Park and aspects of the surrounds of the Aoraki/Mount Cook Airport have introduced features (fences, Birch Hill airstrip shelter structure and mown area, riverbank-protection willows, Unwin Hut complex, airport carpark, vehicle tracks and old earthworks) that adversely affect the Park's entranceway landscapes. It is desirable to remove or, in the case of at least Unwin Hut and the airport carpark, to mitigate the effects of these features and allow natural processes to dominate where possible.

### *Methods*

#### **4.1.2(b)**

**1. The need for natural landscape modification and landscape restoration will be kept to a minimum by placing an initial emphasis on the justification, appropriate siting and design of facilities (see 4.3.9 New and Existing Buildings).**

**2. Facility design will seek to blend in and reduce the impact of facilities on natural landscapes. Exceptions to this may apply for some high altitude huts and bivouacs that may need to be clearly visible to effectively perform their function of providing shelter.**

3. Where facility design involves earthworks, then, as well as restoring an appropriate vegetation cover to disturbed areas, the earthworks will be designed so as not to increase the potential for erosion or for debris to obstruct watercourses. Revegetation may include fertilising and the planting out of plants that have been grown elsewhere from seed or cuttings collected in the Park and its vicinity. Any landscape restoration activities have to be in accordance with the 4.1.1 Indigenous Plants and Animals policies. For indigenous seed and cutting collection for propagation purposes, also see 4.1.1.

4. Attention to mitigating landscape impacts will be a condition of concessions where relevant, to ensure a common standard of quality of Park landscapes.

### ***4.1.3 Water, Snow, Ice and Riverbeds.***

#### *Policies*

##### **4.1.3(a)**

**To manage the Park so that as far as possible the quantity and quality of the waters, glaciers and snowfields and the condition of the water channels are maintained in a natural state.**

##### **4.1.3(b)**

**To manage the Park's waters and, in particular, the Aoraki Tōpuni area and the waters flowing from the area, so that as far as possible, the mauri of the waters for Ngāi Tahu is protected.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.1.3(a)** - The attraction of Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park is in part dependent on the pristine nature of its snowfields, glaciers, rivers and streams. Every effort needs to be made to preserve that condition.

Particular attention needs to be paid to Glencoe Stream and Black Birch Stream above the Village, as these streams provide the water supply for the Village (see 6.2.9 Services).

Maintaining the natural state cannot be absolute, as this would prevent a range of recreational activities and protection works for facilities, which are of benefit to public use and enjoyment of the Park.

For the use of waters for boating, see 4.2.2 Recreational Activities.

**4.1.3(b)** - For Ngāi Tahu, the snow and ice on Aoraki and the surrounding tipuna mountain and the waters that flow from them, have special significance, a mauri (see 1.3.2). Activities such as bathing or washing in the waters, waste water disposal, or defecating on the mountain, adversely affect Ngāi Tahu values.

#### *Methods*

##### **4.1.3(a)**

**1. The limited use of water, snow and ice is appropriate where this is of direct benefit to approved facilities and services in the Park. Guidelines on potability which are in compliance with relevant legislation will be followed and advice obtained as required.**

**2. Facilities for public use in the catchments of the Glencoe and Black Birch Streams above the water supply abstraction points will only be appropriate where there is no risk of contamination of the water supply.**

**3. Water channels will be kept free and unrestricted, but may have road bridges or road culverts, or have stopbanks to direct water flows away from approved facilities and services. As a general rule, protection works must be appropriate to satisfy the requirements of legislation dealing with**

buildings in terms of the probability of damage to them, with higher levels of probability being acceptable for roads, pathways and tracks.

4. Consultation and liaison with Environment Canterbury, which has statutory responsibilities in the Park relating to soil conservation and water management, will be maintained.

#### 4.1.3(b)

1. The Department will consult with tākata whenua and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values in relation to waterways. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act mentioned in policy 4.1.3(b).

2. Public facilities will be sited, designed or even removed and visitor information provided, so that inappropriate use of Tōpuni area source waterways is discouraged.

3. Human waste, particularly but not only within the Tōpuni area, will be managed through the provisions in 4.2.10 Waste Disposal.

#### **4.1.4 Introduced Plants**

##### *Policies*

##### **4.1.4(a)**

To exterminate or control introduced plants in the Park in accordance with national plans, regional pest management strategies, statutory management documents, guidelines and acceptable principles of introduced plant control, in so far as these are consistent with the objectives and policies of this plan.

##### **4.1.4(b)**

To conduct regular introduced plant surveillance within the Park.

##### **4.1.4(c)**

To consider exceptions to extermination or control programmes:

- *where introduced plants are providing a significant and effective soil conservation or water management function, or*
- *where they are of proven historical significance, or*
- *for lawns within the Village amenities area that are a component of an accepted landscape design.*

##### **4.1.4(d)**

To permit herbicide use and advocate for the use of biological control organisms where no effective or efficient alternatives are available, subject to strict controls for the protection of indigenous plants, fauna and waterways and for the safety of people.

##### **4.1.4(e)**

To actively seek to prevent the introduction or further spread of introduced plants in the Park.

##### **4.1.4(f)**

To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu, when eradicating pests or other introduced species, as expressed in the Deed of Recognition for Aoraki.

##### *Explanation*

**4.1.4(a)** - Over 130 introduced plants have been identified in the Park and more may exist undiscovered. They range from trees such as larch, birch, cherry and spruce, through Russell lupin, sweet briar and broom, to introduced grasses and herbs. The majority are found on the Tasman and Hooker valley floors.

Extermination of introduced plants as far as possible, except where the Authority otherwise determines, is a requirement of the National Parks Act 1980 (Section 4(2)(b)).

Given limits on the resources available, extermination has to be seen as a long-term or unrealistic goal for many introduced plant species (e.g. browntop), with control of the species as the shorter-term goal, again where it is realistic.

The *Department of Conservation Strategic Plan for Managing Invasive Weeds* (Owen, 1998) describes from a national perspective the Department's long term approach to protect native species and natural communities from threats posed by invasive weeds (introduced plants). It applies across all lands administered by the Department. Within this national context an introduced plant in a national park may not gain priority for extermination or control compared with plants in other areas.

In general, control is to confine populations and prevent further spreading. Two processes exist to identify species for control.

Environment Canterbury has identified seven introduced plants in the park as warranting control regimes, in terms of the *Regional Pest Management Strategy* (1998). Four plants (broom, gorse, ragwort, nodding thistle) are containment control plant pests and three (heather, St John's wort, sweetbrier) surveillance control plant pests. Broom and gorse are being contained.

In terms of the Department's priorities (see Owen 1998) one introduced plant not included in the *Regional Pest Management Strategy* (1998), is Russell lupin, which is subject to an extensive control programme by the Department to avoid its spread into the Tasman riverbed. Russell lupin is an aggressive weed with the ability to extensively damage braided riverbed habitats and their fauna and flora. Other Departmental priority control plants are cherry trees, heather and wilding pines and larch.

Control of the widespread introduced grass, brown-top, is not possible.

#### **4.1.4(b)**

Introduced plant surveillance is essential if such species are to be effectively controlled. Particular sites for surveillance are in and adjacent to the Village, along SH80 and other roads and on riverbeds. Particular introduced plants to look for are identified in the field guide "*Wicked Weeds to watch out for... in Aoraki/Mount Cook Area*" (2002).

**4.1.4(c)** – In respect of the first and second bullet points there are some plants within the Park that may qualify. In respect of the third bullet point, within the Aoraki/Mount Cook Village some areas of introduced plants may be so extensive that their removal at a single stroke would be counterproductive for the establishment of new plants or for the transitional retention of a pleasant Village environment. Some of the larch and silver birch trees fit into this latter category. For these reasons, even though extermination is feasible, a phasing-out programme combined with replacement planting of indigenous plants is more appropriate. Lawns containing introduced grass species may be an integral part of landscape design (see 6.1.2 Landscape Management).

The introduction or retention of introduced plants within the Park requires the approval of the New Zealand Conservation Authority, in accordance with section 4(2)(b) of the National Parks Act.

#### **4.1.4(d)**

Herbicide or biological control organism use will be in accordance with regional rules, any other statutory requirements, the Agrichemical Users Code of Practice 1995 and, for biological organisms, the procedures in section 5A National Parks Act 1980.

#### **4.1.4(e)**

Exterminating or controlling introduced plants within the Park is a significant challenge faced by Park managers. It is therefore essential that every effort be reasonably made to prevent the introduction or further spread of plants in the first instance. Such efforts should include, but will not be limited to:

- the extermination or control of introduced plants as identified in policies 4.1.4(a) and (b);
- ensuring all earthmoving machinery and/or equipment is free from plant material prior to entry into the park. Exceptions to this should only include emergency works as defined under the Resource Management Act 1991;
- ensuring the necessary conditions are placed on concessionaires to prevent the introduction or spread of plants;
- ongoing liaison and consultation with Environment Canterbury, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, adjoining lessees and landowners, and Transit New Zealand.

**4.1.4(f)** - The Deed of Recognition for Aoraki, under sections 212 – 213 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, applies here. The Director-General is required to provide relevant information and consult with Ngāi Tahu and have particular regard to their views in relation to any programme to eradicate pests or other introduced species within the Tōpuni area.

#### *Methods*

#### **4.1.4(a,b &c)**

**Introduced plants will be classified into four categories:**

- **those to be exterminated;**
- **those to be actively controlled;**
- **those to be monitored;**
- **those not subject to any extermination or control programme because of special circumstances.**

#### **4.1.4(a)**

1. Generally a strategy of extermination will be applied:
  - where the introduced plants are, in terms of the Regional Pest Management Strategy, total or progressive control plants for which Environment Canterbury has approved a programme of eradication;
  - To other introduced plants where:
    - extermination will not have any long-term harmful effects on indigenous species;
    - the introduced plants endanger the habitat and survival of indigenous species, including those out of the Park where not exterminating the plant in the Park would undermine its removal elsewhere (e.g. Russell lupin);
    - extermination will not cause further disturbance that would promote further infestation;
    - priority for extermination meets criteria in Owen (1998).
2. Plants to be actively controlled will be those where:
  - the introduced plants, in terms of the Regional Pest Management Strategy, are containment control plants for which Environment Canterbury has approved a programme of control;
  - other introduced plants where attempts at extermination could promote further infestation;
  - priority for control meets criteria in Owen (1998).
3. Plants that will be monitored only will be those which:
  - are not total, progressive or containment control plants in terms of the Regional Pest Management Strategy;
  - do not meet extermination or control criteria in Owen (1998);
  - are well-established;
  - are not known to pose a threat to the environmental values of the Park;
  - are subject to severe restraints hindering eradication and control.
4. Different methods of control will apply with different species and in different parts of the Park. The various methods, including herbicide spraying, will be used only after a close examination of the consequences for indigenous fauna and flora, for visitors and residents, for water quality and for erosion control. Special precautions will be adopted where necessary and consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 sought where required.
5. Planting of indigenous plants may be used as an introduced plant control measure (see 4.1.1 Indigenous Plants and Animals, 4.1.2 Landscape Management). Some problems with introduced plants can be avoided by placing emphasis on the maintenance of a healthy and competitive indigenous plant cover.

4.1.4(c)

Special circumstances justifying neither extermination nor control measures may apply for:

- the larches, Douglas firs and pines of confirmed historical significance associated with the first Hermitage hotel site at White Horse Hill and poplars and macrocarpa at the Birch Hill homestead sites (see 4.1.6 Historic Resources), but not to wilding seedlings from these trees, nor to the trees themselves if they are a significant problem seed source;
- lawns that are a component of an accepted landscape design;
- willow trees serving an essential river control function along the Tasman River provided they are non-spreading species and cannot be replaced with suitable indigenous species.

#### 4.1.4(f)

The Department will consult with tākata whenua and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values in relation to introduced plant extermination or control within the Aoraki Tōpuni area. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act mentioned in policy 4.1.4(f).

### ***4.1.5 Introduced Fauna and Domestic Animals***

#### *Policies*

#### **4.1.5(a)**

To exterminate or control introduced fauna in and adjacent to the Park in accordance with national plans, regional pest management strategies, policies, guidelines and acceptable principles of animal pest control, in so far as these are consistent with the objectives and policies of this plan.

#### **4.1.5(b)**

To exterminate thar within, and actively control thar adjoining the Park.

#### **4.1.5(c)**

Domestic animals should be excluded from the Park, subject to the Control of Dogs provisions in Part VA of the National Parks Act.

#### **4.1.5(d)**

To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngäi Tahu, when eradicating pests or other introduced species, as expressed in the Deed of Recognition for Aoraki.

#### *Explanation*

**4.1.5(a) & (b)** - The National Parks Act 1980 (Section 4(2)(b) requires extermination of introduced fauna as far as possible, as reaffirmed by Policy 9.4 of the *General Policy for National Parks* 1983. However, Policy 9.4 also recognises the technical difficulty of achieving this and aims for introduced fauna reduction to a level the indigenous flora and fauna can tolerate.

Because of the high mobility of most introduced fauna, lasting extermination in the Park is difficult if pursued in isolation from measures in the surrounding region. Resources do not at present or in the foreseeable future, permit extermination over a wider region. Control is therefore seen as the only feasible alternative during the life of this plan.

Introduced fauna includes a variety of species and classifications with different agencies responsible for control under several statutes:

- the Department of Conservation has the overall responsibility for the control of wild animals (deer, thar, chamois and possums in the case of Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park) and for helicopter hunting by virtue of the Wild Animal Control Act 1977. The Himalayan Thar Control Plan (1993) governs thar control and sets a zero population density for the National Park above which the Department will intervene and commence thar control. Wild animal recovery within the Park requires a concession, as of 1 October 1999 (see 4.4.2 Concessions General and 4.4.3 Aircraft and Airports);

- Environment Canterbury has a responsibility for possums (on agricultural land), rabbits and hares under the Biosecurity Act 1993. Rabbits are declared pests within Council's *Regional Pest Management Strategy* (1998);
- the Central South Island Fish and Game Council is responsible for the management of introduced sports fish (Conservation Act 1987);
- the Department of Conservation and the Central South Island Fish and Game Council are jointly responsible for the management of introduced game birds (Wildlife Act 1953);
- the Department of Conservation is responsible for the extermination, as far as possible, of animals such as cats, rodents, hedgehogs and mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels), and for ensuring that domestic animals do not enter the Park (National Parks Act 1980). Farm livestock can be permitted in the Park under a formal concession arrangement.

Continued pressure on wild animal populations has brought them down to a low level. Hare, rabbit, cat, mice and mustelid populations are variable and need to be closely monitored as they can increase rapidly. Introduced fish and game bird populations are not significant.

Although aircraft can adversely affect the experience of Park visitors, aircraft access into Liebig Hut should be permitted, as this facility is located within the thar feral range and thar come into the Park over the adjoining Liebig Range. This recognises that recreational hunting can assist with the Department's target of zero thar within the Park. Any aircraft access will be conditional, however, on the hunting being considered as an animal control measure, not as trophy hunting. Although trophy animals may be gained all thar seen should be shot.

**4.1.5(c)** – Domestic animals (this includes all pets) have the potential to adversely affect indigenous flora and fauna and to create conflict with other park users. Exclusion is necessary to ensure that no animals are left uncontrolled. This does not include stock permitted under grazing licenses in accordance with policy 4.3.8.

If stray domestic animals are found within the Park every attempt will be made to identify the owner and have the animals removed. If animals are found within the Park the animals may be dealt with as trespassing animals, in accordance with section 62 of the National Parks Act 1980. For dogs, the seizure and other provisions of Part VA of the National Parks Act apply.

This policy does not preclude the use of dogs for police, park management, customs or search and rescue purposes, or guide dogs used by the blind, or companion dogs, all in accordance with Section 56E of the National Parks Act 1980. Any other use of dogs, including farm dogs for stock management within any grazing area, requires a dog control permit in accordance with Section 56B of the Act.

The use of horses or other ridden or pack animals within the Park is not appropriate because of their ability to pug tracks, damage vegetation, spread noxious weeds and create conflict with other park users.

For recreational hunting see 4.2.2 Recreational Activities. For guided hunting see 4.2.4 Guiding.

For farm livestock grazing, see 4.3.8 Grazing.

**4.1.5(d)** - The Deed of Recognition for Aoraki, under sections 212 – 213 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, applies here. The Director-General is required to provide relevant information and consult with Ngāi Tahu and have particular regard to their views in relation to any programme to eradicate pests or other introduced species within the Tōpuni area.

#### *Methods*

#### **4.1.5(a) & (b)**

- 1. Support continued pressure on wild animal populations by all available means, including recreational and commercial hunting and Department hunting operations.**
- 2. Process concessions for wild animal recovery operations.**
- 3. Prepare and action a control plan for hares, rabbits, cats, rodents and mustelids in the Park, taking into account the *Regional Pest Management Strategy* in respect to rabbits. Because many of these animals will need to be controlled near populated areas, the control plan will pay particular attention to control methods that are consistent with public safety. Particular attention will also be paid to methods of control that minimise the disturbance or destruction of indigenous plants and animals (see 4.1.1 Indigenous Plants and Animals).**
- 4. Support continued pressure on wild animal populations on land adjoining the Park to keep the potential for re-infestation of the Park to a minimum.**
- 5. Encourage recreational hunting of thar through permitting aircraft access to the Liebig Hut, provided that shooters undertake to shoot all thar seen and report their kills.**

#### **4.1.5(d)**

The Department will consult with tākata whenua and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values, in relation to introduced fauna extermination or control within the Aoraki Tōpuni area. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act mentioned in policy 4.1.5(d).

#### **4.1.6 Historic Resources and Memorials**

##### *Policies*

##### **4.1.6(a)**

To preserve archaeological and historic objects and sites located within the Park.

##### **4.1.6(b)**

To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu with their wāhi tapu, wāhi taonga and other places of historic significance, and give effect to the Department's Protocols with Ngāi Tahu for historic resources.

##### **4.1.6(c)**

Additional memorials of a monument-type should not be permitted except where the historical association of the site, individual or event is of exceptional importance. Plaques on existing monuments may be permitted to record ongoing associations with the monument's original purpose.

##### **4.1.6(d)**

To discourage the spreading of deceased persons' ashes, especially where this may affect the Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni area or the waters flowing from that area.

##### **4.1.6(e)**

To permit plaques on Park facilities, to commemorate benefactors of the Park.

##### *Explanation*

**4.1.6(a)** - In managing sites and features of archaeological and historic interest within the Park the provisions of the relevant legislation and policy will be observed. Legislation, in addition to the National Parks Act 1980, includes the Conservation Act 1987, the Historic Places Act 1993, the Antiquities Act 1975 and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

At a national level the Department's historic policies include the *ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the conservation of places of cultural heritage value* (1993), the *Historic Heritage Strategy* (1995) and the *Kaupapa Atawhai Strategy: Atawhai Ruamano Conservation 2000* (1997). These national policies are given effect to through the conservancy level policies in the *Historic Resources Strategy: Canterbury Conservancy* (1998) and the *Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy* (2000), as well as in the *Protocols on the Department of Conservation's Interaction with Ngāi Tahu on Specified Issues* (1999).

Known or potential historic sites within or immediately adjoining the Park are:

- foundations of the first Hermitage hotel at White Horse Hill, now marked by a plaque, with the associated introduced trees (see 4.1.4 Introduced Plants) and old walking tracks in vicinity;
- stone memorial (King Memorial) on the Hooker Valley Track commemorating the deaths of three climbers in 1914 and rededicated as a climbers' memorial in 1994;
- former hydro-electric power station site in Sawyer Stream;
- foundations of the first Ball Hut;
- Ball Hut old road and horse track remains;
- rubbish dumps associated with the first Hermitage hotel and the first Ball Hut;
- Sefton Bivi, recently replicated in accordance with a conservation plan;
- Hooker Hut (see also 4.2.7 Huts);
- the original Empress Hut (currently in storage for potential future display);
- other huts, subject to an assessment of their historic values being undertaken;
- Wakefield Track;
- "Wakefield Cottage", Sefton Staff Lodge and the carpenters' workshop, all behind The Hermitage and owned by the hotel owners;
- power generator shed within the Village (owned by The Hermitage owners and soon to be redundant);
- Birch Hill homestead/high country station site complex: includes introduced trees, (see 4.1.4 Introduced Plants), enclosures, fences, yards and Jimmy Lloyd's gravesite (Jacomb, 2002). (Note that most of these sites are within conservation area H37 018 that the Department is seeking to return to the Park – see 4.1.9 Boundaries and Land Additions);
- coach road causeway and bridge abutment, Woolshed Creek, Birch Hill;
- old stock-fence near Red Tarns Track.

In addition to these in situ historic sites, there are historic relics and information held by the Department, some of which are displayed in the visitor centre and may form the nucleus of historic displays and interpretation, possibly in a museum (see 6.2.7 Interpretation, Information and Park Administration ). There is also a record of Māori artefacts being found within the Godley Valley (Andersen 1916, p39).

It is important that historic sites are identified before any work is undertaken that may affect them. If human bones are uncovered in the Park, work must stop immediately and the Police, the Department and local tākata whenua be notified. Ngāi Tahu has a kōiwi policy that specifically addresses the discovery of human bones.

Authority to modify an archaeological site is currently (2001) required from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. It is a statutory requirement to have consent from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust for any works or actions that will modify an

archaeological site. For example, erecting fence posts within an archaeological site is likely to adversely impact on the site.

**4.1.6(b)** - The Protocol for historic resources acknowledges the importance to Ngāi Tahu of their wāhi tapu, wāhi taonga and other places of historic significance. This Protocol is included in Appendix D. Ngāi Tahu may choose not to disclose, or disclose to a "silent file" system, the location of wāhi tapu sites to preserve the sacredness of these sites. Consultation will provide Ngāi Tahu with the opportunity to address proposed actions which may affect these areas and advise the Department about Ngāi Tahu policies which the Department should follow.

**4.1.6(c)** - The placing of memorials and monuments is not considered to be consistent with the preservation of the Park. Conservation Authority General Policy for National Parks 17.1 is that additional memorials of a monument-type will not be permitted, except where the historical association of the site, individual or event is of exceptional importance. An example of this would be the vesting of Aoraki/Mount Cook by the Crown to Ngāi Tahu and their subsequent gifting to the nation.

Where plaques are added to existing memorials it should be done in such a way and using such materials, so as not to diminish the historic integrity of the original memorial. It is recognised that within the lifetime of this Plan the King Memorial will be filled up with plaques under the method set out below and should further memorial plaques be requested, a site within the Village would be preferable.

**4.1.6(d)** - It is known that the spreading of deceased persons' (climbers and others) ashes within the Park, including within the Aoraki Tōpuni area, does occur. This is offensive to Ngāi Tahu, particularly within the Tōpuni area and where the mauri of waters may be affected (see policy 4.1.3(b)). The issue is difficult to control other than through public education.

**4.1.6(e)** - Conservation Authority policy allows for benefactors of the Park where appropriate to be commemorated by means of plaques on facilities such as huts, shelters, or footbridges.

For display boards and information about historic and archaeological sites, see 4.2.9 Interpretation.

### *Methods*

#### **4.1.6(a)**

**1. Achieve the historic management objectives for specific sites in the Park according to significance and threat as prescribed by the *Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy (2000)* and *Historic Resources Strategy: Canterbury Conservancy (1998)*.**

**2. Liaison will be maintained with The Hermitage owners and subsequent owners of the historic cottages within the Village, to encourage the protection of those buildings. The Department will encourage a full historic record to be made of the generator shed before the building is removed.**

#### **4.1.6(b)**

Consult with tākata whenua and where appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect their values in relation to historic sites. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act mentioned in policy 4.1.6(b).

#### **4.1.6(c)**

1. Additional free-standing memorials will generally not be permitted. Exceptions may be made to cater for persons or events of national or international significance that are strongly associated with the Park.

2. Small memorial plaques commemorating climbers who have died within the Park may be attached to the eastern and northern sides of the base of the 'King Memorial', provided that no more than 25% of the memorial side rock-work is covered. Prior approval from the Area Manager, in accordance with the guidelines in Appendix G, must be obtained. A memorial book will be maintained by the Department at the Visitor Centre for those who have perished within the Park.

#### **4.1.6(d)**

In respect of the spreading of deceased persons' ashes, the Department will work with recreational climbers, mountain guides, the Aircraft User Group (see 4.3.3 Aircraft and Airports) and Ngāi Tahu to provide educational material and:

- actively discourage the practice within the Tōpuni area and in or near waters flowing from that area; and
- encourage people wanting to scatter ashes elsewhere in the Park to consult with tākata whenua as a matter of courtesy.

#### **4.1.6(e)**

Small plaques may, with appropriate consent, be erected on Park facilities to commemorate benefactors strongly associated with the particular facility, or as memorials to people or events strongly associated with the site of the facility. Plaques may also be used, with appropriate consent, to record the history of facilities on a site.

#### **4.1.7 Natural Hazards**

##### *Policy*

##### **4.1.7(a)**

**To manage Park facilities to avoid increasing the threat from natural hazards.**

##### **4.1.7(b)**

**To manage the Park so that, except where public safety or amenities area facilities or State Highway 80 are threatened, nothing will be done which would alter the natural processes of avalanche, debris flow, flooding and erosion.**

##### *Explanation*

Natural hazards, from snow avalanches and floods to debris flows, rock avalanches and erosion, are a distinct possibility throughout the Park at any time of the year. Insensitive development increases the threat from natural hazards and may accelerate erosion processes.

Knowledge is still being gained about natural hazards and the factors affecting them. Greater understanding will allow more informed management decisions to be made about such matters as hut and track siting and the impact of earthworks.

Extensive research has occurred in respect of natural hazards and Aoraki/Mount Cook Village (see 6.1.2 Waterways and Floodways) and *Geotechnical Report No 1...* (1997), Hurley (1996), and McSaveney (1995).

##### *Methods*

##### **4.1.7(a) & (b)**

- 1. Facilities should be located so as to minimise the risk of damage or loss (and thus minimise the risk to public safety) resulting from natural hazards. Research to assist with such decisions is encouraged (see 4.3.11 Research).**
- 2. Existing facilities subject to natural hazards at unacceptable levels will be relocated to safer ground, as resources permit. Where no safer alternative is available the facility may be closed as a temporary measure during times when the risk is considered by the Area Manager to be unacceptably high.**
- 3. On the issues of soil conservation and water management within the Park, as part of the Waitaki catchment, there will be close co-operation with Environment Canterbury on its statutory functions.**
- 4. Except as part of the rehabilitation of disturbance resulting from visitor use (see 4.1.2 Landscape Management), re-vegetation or engineering programmes to prevent or control erosion are not considered to be necessary.**

**5. Earth-moving of eroded or avalanche materials should be permitted in Black Birch and Glencoe Streams and other waterways where facilities, such as water supplies, roads (including State Highway 80), stop banks, buildings and bridges would be threatened by erosion, flood or avalanche events. Earth-moving of eroded or avalanche material is allowed on Park roads and at other facilities that are to be retained for public use and enjoyment. Excavated material will be deposited on sites which, as far as possible, are geologically stable, minimise ecological and visual impacts and will not result in introduced plant spread.**

#### **4.1.8 Fire Control**

##### *Policy*

#### **4.1.8**

**To prevent or extinguish all fires within or threatening the Park, other than those permitted by the National Park Bylaws and that do not constitute a fire hazard.**

##### *Explanation*

Fires, especially during warm dry north-westerly weather, are a major hazard not just for the Park, but also for adjoining land downwind. All fires, whether lit naturally, accidentally or deliberately, can seriously damage the Park environment. Any damaged area will take a long time to recover, as is shown in an area in the Liebig Range affected by fire in 1970. That fire was caused by an unprotected stove setting light to adjoining vegetation.

The lighting of fires is subject to strict controls set out in the Park bylaws (see Appendix A). No "permanently constructed fireplaces" (in terms of bylaw 7) are considered to be necessary in the Park. "Approved cooking equipment" covers portable camping stoves, cookers and burners. During use, the flame should be enclosed and Park bylaws as to location should be observed. Solid fuel barbecues and thermettes are not "approved cooking equipment", because the disposal of the resulting embers can constitute a fire hazard. Users have a responsibility to ensure that any fire does not create a fire hazard.

The overall responsibility for the control and extinguishing of outdoor fires in the Park or within 1km of its boundaries lies with the Department of Conservation under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977. The Department's *Standard Operating Procedure: Fire control, operations, procedures and guidelines* (1999) directs its fire tasks. A fire plan, for use in fire emergencies, is revised annually and details the fire-fighting equipment available and procedures to be followed. See also 6.1.3 Village Fire Control.

Responsibility for the protection of buildings from fire is split according to ownership of the buildings. Government departments are responsible for fire protection inspections and the maintenance of fire equipment in their own buildings. The New Zealand Fire Service and Mackenzie District Council are responsible for fire safety inspections and licensing of concessionaire accommodation buildings.

##### *Methods*

#### **4.1.8**

**Enforce the Park bylaws, and restricted and prohibited fire seasons and respond to all smoke reports.**

**2. Have an ongoing commitment to the education of Park users and co-operation with adjoining land occupiers. Interpretive information, public notices, publicising of bylaws and contact with Park staff will be given priority where possible.**

### ***4.1.9 Boundaries and Land Additions***

#### *Policies*

#### **4.1.9(a)**

**To keep the Park boundaries under continuous review to enable adjustments or additions to be considered that would assist ecosystem protection, public use or land management.**

#### **4.1.9(b)**

**To promote minor adjustments to the Park boundaries to rectify anomalies or to better achieve Park objectives.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.1.9(a)** - Some areas adjoining the Park have been suggested over the years as possible additions. These include the Birch Hill river-flats, the Birch Hill Stream catchment, parts of the Ben Ohau Range, the Tasman riverbed, the southern side of the Liebig Range and the Sibbald Range. The process of Crown pastoral lease tenure review is likely to result in additions to conservation lands from the pastoral leases and unallocated Crown Lands adjoining the National Park. Some of these lands may be suitable for additions to the Park – see Policies 7.1 and 7.3 in *General Policy for National Parks* (1983).

Section 8 National Parks Act 1980 provides for the investigation of proposals for additions to the Park. The criteria for additions come from section 4 (1) of the Act and are that the areas contain such distinctive quality, ecological systems, or natural features so beautiful, unique, or scientifically important that their preservation is in the national interest. The section 8 procedure of public notification and reporting to the New Zealand Conservation Authority is independent of the management plan process and boundary changes are therefore outside the statutory authority of this Plan.

**4.1.9(b)** - The Authority has some discretion in deciding whether or not to invoke the Section 8 procedures before it formulates a recommendation to the Minister of Conservation in terms of Section 7(2) National Parks Act 1980. Its policy is that, while each proposal will be examined on its individual merits, in general, minor boundary adjustments need not be subject to the Section 8 procedures.

An unformed legal road runs through the Godley Valley area of the Park. By revoking the legal road status and applying National Park status, the public right of freedom of entry and access to the Park will be retained, but the same regulation on types and methods of access as on surrounding National Park land will apply. The retention of 4WD access is intended and is addressed in 4.2.4. Roads, Parking Area & Vehicles. The road status change would avoid legal problems of jurisdiction and prevent uncertainty.

For some unknown reason a recreation reserve in three small parts on the Hooker Valley flats was not added to the Park when it was created in 1953.

Part of the Birch Hill river-flats (conservation area H37 018) was removed from the National Park in 1969 for park staff accommodation, but was not used and is no

longer needed for that purpose. It is appropriate to consider returning this conservation area to the Park. The area contains a short section of formed State Highway 75 not on the legal road.

These three areas are considered to fall into the category of adjustments of a tidying-up or anomalous nature. They are areas within the general Park boundaries, but which at present have a different status.

### *Methods*

#### **4.1.9(a)**

**Reports will be prepared for the New Zealand Conservation Authority on the desirability or otherwise, of section 8 National Parks Act investigations of boundary adjustments arising from the Crown pastoral lease tenure review process.**

#### **4.1.9(b)**

**Actions will be taken to:**

- **seek the closure of the legal road in the Godley Valley and to add the land to the Park;**
- **seek the addition of the recreation reserve (conservation units H36 025/026/027) to the Park; and**
- **seek the return of the conservation area (H37 018) to the Park, after first seeking that Transit New Zealand legalises the formed road route in exchange for the unformed legal road.**

#### ***4.1.10 Management of Adverse Effects***

##### *Policy*

#### **4.1.10**

**To ensure that adverse effects of activities and developments carried out within the Park do not prevent the primary objectives in section 2.2.1 of this Plan being achieved.**

##### *Explanation*

**4.1.10** - National parks are established to preserve natural values in perpetuity for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the public. Preservation of these values is a fundamental requirement of the Act. This includes management of the Park by the Department as it undertakes its activities and developments. The Department will manage effects within the Park to ensure that the primary objectives in section 2.2.1 are achieved. Where concessions are involved the relevant provisions of 4.3 Concessions and Other Uses apply.

An assessment of environmental effects appropriate to the scale of the activity should be undertaken prior to any activities or developments commencing in the Park, which are likely to impact on natural, historic, cultural or visitor values. The Department's guidelines for these assessments should be used or other assessments should be endorsed by the Department, e.g. as may be prepared for a Resource Management Act consent application.

The following method provides a general guide where the activity or development is not covered by a specific policy or method in this Plan. The intention of this method is to ensure that the Park is always managed so as to achieve the primary objectives set out in section 2.2.1.

##### *Methods*

#### **4.1.10**

**1. Require that an assessment of environmental effects be undertaken prior to any new activities or developments being considered, using the Department's standards for assessment.**

**2. Assess existing and proposed activities and developments within the Park for potential adverse effects on:**

- **the preservation of the Park's natural, archaeological, cultural and historic values;**
- **the Park's visitor management setting(s);**
- **Park visitors.**

## 4.2 VISITORS

### ***4.2.1 Access within the Park***

This policy deals with the rights of access and the means of controlling access for public recreational activities. Facilities to assist access are dealt with under policy 4.2.3 Recreational Facility Development.

#### *Policies*

#### **4.2.1(a)**

**To foster public access and use of the Park consistent with:**

- 1. the preservation and protection of the Park's scenery, natural features, ecological systems and plant and animal life;**
- 2. the visitor management settings;**
- 3. minimising conflict between different visitor groups;**
- 4. visitor safety.**

#### **4.2.1(b)**

**To apply the visitor management settings, described in 1.3.5.1, within the areas of the Park as shown on Figures 4 and 4A<sup>1</sup> and as described in Appendix J.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.2.1(a)** - National parks are established to preserve natural values in perpetuity for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the public. The public have the right of access to all areas of the Park. It may however, be necessary to manage the method or amount of access to avoid compromising the Park's natural, historic and cultural resources and to maintain the range of visitor experiences, such as the enjoyment, inspiration, solitude or experiencing the natural quiet of an area.

Aspects of the Park's recreational use are significant in a national setting. For example, the Park is the premier alpine climbing area for the country. Special consideration of this long-established and nationally significant activity is required when assessing the effect of any new recreational development proposal.

At all times, the Department must consider the safety of visitors from known hazards and make judgements on what degree of risk is reasonable, given the balance of likely visitor skills, visitor numbers and the visitor experience sought to be provided within each visitor management setting.

Management of access and use may involve limiting numbers to, or closing specific areas of, the Park for certain periods.

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<sup>1</sup> The boundaries of the visitor management settings have been plotted at 1:50,000 scale and can be viewed at this scale at the Aoraki Area and Canterbury Conservancy Offices.

Closing a part of the Park can be legally enforced if need be, but is more likely to occur by seeking visitor co-operation through the use of signs and information (e.g. former Ball Hut road for avalanche danger; Empress Hut during a rock-fall threat).

**4.2.1(b)** - Visitor management settings provide a framework for managing a range of recreational visitor experiences. Managing access within each visitor management setting is one way of helping maintain a range of visitor experience. For example, the Kea Point and Tasman Glacier lookout tracks are maintained to a standard that enables large groups of visitors, who may be inexperienced in the outdoors, to walk up and view the glaciers.

The visitor management settings shown on Figure 4 and as described in Appendix J have been chosen in conformity with *The Recreational Opportunity Spectrum Guideline for Users* (1993), which includes consideration of the existing means of physical access (car/bus, 4 x 4 vehicle, aircraft, foot), existing visitor activities and existing facilities.

The visitor management setting shown along the SH80 alignment does not apply to the State Highway itself – see section 4.4.2 State Highway 80.

### *Methods*

#### **4.2.1(a)**

**Assess proposals for the maintenance, further development or upgrading of Park access, having particular regard to:**

- **any impacts on the Park's natural, historic and cultural resources, including any potential impacts of increased visitor use as a result of the access development or upgrade;**
- **the existing natural character of the specific area in which the maintenance, development or upgrade is proposed;**
- **the appropriateness of the type of access for the visitor management setting within which it is proposed;**
- **the existing use and history of recreation in the area;**
- **any adverse effects on Ngāi Tahu values.**

#### **4.2.1(b)**

- 1. Apply the visitor management settings as in Figures 4 and 4A.**
- 2. Should the former Ball Hut road to Husky Flat cease to be usable, then the "backcountry accessible motorized" setting will change to the "backcountry walk-in" setting.**
- 3. The Godley Valley "remote" visitor management setting area and the whole of the Hooker and Mueller valleys up-valley from the White Horse Hill, will be particularly managed to protect "natural quiet", subject to section 4.3.3, Tables 3 and 4.**

FIG 4: AORAKI/MT COOK VISITOR MANAGEMENT SETTINGS

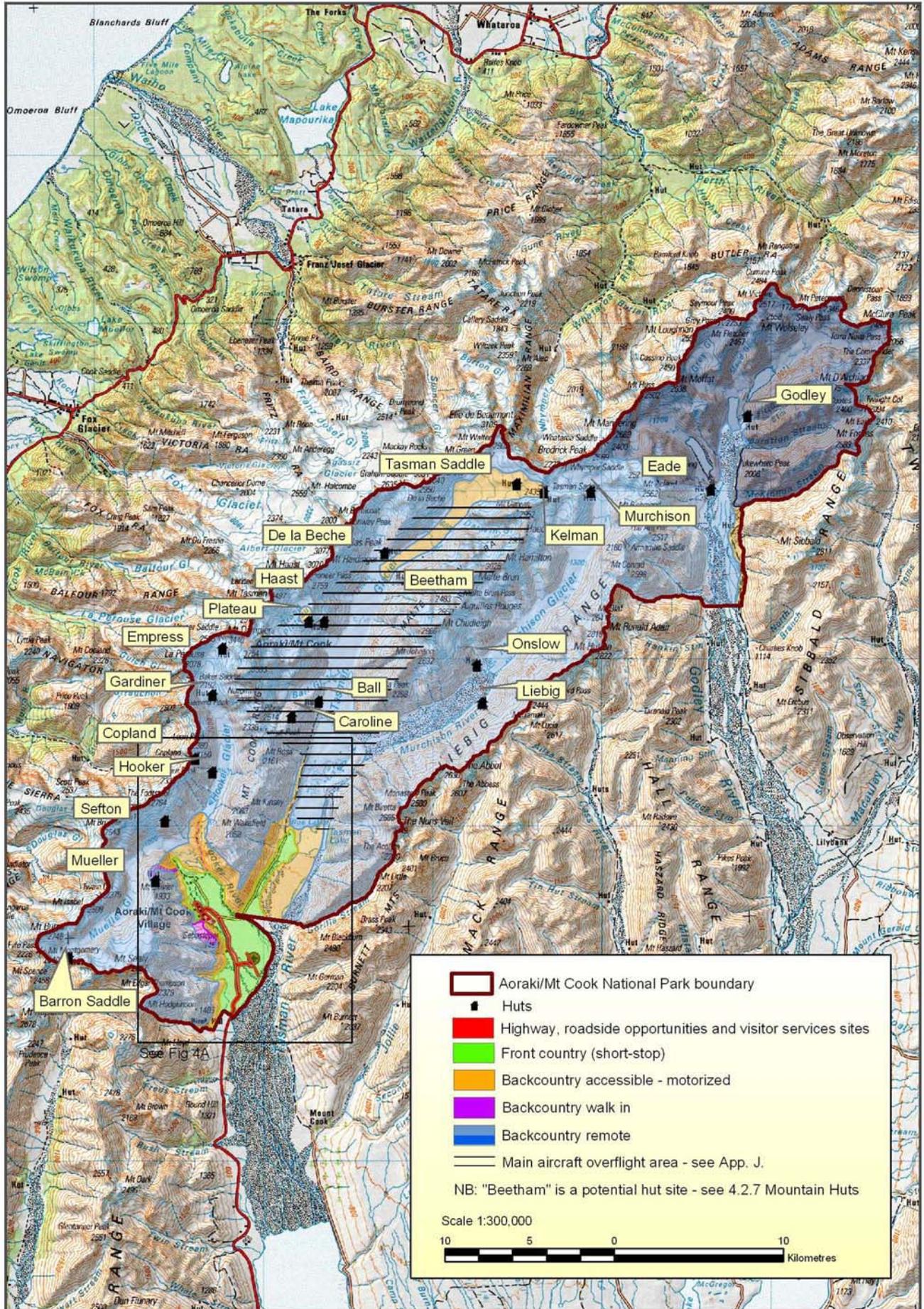
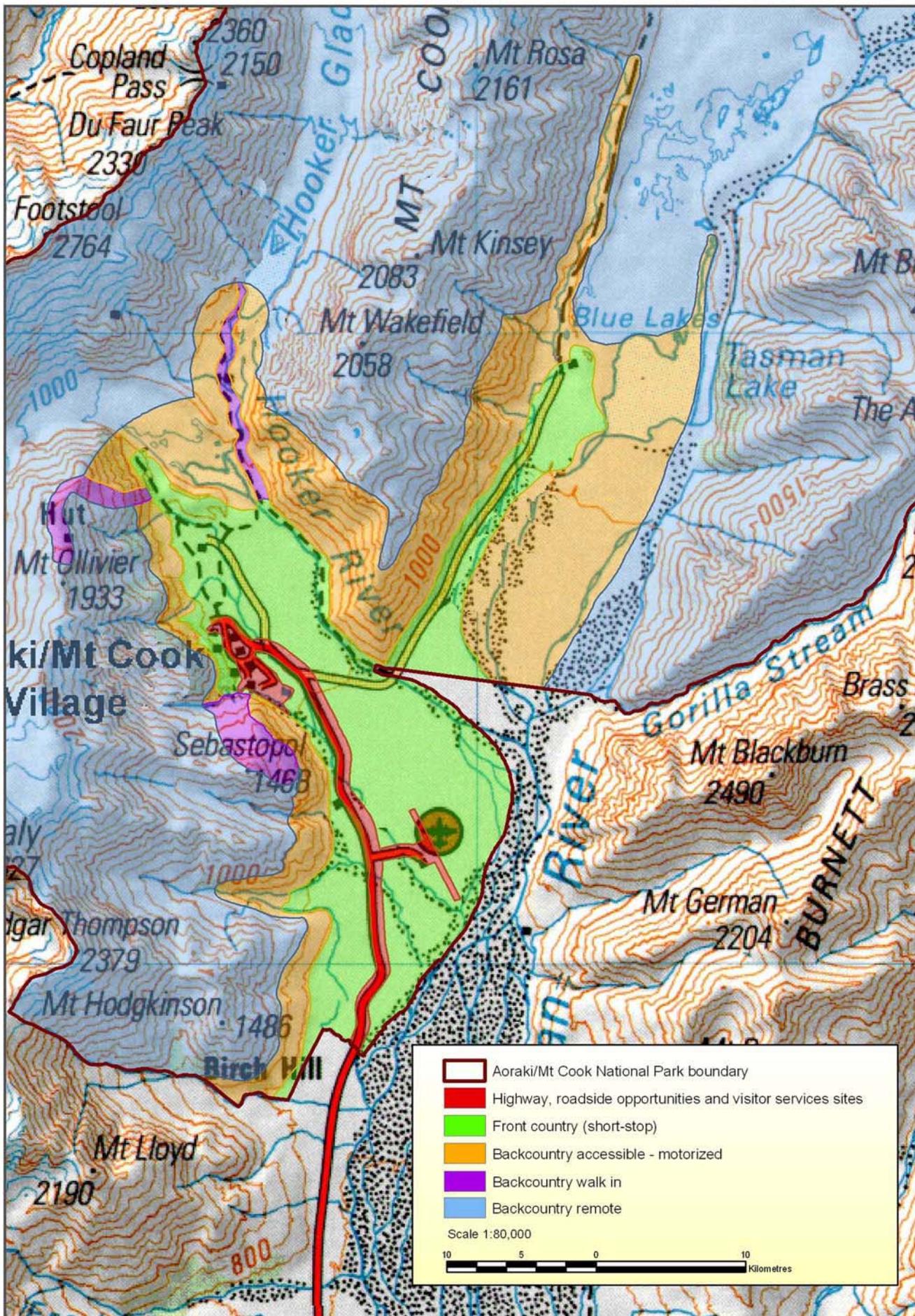


FIG 4A: AORAKI/MT COOK VISITOR MANAGEMENT SETTINGS - DETAIL



### **4.2.2 Recreational Activities**

This policy applies to non-commercial activities. For consideration of commercial activities refer to policy 4.3.2 Concessions General.

#### *Policy*

### **4.2.2**

**To foster recreational activities to the extent that they are consistent with the preservation of the Park and Park bylaws.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.2.2** - Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park offers an attractive setting for a wide range of recreational activities, including climbing, skiing, tramping, hunting and less active pursuits.

- The Park is the premier alpine climbing region in New Zealand and for Australia. While much of the Park is accessible only to properly equipped climbers, lower areas in the Hooker, Tasman and Godley valleys are suitable for tramping and walking. The Mueller Hut and Ball Pass routes are becoming popular for summer high level tramping in suitable conditions, while the Copland Pass route remains as a more difficult trans-alpine crossing.
- Four types of skiing occur in the Park: glacier day skiing with ski-plane positioning; ski mountaineering, often as an adjunct to climbing and sometimes using either ski planes or helicopters for positioning; heliskiing with helicopter positioning; and cross country or Nordic skiing at lower altitudes.
- The Park offers some recreational hunting for thar. While hunters would like to see a trophy quality herd maintained this cannot be a consideration under the provisions of the National Parks Act, as implemented by the Himalayan Thar Control Plan (see 4.1.5 Introduced Animals and Domestic Animals). Strategically placed huts do encourage hunters into seldom-visited areas.
- Game bird numbers fluctuate, and are not considered to be threatening the populations of flora and fauna. There is no tradition of game bird shooting in the Park.
- The predominant boating activity in the Park, as at 2003, is the concessionaire-run activity on the growing pro-glacial lakes at the Tasman and Mueller glacier snouts.
- The Tasman River has been used for guided rafting expeditions, while the Hooker River is a difficult challenge for kayakers. Neither is much used. Because of the high level of suspended sediment in the rivers, they are not ideal for jet boating.

Activities that have an adverse impact on the Park or on its users, will be constrained, controlled or prohibited as appropriate and necessary for the management of the Park.

Where it is considered necessary to regulate the conduct of the public in order to protect the Park's natural and historic values, bylaws should be developed and recommended to the Minister.

It is possible that the potential adverse effects of an activity will not be known until some time after it has commenced. If adverse effects are not known and the activity appears to be consistent with the policies and objectives of this plan and where no satisfactory information on the activity can be found from the users or other New Zealand or overseas sources, then a precautionary approach should be taken.

A monitoring programme should be established before or as soon as a new activity commences, the results recorded and analysed. If the adverse effects are found to be unacceptable and cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated, the Department should then recommend to the Minister that the activity be controlled or prohibited through Park bylaws.

When boats, canoes and rafts are floating on the water, they will be subject to the Resource Management Act 1991, as administered by the Mackenzie District Council. The Maritime Safety Authority has a role in respect of watercraft safety.

### *Method*

#### **4.2.2**

**Monitor and assess the likely cultural, physical and social adverse effects of an activity having particular regard to:**

- **the management objectives set out in section 2.2 of this plan;**
- **the appropriateness of the activity for the visitor management setting(s) within which it is proposed to be undertaken;**
- **any adverse effects on Ngāi Tahu values;**
- **the extent of opportunities for the activity to be undertaken outside of the Park;**
- **any known effects of the activity where it has previously been undertaken;**
- **consistency with relevant legislation and the Park Bylaws.**

### **4.2.3 Visitor Facility Management**

#### *Policies*

#### **4.2.3(a)**

**To provide a range of facilities that enables visitors to experience and appreciate the natural and historic features and cultural values of the Park.**

#### **4.2.3(b)**

**To consider visitor facility proposals within the Park where they are consistent with the visitor management setting(s) in which the facility is to be located and with the objectives and policies of this plan.**

#### **4.2.3(c)**

**To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu, as expressed in the Deed of Recognition for Aoraki.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.2.3(a)** - The management of facilities within the Canterbury Conservancy is directed by the Department's national visitor assets and recreational opportunities programmes, the *Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy* (2000) and other Departmental strategies. This ensures that the Department focuses its resources on the national provision of recreational facilities, rather than simply focusing on one area. Community consultation and community involvement in management are part of the Department's process.

Facilities may be provided, where they are consistent with the visitor management setting, to enhance the visitor experience and to protect the Park's natural values. For example, the Kea Point track and lookout upgrade has provided visitors with easy access to an impressive vantage point for viewing the Mueller Glacier and Hooker Valley. The high standard track and viewing deck also prevents visitors from trampling vegetation and creating new tracks in an otherwise natural environment.

Options for future management of the Hooker Valley track were debated through the draft plan and the resulting submissions. For the life of this Plan the following management of the track will occur:

- ongoing visitor number and visitor perceptions monitoring;
- maintain track to Mueller Lake viewpoint to "short walk" standard and from thereon, to "walking track" standard, recognising a constriction at the bluffs leading to and at the second swing bridge. Occasional lay-bys will assist larger groups to pause and to pass other visitors;
- remove the Stocking Stream shelter and toilets and locate improved facilities near, but discrete from, Hooker Lake (see 4.2.6 Camping, Picnicking and Shelters), incorporating the historic Hooker Hut as a day shelter only;
- consider a one-way loop track between the second swing bridge and Hooker Lake, subject to seasonal avalanche path safety and visitor number pressures.

Any such loop will swing to the west of the existing track, not east over the Hooker River;

- maintain other track options to reduce pressure on the Hooker Valley but recognise that the Hooker experience is unique and will continue to attract high use;
- apply greater control to bus-load visitors. Party size should not exceed 15 persons; encourage the spread of visitors throughout the day and consider a limited number of concessionaire operators and all parties booking through them.

**4.2.3(b)** - The visitor management settings defined in section 1.3.5.1 provide a framework against which the appropriateness of proposed new or upgraded facilities can be assessed. It is important that a facility is not developed which is out of character with the visitor management setting(s). In particular there is a need to be wary of over-development within each visitor management setting - for example at Plateau and Tasman Saddle/Kelman huts.

The need for new or upgraded facilities in the Park must be clearly demonstrated. Consideration must be given to the possible adverse effects of the development on the Park's natural, historic and cultural values. Development should be permitted only where the statutory criteria are met and such development is consistent with the primary objective in section 2.2.

In some cases facilities may be needed to minimise adverse visitor-to-visitor impacts.

Careful consideration of other relevant policies in this Plan will enable an informed decision to be made as to the appropriateness of the development and whether specific conditions need to be set to avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects. For example, the location of a new alpine hut in the "backcountry walk-in" setting would generally be consistent with that visitor management setting, but a full containment toilet system may be a condition on that development, in accordance with the policy on waste management. This acknowledges the significance of waters within the Park to Ngāi Tahu. It is important that the Plan is considered as a whole.

**4.2.3(c)** - The Deed of Recognition for Aoraki, under sections 212 – 213 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, applies here. The Director-General is required to provide relevant information and consult with Ngāi Tahu and have particular regard to their views in relation to the location, construction and relocation of any structures, huts, signs and tracks within the Tōpuni area.

### *Methods*

#### **4.2.3(b)**

**Assess proposals for visitor facility development within the Park having particular regard to:**

- **the impacts of the development on the Park's natural, historic and cultural resources;**
- **potential impacts of any increased visitor use as a result of the development;**

- the existing natural features of the specific area in which the facility development is proposed;
- the effect upon visitors' experience;
- the appropriateness of the facility development for the visitor management setting within which it is proposed;
- the availability of similar facilities outside the Park;
- the objectives and other policies of this Plan.

#### 4.2.3(c)

The Department will consult with tākata whenua, and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values, in relation to the location, construction and relocation of any structures, huts, signs and tracks within the Tōpuni area. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters, both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act as mentioned in policy 4.2.3(c).

#### ***4.2.4 Roads, Parking Areas and Vehicles***

##### *Policies*

##### **4.2.4(a)**

To maintain and where appropriate improve, existing formed roads, parking areas and associated signposts, where this is environmentally and physically feasible.

##### **4.2.4(b)**

Vehicles should not be permitted to move off a formed road except:

- in emergency or search and rescue situations, or
- for Park management purposes, approved research, or to service concessionaire facilities or public utilities, as provided for in a concession, only where no reasonable alternative access is available, or
- to follow a 4WD vehicle track in the Godley Valley to a defined vehicle end-point at Separation Stream, or
- to follow a 4WD vehicle track in the Tasman Valley from the Blue Lakes carpark to Husky Flat, until such time as the track is closed due to natural events, or
- as otherwise provided for by the Park Bylaws.

##### **4.2.4(c)**

To remove formed roads and 4WD vehicle tracks that cease to serve any relevant purpose or which become unsafe and return the land to as near to a natural a state as possible.

##### *Explanation*

See Figures 3 and 4 for localities.

**4.2.4(a)** - This policy only applies to roads and parking areas constructed on National Park land. They do not apply to State Highway 80, which is legal road under separate jurisdiction or to the legal road through the Park in the Godley Valley (see 4.1.9 Boundaries and Land Additions).

The Park Bylaws (see Appendix A) prohibit the driving of vehicles in the Park, except:

- on formed roads, including vehicle tracks;
- in appropriated camping sites (see 4.3.6 Camping, Picnicking and Shelters);
- in appropriated parking places;
- as authorised in a concession;
- in an emergency, or

- where the Director-General of Conservation considers it necessary for the proper and beneficial management, administration and control of the Park.

While the definition of "road" in the Bylaws includes "tracks formed for the use of vehicles", it is useful for the purposes of this management plan to distinguish two types of road. "Formed roads" are sign-posted and regularly maintained; "4WD vehicle tracks" are rough vehicle tracks in the Hooker, Tasman and Godley valleys that are not maintained by the Department (see (b) and (c) below).

Existing "formed roads" (at 2001) are:

- Tasman Valley Road (as far as Blue Lakes);
- Hooker Valley Road to White Horse Hill campground;
- Aoraki/Mount Cook Airport access road;
- all roads within the Village;
- short feeder roads to parking, picnicking and gravel extraction areas.

Given the terrain of the Park, these formed roads are considered to be sufficient and there is no intention at this stage that others will be developed or park vehicle tracks upgraded. They will be kept open as often as practicable. Experience on the Tasman Valley Road has shown that roads closed by erosion may not be able to be reopened immediately or may have to be closed permanently, because it is impractical to reopen them. Funding for the Tasman Valley Road is from Transfund as a "special purposes road".

Existing parking places (at 2004) are located at Foliage Hill/White Horse Hill, Aoraki/Mount Cook Airport, Hooker Corner and Blue Lakes. Additional parking areas may be required to service day visitor facilities, (see 4.2.6 Camping, Picnicking and Shelters) in line with providing for an increase in day visitor numbers.

The restrictions on new roads and parking areas and on vehicle use cannot be absolute, as new facilities or concessions, including for road metal excavation, may be approved and require access. New roads require the consent of the Minister under section 55(2) of the National Parks Act.

Formed roads are roads for the purposes of the Land Transport Act 1998 and the provisions of that Act apply.

For the use of gravel, shingle, stone or other material in the construction and maintenance of formed roads and State Highway 80, see 4.3.7 Mining and Shingle/Rock Removal.

**4.2.4(b)** - Off-road vehicle use should be kept to a minimum to preserve the natural state of the Park. Apart from the impact on vegetation, a particular concern is ground nesting birds on the river flats.

A developing problem is 4WD vehicles not keeping to the roughly tracked route up the Godley Valley to Separation Stream. In the absence of a survey it is not possible to determine if this route is on National Park land or on legal road. This creates administrative difficulties, particularly if an offence under the National Parks Act or Park bylaws is being committed, and in controlling vehicles and other activities beyond or along the vehicle route, where those activities are clearly contrary to the adjoining National Park management.

The use of vehicles in the Park beyond Separation Stream, where there is no legal road, and/or environmental damage by such vehicles, is contrary to the National Parks Act, the General Policy for National Parks and the Park bylaws.

The Tasman Valley vehicle track from the Blue Lakes carpark to Husky Flat, while currently usable by car in part and 4WD in total, is vulnerable to natural flooding, avalanche, rock fall and moraine wall slumping. It is inevitable that the track will become less usable as these natural events occur, unless maintenance or reconstruction by heavy machinery is undertaken. Natural forces should largely be left to occur along this vehicle track and only minimal maintenance be carried out. This is the same management as is occurring with the adverse effects of natural forces on huts and tracks in the Park, in connection with their maintenance, relocation or removal.

**4.2.4(c)** - 4WD vehicle tracks into Hoophorn Stream valley and beside Black Birch Stream were formed for SH80 purposes in the past. Their continued existence, in association with the public right to use them provided by the bylaws, causes problems for management, which can best be resolved by land rehabilitation to 'remove' the tracks. Access will however be retained, so that Transit New Zealand can undertake, with the necessary approvals, river protection works as necessary to protect the SH80 access into the Park.

#### *Methods*

##### **4.2.4(a)**

- 1. Formed roads will as far as practicable be maintained to all-weather standards, consistent with the visitor management setting.**
- 2. As the avalanche danger on the Tasman Valley Road beyond Hooker Corner can be unacceptably high, this road or parts of it, may be closed to traffic as a safety measure on a seasonal or temporary basis.**
- 3. Existing parking places will be formalised in terms of the National Parks Act 1980. New parking places will also be formalised, to allow for vehicle use in accordance with the Park Bylaws. Parking places will be designed, constructed and maintained to be environmentally attractive to visitors and to encourage use. Rehabilitation measures will be applied to substandard existing areas, and to newly developed areas (see 4.1.2 Landscape Management).**
- 4. Through liaison with Transfund New Zealand, the Department will also seek the ongoing retention of the "special purposes road" funding for the Tasman Valley Road.**

##### **4.2.4(b)**

- 1. To stop the legal road up the Godley Valley from the National Park boundary so that it can be added to the National Park (see 4.1.9 Boundaries and Land Additions), thus bringing all land under a single administrative authority.**
- 2. Allow the continued use of 4WD vehicles on a defined access route as far as Separation Stream. Seek, in consultation with relevant visitor groups, to**

**find a solution that avoids vehicle use away from a defined access route (4WD vehicle track) and avoids, remedies or mitigates any damage to vegetation or ground-nesting birds.**

**3. To allow the maintenance of the Tasman Valley vehicle track from the Blue Lakes carpark onward, only where:**

- the use of heavy machinery is not required;**
- no indigenous vegetation is affected;**
- the remains of the Ball Hut old road and horse track are not affected.**

### **4.2.5 Climbing Impacts**

Climbing generally, is fostered by policy 4.2.2 Recreational Activities.

#### *Policies*

#### **4.2.5(a)**

**To recognise the tradition of climbing in the Park and to work with the climbing fraternity to maintain or achieve the respectful use of the mountains, the available facilities and the National Park generally.**

#### **4.2.5(b)**

**To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu, as expressed in the Tōpuni for Aoraki/Mount Cook.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.2.5(a)** - Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park has a long tradition of climbing and it remains a major activity over most of the Park. The climbing community has contributed much to the Park (e.g. see 4.2.7 Huts) and, along with trampers, to national park and protected area principles and management generally.

Often unwittingly however, climbers are having an impact on the natural, recreational and Ngai Tahu cultural values of the Park. The issues of particular concern are bolting, bodily human waste disposal and Aoraki/Mount Cook summit climbing.

Climbers also have an involvement with memorials, the spreading of deceased persons' ashes in the Park and deaths. These issues are covered in 4.1.6 Historic Resources and Memorials and 4.2.8 Visitor Safety and Emergency Services respectively.

#### Bolting and other 'protection'

Climbing involves the use of some form of 'protection' to safeguard climbers should they fall. Bolts are sometimes used as permanent anchors in rock on extreme routes or are used at some abseil points. Bolting involves hammering or power-drilling a hole that will take an anchor point that climbers can pass a rope through or "tie off" to. Bolt use is common in the Park and widespread on the Sebastopol Bluffs where defined climbing routes have regularly used bolts. Old and/or unsafe bolts can usually be removed or punched in and grouted over.

Some climbers and others have raised ethical questions about the use of bolts *per se* and specifically about their use in Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. A 'rule' that is accepted by some is that if a route was first climbed without bolts then they should not be later used. The development of new climbing aids may reduce the need for bolting.

Some of the debate regarding bolting also applies to other forms of protection, such as pitons which, driven into existing cracks in the rock, may also be left as 'permanent' anchors. Bolts, however, have a more intrusive effect, as they do require a physical modification, by drilling, of the National Park.

The issue is in part, whether bolt-dependent climbing is an appropriate activity within the Park and in part, whether bolting is just another form of visitor facility that is provided by visitors. Any detracting from the Park's intrinsic worth, the primary objective of this plan, needs to be considered.

In law the specific approval of the Department is required for bolting (and for permanent pitons), but has seldom been sought or given. The Department has a responsibility under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1962 to take action to ensure there is no reasonable cause of risk to potential users of the bolts. To this end, the existing bolted areas on the Sebastopol Bluffs are currently inspected annually and signposted to warn of potential use risk. Other notification is provided through avenues such as club magazines.

The use of bolts is promoted by some climbers as a better alternative to the cumulative effect of numerous abandoned abseil slings. This may be so, but equally climbers should be removing abandoned slings if they themselves need to leave their own slings, under the "pack-it-in, pack-it-out" policy for backcountry areas (see 4.2.10 Waste Disposal and Park by-law 4(a) in Appendix A).

If bolting is to be used by climbers then the Department would rather this was done under a code of practice that also addressed other forms of permanent protection and abandoned sling removal. Should the use of climbing bolts or other forms of protection within the Park become unacceptable to the preservation of the Park's natural and historic values, or to the protection of Ngāi Tahu values within the Tōpuni, then a Park bylaw will be required to control the activity.

#### Human Wastes Disposal

The Department will seek the support of climbers for a personal pack-it-out policy for human wastes (see 4.2.10 Waste Disposal).

#### Aoraki/Mount Cook summit climbing

For Ngāi Tahu, climbers standing upon the very top of Aoraki, the head of Aoraki the ancestral tipuna, denigrates its tapu status (see 1.3.2.1 Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni). By informal agreement, aided it must be said by currently unstable summit geology, climbers have in recent years been generally respectful of the wishes of Ngāi Tahu. The Department wishes this respect to continue.

This issue also applies to other ancestral tipuna summits (see 1.3.2.1 Aoraki/Mount Cook and Tōpuni) and to the waters flowing from them, but these other summits and waters do not have the legal recognition of the Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni (see 4.2.5(b) below).

**4.2.5(b)** - The Actions by the Director-General (see Appendix B), pursuant to clause 12.5.10 of the *Deed of Settlement* 1997, apply here. The Director-General is required to encourage respect for the association of Ngāi Tahu with Aoraki, the relevant actions being to provide educational material to climbers regarding Aoraki, to encourage the removal of rubbish and wastes and to review the conditions to be applied to new concessions.

The Ngāi Tahu values for Aoraki and the Tōpuni area are set out in 1.3.2.1 Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni. Alongside Ngāi Tahu there is a growing international movement by indigenous peoples to expect more respectful use of their sacred

mountains (e.g Uluru in Australia, Denali in Alaska, and Sagamartha/Chomolunga in Nepal/Tibet) by climbers and other visitors.

### *Methods*

#### **4.2.5(a)**

**1. In respect of bolting the Department will:**

- **develop a Code of Practice for bolting, other protection and sling removal within the Park in conjunction with the climbing fraternity;**
- **monitor, in conjunction with climbers, the use and safety of bolts on the Sebastopol Bluffs;**
- **in conjunction with climbers remove any unsafe or inappropriately placed bolts or other 'protection'.**

**2. In respect of human wastes see 4.2.10 Waste Disposal.**

**3. In respect of summit climbing on Aoraki/Mount Cook the Department will work with recreational climbers and mountain guides and provide educational material to encourage respectful use of the mountain. New guiding concessions will include conditions requiring clients are provided with this educational material.**

#### **4.2.5(b)**

**The Department will consult with tākata whenua, and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values, in relation to climbing within the Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni area. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters, both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act as mentioned in policy 4.2.5(b).**

## ***4.2.6 Camping, Picnicking and Shelters***

### *Policies*

#### **4.2.6(a)**

To provide for camping in the Park, in accordance with the Park bylaws, except within areas where camping must be prohibited to avoid the deterioration of the Park's natural, historic and cultural resources or within the Aoraki/Mount Cook Village.

#### **4.2.6(b)**

To allow for the development of picnic areas, shelters and short-stop lookouts and associated car parks, within the following visitor management settings - "front-country" and "highways, roadside opportunities and visitor service sites", to the extent that they are consistent with the preservation of the Park and the other objectives and policies of this plan.

#### **4.2.6(c)**

To make all camping sites available to the public on a first-come first-served basis unless pressure from high visitor use requires a booking or other management system to be established.

### *Explanation*

**4.2.6(a)** - Camping in the Park away from formed roads, either in tents, rock bivouacs, snow caves or in the open, is an accepted part of recreation activities. The Park Bylaws (see Appendix A) require that all areas on which camping occurs be left clean and tidy after use.

Camping (which includes staying overnight within vehicles, as defined in the bylaws interpretation) needs to be managed in order to avoid conflict with Park values and other activities. Park Bylaw 5 prohibits camping within 200 metres of a formed road, unless the Department has given prior permission.

The Department intends to concentrate roadside camping into a single part of the Park at White Horse Hill, where natural shelter exists, the terrain is suitable and simple facilities can be provided. The provision of such facilities (toilets, rubbish collection and a cooking shelter with water) in the camping site is consistent with the area's front-country visitor management setting and recognises the limited seasonal nature of the site's use. The Department may contract out the management of this camping site and will consider providing coin-operated gas-heated showers.

Campers seeking a wider range of facilities will be encouraged to use motor camps outside the Park.

Bylaw 5 also requires that, without the consent of the Department, no person may camp in the Park for more than 14 consecutive days.

Bylaw 5A prohibits camping within 500 metres either side of the "Mount Cook/Westland Alpine track" (the Copland Pass route), within 100 metres radius of any hut, or in an emergency shelter. This bylaw provision can be over-ridden if any part of the area is appropriated (see Bylaw 2, "Camping site") as a camping site

under the National Parks Act, or the place is an emergency shelter and camping in the shelter is in an emergency.

Camping (including within vehicles) will not generally be permitted within the Aoraki/Mount Cook Village due to the lack of suitable sites and the desire to avoid the mixing of front-country camping activity with the intensive Village developments. Exceptions are allowed for safety reasons – see 6.2.2 Vehicle Access. In addition there may be occasions when, to avoid the deterioration of natural areas or visitor experiences by overuse, specified areas are closed to all camping and snow-caving by applying Park Bylaw 5A. This may be necessary around Mueller and Plateau huts where, as at 2003, considerable camping does occur, in and around Copland Shelter and in the lower Hooker Valley, although generally, camping beside Park huts is currently not a significant issue.

The camping situation near Mueller Hut may be dealt with by the combination of a new hut (see 4.2.7 Mountain Huts) and its provision of toilets and water supply facilities designed to also service nearby camping.

Where campers use hut facilities then the Department is justified in charging for a proportion of the relevant hut fee.

**4.2.6(b)** - Picnicking and short-stop visitor attractions and associated car parks are appropriate within the “front-country” and “highways, roadside opportunities and visitor service sites” visitor management settings. Day visitor numbers are increasing and special attention will have to be paid to their needs. Additional facilities for day visitors are likely to be required (see 4.2.3 Recreational Facility Development), the majority of which can be provided in the Village (see 6.2.4 Open Space).

Shelters and toilets are located (as at 2004) at:

- White Horse Hill campground;
- Stocking Stream on the Hooker Valley track;
- Tasman Valley Road - Blue Lakes carpark;
- within the Village (shelter also includes a shower).

Toilets are also available at commercial facilities and the Visitor Centre in the Village. Some toilets may be closed during winter months due to the water supply freezing.

New provisions for picnicking may be developed as necessary. In general terms, such new areas are likely to be associated with the Tasman or Hooker valley roads (see 4.2.4 Roads, Parking Areas and Vehicles). They should be sited so as not to intrude upon the open landscape of the Tasman Valley.

**4.2.6(c)** - The Department is (in 2003) considering the redesign of the White Horse Hill facilities' area to provide better separation of the camping area from day-visitor car parking and of tent sites from campervan sites as well as increased camping sites, the amalgamation of camping facilities into a single building and improvements to the sewerage system.

It is inevitable that these improvements will draw more visitors and that in time, visitor demand will outstrip supply. In this event a booking or other management system may be required, as for similar campgrounds in other national parks.

### *Methods*

#### **4.2.6(a)**

- 1. Designate the existing camping site at White Horse Hill, through appropriate signage, as a camping area and allow for associated vehicle use, in accordance with The Mount Cook National Park Bylaws 1981.**
- 2. Designate camping sites around Mueller and Plateau huts and Ball Shelter and any other huts as necessary, in accordance with the Park bylaws.**
- 3. Apply the camping prohibitions within The Mount Cook National Park Bylaws 1981 when camping is causing unacceptable adverse effects near huts or near the Copland Pass route (the "Mount Cook/Westland Alpine Track") and alongside formed roads.**
- 4. The Caroline Hut public shelter is deemed to be an overnight emergency shelter in respect of Bylaw 5A(2)(b) and camping in the shelter is not allowed except in emergencies.**
- 5. A camping site with toilets will be established to service the Hooker Valley side of the Ball Pass crossing and, if necessary, a bylaw amendment will be sought to control camping in the east Hooker away from this provided site. Note policy and method 4.2.3(c).**
- 6. Where campers use hut facilities a proportion of hut fees, as a camping fee, will be charged.**
- 7. Seek a bylaw amendment to allow charging for the use of facilities at camping sites.**

#### **4.2.6(b)**

- 1. Provide picnic areas, shelters and short-stop lookouts and associated car parks, in accordance with policy 4.2.3 Recreation Facility Development.**
- 2. Establish a day-shelter, incorporating the historic Hooker Hut, near Hooker Lake, to replace the Stocking Stream shelter (see Explanation 4.2.7(a)).**

## **4.2.7 Mountain Huts**

### *Policies*

#### **4.2.7(a)**

To make all Park huts<sup>1</sup> available to the public on a first-come first-served basis, unless pressure from high visitor use requires a booking or other management system to be established.

#### **4.2.7(b)**

To permit additional hut sites only in exceptional circumstances, that may include, but not be limited to:

- (i) an existing hut site becoming unsafe for any reason and requiring relocation to a new site;
- (ii) a temporary requirement for a hut for Park management purposes, authorised by the Department.

In all cases, Park huts will meet the Department's hut standards, fee structure and be consistent with the design principles for new and existing buildings.

#### **4.2.7(c)**

To locate only one hut (which may comprise linked buildings) at any one hut site, unless in accordance with policy 4.2.7(b)(ii).

#### **4.2.7(d)**

To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu as expressed in the Tōpuni and Deed of Recognition for Aoraki.

### *Explanation*

**4.2.7(a)** - It is important that all Park huts continue to be accessible to the public on a first-come/first-served basis where possible, with no exclusive-use group and that any required booking system favours continued public use.

Monitoring of Park hut usage within the Park over the past twenty years shows total bed-night usage by climbers to be steady or even declining, although there are year-to-year, seasonal and hut-by-hut variations – see Appendix I. The Visitor Centre has a Park hut occupancy display and advice service that works reasonably well to avoid overcrowding in the climbing huts.

Conversely the Mueller Hut capacity is exceeded on occasions during the peak season by the predominant tramper/back-packer visitor use. This use will likely increase, along with guided concessionaire use, especially to the new and enlarged hut. A full booking system or other suitable management techniques may be required, if visitor experiences are diminished at this locality in the future (see 4.3.4 Guiding).

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Park huts” means the public and club huts managed by the Department.

Bylaw 6 of *The Mount Cook National Park Bylaws* 1981 states that, except in an emergency, no person shall use any one hut for more than seven successive nights without prior consent of the Department. This allows climbers to stay as close to their intended climb as possible.

Section 1.3.5.1 of this plan sets out guidelines for the use of Park huts by concessionaires. Where a concessionaire is seeking to use a hut, policy 4.3.2 Concessions General shall apply.

As shown on Figure 4 Park huts include (ownership in brackets):

- Ball Shelter (DOC)#
- Barron Saddle (DOC)
- Copland Shelter (DOC)
- De La Beche (NZ Alpine Club)
- Eade (NZ Deerstalkers Association)
- Empress (DOC)#
- Gardiner (DOC)#
- Godley (NZ Alpine Club)
- Haast (DOC)
- Hooker (DOC)
- Kelman(DOC)
- Liebig (DOC)
- Mueller (DOC)
- Murchison (NZ Alpine Club)
- Onslow (Steffan Memorial) (NZ Deerstalkers Association)
- Plateau (DOC)<sup>#</sup> - replacement intended 2003/04
- Sefton Bivouac (DOC)
- Tasman Saddle (DOC)

Hut sites in terms of policies 4.2.7(b) and (c) are also recognised in the general vicinity of the Beetham Valley and to serve the eastern side of the Copland Pass crossing. A Department-built hut at the Beetham site is not a high Department priority, but support will be given to a non-Department project, subject to policy 4.2.7(a).

Public and club members have equal access to all the above huts, with hut fees going to the clubs as per a management agreement with the Department.

Additional to the huts listed above is the concessionaire-use-only Caroline Hut on the Ball Ridge. It is an exception to the Park huts policy 4.2.7(a) under the hut's current concession. This hut has an attached public day-shelter, but overnight sleeping accommodation is allowed only in emergencies (see 4.2.6(a)). A public toilet is provided.

The increased popularity of the Ball Pass route is leading to some tension between guided party use and public use of the Caroline Hut shelter (and of the route). This is not surprising given the close proximity of concessionaire and public facilities. Tākata whenua have also expressed concern about the hut being located within the 1998-decreed Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni. The current concession expires in 2005, but has provision for one 15-year right of renewal. See also 4.2.6(a).

**4.2.7(b)** - The above Park huts and bivouacs have been developed over the years by mountain and hunting clubs and by public agencies and this varied tradition is

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<sup>#</sup> These huts, and Caroline Hut, are within the Aoraki Tōpuni area (see 4.2.7(d)).

welcomed. They serve as shelter during adverse weather, as starting points for pass crossings and as bases for climbing or hunting activities. The Department provides the majority of park huts. The provision and any review<sup>1</sup> of these huts is guided through the Department's national visitor assets and recreational opportunities programmes. Working through these hut management issues with hut user groups is an essential and ongoing part of these programmes.

In deciding on the location of huts the most significant limiting factor is the lack of sites which are at minimal risk from avalanche hazard or geological instability. The availability of resources from the Department and elsewhere for construction, maintenance and servicing (see 4.2.10 Waste Disposal) is also a limiting factor.

Although it is recognised that huts play an important role in the provision of recreational opportunities and the safety of Park visitors, they are modifications of an otherwise unmodified environment. In general, huts will not be located in visually or environmentally sensitive areas. They should be restricted in size, consistent with the experience characteristics of the visitor management settings.

Applications for the provision of new huts in the Park may be considered on their merits but should be permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

The future of Hooker Hut was debated through the draft plan submissions, both on its own merits and within the wider context of Copland and Ball Pass crossings and Hooker Valley visitor use. Several clear directions emerged from this debate:

- A hut is required to service the Hooker Valley side of the Copland Pass crossing and in the interim at least, this will be the existing Copland Shelter, upgraded to hut status and with toilet facilities.
- Additional public facilities are needed to serve the Ball Pass crossing. These will be designated camping areas with toilet facilities in the east Hooker and at the Ball Shelter site (moved slightly to a stable area). Existing public toilets, day-shelter and emergency overnight shelter remain at Caroline Hut.
- Relocation of Hooker Hut to a site at the base of 'Copland Spur' is not viable on avalanche safety grounds due to the hut's design. A specially designed hut could withstand the predicted avalanche forces, but there is uncertainty on future moraine wall access. This may change in the longer term with moraine wall recession.
- A hut in the east Hooker would be too close to the road-end and would rapidly become an overcrowded destination in itself, rather than serving the Ball Pass crossing.
- The new Mueller Hut and associated camping has largely replaced the trumper/back-packer function that Hooker Hut used to serve, although with a larger capacity, more dramatic setting and longer access to heighten the visitor experience and reduce the adverse effects associated with a hut too near a road-end.
- Moving Hooker Hut out of the Hooker Valley, even out of the Park, would break the historical association between the hut and valley.
- Stocking Stream shelter and toilets in the lower Hooker Valley need replacing and new facilities will be placed nearer Hooker Lake, but discrete from the track and lakeside. Hooker Hut will become part of this day-shelter facility.

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<sup>1</sup> "review" includes any renewal, relocation, extension, or removal proposal.

**4.2.7(c)** - As identified above, Park huts are modifications of an otherwise unmodified environment. It is important that clusters of huts are avoided so that modification is kept to the minimum necessary to provide for the visitor experience.

The combined effect of policies 4.2.7(a), (b) and (c), given the hut usage patterns identified in 4.2.7(a), is that there are unlikely to be any additional huts in the Park, other than renewals and possible huts in the Beetham and Hooker localities. Concessionaire-use-only huts, such as Caroline Hut, would not comply with the policies of this section of the Plan.

The issue of camping around huts is covered in 4.2.6 Camping, Picnicking and Shelters.

**4.2.7(d)** – The actions required by the Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni and the Deed of Recognition for Aoraki/Mount Cook, apply here. The Director-General is required to provide relevant information and consult with Ngāi Tahu and have particular regard to their views, in relation to the location, construction and relocation of any huts and in relation to conditions to be applied to new concessions, within the Tōpuni area. This includes the five huts listed in Explanation 4.2.7(a) above.

#### *Methods*

#### **4.2.7(a) & (b)**

- 1. Where hut overcrowding may cause or is causing unacceptable diminished experiences for visitors, the Department will continue its hut occupancy advice service. Where an enforceable booking system is required, the Department will recommend to the Minister that appropriate changes be made to the Park Bylaws and a booking system implemented.**
- 2. Continue working with the New Zealand Alpine Club and New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association and other hut users through the visitor assets and recreational opportunities programmes.**
- 3. At the time of the Caroline Hut concession renewal assessment in 2005 the Minister will re-assess the concession in terms of the Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni. Any re-assessment of the concession in terms of the wider objectives and policies of this management plan may not be able to be addressed until the concession's expiry in 2020.**
- 4. Upgrade Copland Shelter to hut status as an interim hut at least, to service the Hooker Valley side of the Copland Pass crossing.**

#### **4.2.7(d)**

The Department will consult with tākata whenua and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values, in relation to the location, construction and relocation of any huts and the review of hut concession conditions, within the Tōpuni area. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act as mentioned in policy 4.2.7(d).

## ***4.2.8 Visitor Safety and Emergency Services***

### *Policies*

#### **4.2.8(a)**

To inform park visitors and concessionaires, as far as practicable, of potential natural hazards in the Park and to create an awareness and understanding of natural hazards, while recognising that visitors will be primarily responsible for their own safety.

#### **4.2.8(b)**

To co-operate fully with the New Zealand Police in search and rescue and with the civil defence, fire, ambulance, State Highway safety and other safety and health authorities.

#### **4.2.8(c)**

To provide Department expertise, as far as is practicable and necessary, to assist with emergency operations involving visitor safety.

#### **4.2.8(d)**

To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngäi Tahu, in respect to search and rescue programmes, as expressed in the Deed of Recognition for Aoraki.

### *Explanation*

**4.2.8(a)** - There is an element of risk for all users of the Park and it would be impractical to remove that risk entirely. Each person must be responsible for their own safety, but Park managers do contribute to safety through signage, other information and education programmes. The Department applies safety and health standards when managing facilities. It also provides equipment, such as hut radios.

Where a person's own resources prove inadequate to handling a situation, or where an accident occurs, a public service is provided to assist.

**4.2.8(b) & (c)** - Other authorities involved in ensuring visitor safety and the Department's interaction with them are:

The New Zealand Police, holding authority and responsibility for all search and rescue. By agreement with the Police, the Department provides an alpine search and rescue team over summer and contributes to a winter response group for the wider Mackenzie Basin.

Mackenzie District Council as the local Civil Defence organisation, holding responsibilities for public safety in the event of a civil emergency, under the Civil Defence and Emergency Act 2002. This role primarily relates to emergencies within the Aoraki/Mount Cook Village. Elsewhere in the Park search and rescue is the primary emergency service – see Police above. The Department has government department and land manager responsibilities to assist the Council, working with the Village community.

The emphasis is on sound risk management practices that begin with identifying and analysing hazards, mitigating these, being prepared and being able to respond to and recover from, any event. This is set out in a plan prepared by the Mackenzie District Council in conjunction with the Department and which is regularly reviewed. Practical implications of this approach can be seen in policy sections 4.1.7 Natural Hazards and 6.1.2 Waterways and Floodways.

New Zealand Fire Service Commission. The Department provides support for the Mount Cook Industrial Fire Brigade based in the Village, by agreements between the Commission, the Brigade and the Mount Cook Local Body Contributors.

St John Ambulance. The Department provides support for the volunteer St John ambulance team and the St John First Response Unit based in the Village, by agreement with The Order of St John, Northern Region South Island.

Mackenzie District Council and Canterbury District Health Board, having responsibilities for public health matters.

Civil Aviation Authority, with responsibility for aviation safety.

Transit New Zealand, as the authority responsible for the maintenance and safe and efficient operation of SH 80.

**4.2.8(d)** - The Deed of Recognition for Aoraki, under sections 212 – 213 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, applies here. The Director-General is required to provide relevant information and consult with Ngāi Tahu and have particular regard to their views, in relation to any departmental guidelines for search and rescue programmes within the Tōpuni area.

From time to time, deaths occur on Aoraki/Mount Cook. Tākata whenua would like to see protocols developed with the Department and the climbing community on the respectful treatment of bodies during their retrieval and holding at the Village, until collected for the Timaru coroner.

#### *Method*

#### **4.2.8(d)**

**The Department will consult with tākata whenua and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values. This is in relation to any Departmental guidelines for search and rescue programmes within the Tōpuni area and the retrieval and holding of bodies. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. “Consult” includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act as mentioned in policy 4.2.8(d).**

## ***4.2.9 Information and Interpretation***

### *Policies*

#### **4.2.9(a)**

To provide visitor information on the Park and the South-West New Zealand (Te Wāhipounamu) World Heritage Area, in a manner that promotes understanding of and respect for, Park values.

#### **4.2.9(b)**

To interpret the Park's natural, cultural and historic sites in a manner that promotes respect for Park values and the conservation management activities undertaken by the Department to protect these values and promotes conservation awareness generally.

#### **4.2.9(c)**

To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu when managing interpretation projects in the Park, as expressed in the Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni and give effect to the Department's Protocols with Ngāi Tahu for visitor and public information and historic resources.

#### **4.2.9(d)**

To enhance the experience and awareness of visitors by providing high quality interpretation.

### *Explanation*

**4.2.9(a)** – Information provision and interpretation are primary means of educating visitors about the Park's values and its World Heritage Area status. Continued and increased awareness of the Park's values can help to ensure that future generations understand and protect these values.

The *Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy* 2000 provides the overall framework for interpretation for the Conservancy. Interpretation should be consistent with the *Strategy*.

**4.2.9(b)** - The relationship between the historic, natural and cultural heritage of the Park provides an excellent interpretive opportunity. The *Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy* 2000 and the *Canterbury Conservancy Interpretation Plan 2000* currently prioritise the production of interpretive media and ensure that consistency is maintained throughout the Conservancy. The latter follows the national interpretation themes of landshaping, flora and fauna and human occupation.

Key themes for interpretation of the Park are tectonics and glaciation, mountain ecology and forest remnants, Ngāi Tahu values and Tōpuni status, exploration and recreation history, pastoralism, national park heritage and the World Heritage Area status.

**4.2.9(c)** - The actions required for the Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni and the agreed Protocols with Ngāi Tahu, apply here. The Director-General is required to provide information to staff, Conservation Board members, concessionaires and the public about the Ngāi Tahu values and the existence of the Tōpuni over Aoraki. He is also required to provide relevant information and consult with Ngāi Tahu and have particular regard to their views, in relation to the provision of visitor and public information and to historic resources.

As part of these processes, the Department will consult with tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu before using Ngāi Tahu cultural information. The Department will also request that concessionaires consult with Ngāi Tahu (see 4.3.2 Concessions General).

**4.2.9(d)** - Understanding and appreciation of the Park can be increased by the provision of interpretive facilities and services. The main facility is the Park Visitor Centre in the Village with its displays, audiovisual presentation and information desk, managed in accordance with the *Visitor and Information Centre Strategy* (2001). Other forms of interpretation reach out to the variety of visitors to the Park and include:

- publications, e.g. books, maps, pamphlets, posters, slide sets, video cassettes;
- computer, internet and video communications;
- public contact (e.g. the possible operation of guided tours as part of holiday programmes, concessionaire operations and educational visits);
- signpost marking of roads and tracks;
- interpretation panels at points of interest (e.g. Tasman Glacier Lookout, Kea Point, site of first Hermitage hotel) and for the naming of flora;
- education programmes;
- an interpretation programme that raises awareness of natural, historic and cultural values in the Park, including those of Ngāi Tahu;
- encouraging artistic interpretation of the Park and its values, through the national Wild Creations Artists in Residence programme with Creative New Zealand.

Each method has its strengths and weaknesses depending on who is its audience as visitors at various times during their stay have differing requirements, whether they be for park information, understanding of the purposes of national parks, safety education, ways to avoid damage to the Park, or prevent offences. Design standards for interpretive material are set by Department national guidelines.

### *Methods*

#### **4.2.9(c)**

**The Department will consult with tākata whenua and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values, in relation to providing information about the Tōpuni and Ngāi Tahu values of the Park. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu**

must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act as mentioned in policy 4.2.9(c).

#### **4.2.9(d)**

- 1. Outdoor interpretive panels will be eye-catching and informative in their design, yet not intrusive on the landscape in their location.**
- 2. Consultation with Transit New Zealand will occur where interpretive signs and information about the Village and other park facilities are proposed in the Park alongside of or within sight of, State Highway 80.**
- 3. The guiding of visitors around the Park on interpretive tours will primarily be by concessionaires (see 4.3.4 Guiding) or by Department staff, if the latter are available.**
- 4. Concessionaires, through the opportunities available to them during their approved activities, will be required to promote the safe and enjoyable use of the Park and be encouraged to promote the purposes of national parks and reserves and the benefits of conservation generally.**
- 5. Department staff will, to the extent that resources permit, assist education groups and, where appropriate, the special development of information directed at such groups.**

#### ***4.2.10 Waste Disposal***

##### *Policies*

#### **4.2.10(a)**

To seek the minimisation of refuse and for it to be disposed of at suitable sites outside the Park boundaries.

#### **4.2.10(b)**

To provide toilet facilities at all huts and other appropriate sites, as necessary.

#### **4.2.10(c)**

To maintain an efficient Village sewerage system.

#### **4.2.10(d)**

To extend the current "pack-it-in, pack-it-out" system to include bodily human waste from sensitive areas.

#### **4.2.10(e)**

To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngäi Tahu, as expressed in the Aoraki/Mount Cook Töpuni.

##### *Explanation*

**4.2.10(a)** – Bylaw 4 of the Mount Cook National Park Bylaws 1981 makes it an offence to dispose of refuse in the Park. All refuse should be removed from the Park and recycled or disposed of in approved facilities. Where a structure or facility is being constructed or dismantled, all waste materials should be removed from the Park.

The Mackenzie District Council and Environment Canterbury are the authorities managing waste disposal sites outside the Park. They are also the consent authorities for any discharges of waste within the Park. It will be necessary to liaise closely with these authorities to ensure that any adverse effects of waste disposal on the Park are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Mackenzie District Council is working towards a zero-waste policy for the District. The Department will need to plan for this eventuality. The tourist industry is developing several environmental standards that include waste issues.

The Council has provided a campervan sewage disposal point at Twizel and Tekapo.

**4.2.10(b)** - Toilet facilities of an appropriate standard will be provided in accordance with the Department's visitor assets management programme or otherwise as required, through demand, particularly where there is overnight accommodation. Currently the Department is seeking and implementing cost-effective ways of containing and removing toilet waste from hut toilets, for disposal through the Village sewerage system.

**4.2.10(c)** - The Aoraki/Mount Cook Village has a primarily gravity-fed sewerage system, which means less opportunity for pump failure discharges, feeding to oxidation ponds beside Black Birch Stream within the Park. The ponds have a discharge to ground, although resource consent is held for discharges to Black Birch Stream. Monitoring, maintenance and plant upgrading is currently (2004) underway to minimise any adverse discharge effects. A new resource consent will be sought in 2005. Recent (1999) protection works (see 6.1.3 Waterways and Floodways) have reduced the risk of flood and debris damage to the ponds and the consequent risk of a breached pond discharge.

**4.2.10(d)** - The Department will continue to promote the “pack-it-in, pack-it-out” policy that requires visitors to carry out their own refuse or, in the case of abseiling and other slings for climbers, carry out the abandoned slings of previous climbers (see 4.2.5 Climbing).

For health, aesthetic, recreational appreciation and cultural reasons the Department wishes to extend the “pack-it-out” policy to bodily human waste. This is partly in response to policy 4.2.10(e), but would be applied to all sensitive areas, such as the high alpine (non-organic<sup>1</sup> soil) areas, the Aoraki Tōpuni area (see Figure 2) and wherever there may be a chance of affecting the waters that flow from Aoraki.

**4.2.10(e)** - The actions required of the Director General, under the Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni, apply here. The Director-General is required to encourage respect for the association of Ngāi Tahu with Aoraki by encouraging the removal of all rubbish and waste and to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that the Department disposes of waste, particularly human waste, in a way that minimises the risk of contamination of waterways.

Section 1.3.2 of this Plan identifies the specific values of Ngāi Tahu in Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. Waters that flow from Aoraki are considered by Ngāi Tahu to be tapu/sacred. It is appropriate therefore, to minimise the ability of waste to reach any of these waters in the Park, whether they are frozen, still or flowing.

### *Methods*

#### **4.2.10(a)**

**Liaise with the Mackenzie District Council and concessionaires to ensure waste (including waste from campervans) is minimised and disposed of where it can be dealt with effectively, economically and with regard to the preservation of the environment.**

#### **4.2.10(b)**

**Maintain a monitoring and maintenance programme for the Village sewerage system and especially the oxidation ponds, to ensure its efficient operation and that any adverse effects of discharges to waterways or groundwater are avoided or remedied. Obtain discharge consents as needed from Environment Canterbury.**

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<sup>1</sup> For these purposes an organic soil is one with a well-developed, moist humus layer where natural bacterial processes will decompose shallow-buried faeces, and well clear of waterways (see Meyer, 1989).

#### **4.2.10(d)**

**Encourage all visitors to remove their bodily human waste from high alpine (non-organic soil) areas and the Aoraki Tōpuni area and dispose of them in an environmentally and culturally acceptable manner. The Department will work closely with the climbing community, guiding concessionaires and others, to research, develop and promote this system within the Park.**

#### **4.2.10(e)**

**Consult with tākata whenua and where appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, to establish practices for waste management, particularly human waste management, within the Park.**

## 4.3 CONCESSIONS AND OTHER USES

### *4.3.1 Ngāi Tahu Customary Use*

#### *Policy*

#### **4.3.1**

**To process applications for the customary taking and use of indigenous plants and animals and other natural materials from the Park, where it is consistent with the other policies of this Plan, the National Parks Act 1980, other relevant legislation and national policies.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.3.1** - Ngāi Tahu has traditionally taken and used indigenous species and other natural materials within their rohe. These species and materials were essential to everyday life and a necessity for tākata whenua. There is a present-day revival of former traditions and of the use of natural materials. Traditional species and materials include, but are not limited to, native plants used for food, weaving and medicine, native birds and other animals for their feathers and for food, clays and stones and water from sacred waters.

Section 5 of the National Parks Act 1980 allows for the cutting or taking of indigenous plant material and the trapping, killing, or taking of animals only with prior written consent of the Minister and where it is consistent with the management plan. The *General Policy for National Parks* 1983 requires that traditional uses of such plants and animals from a national park be provided for in the management plan where the plants or animals are not protected under other legislation and demands are not excessive.

It is possible, under the provisions of the Wildlife Act 1953 and section 5 of the National Parks Act, for applications to be lodged for the non-commercial gathering and use of freshwater fish, plants and some animals for traditional use by Māori.

The *Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy* has a "traditional use" section approved in accordance with the *Deed of Settlement* 1997 and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. In compliance with section 44A of the National Parks Act 1980 this plan shall not derogate from the *Conservation Management Strategy*.

The status of Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park provides a high degree of protection to plants and animals within the Park. The taking and use of plants and animals is not necessarily inconsistent with the preservation of the Park. Ngāi Tahu will be encouraged, however, to use traditional materials from areas outside the Park. Some take and use may be sought for carrying out ceremonial activities in accordance with tikaka.

A permit is required from the Minister for the gathering of any materials from the Park. Restrictions on such gathering may be necessary to ensure that species/resource is preserved and that materials are available to future generations.

Given the physical nature of Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park requests may possibly only arise in respect of feathers and bones of found dead birds, alpine plant material, rocks and water. The Park's geology makes the occurrence of pounamu very unlikely, but if found it is subject to the Ngāi Tahu (Pounamu Vesting) Act 1997. Its removal would entail the access arrangements under section 61B of the Crown Minerals Act 1991. Any request for freshwater fish, again unlikely in the Park, would involve consideration of section 5 of the National Parks Act and the Freshwater Fisheries Protocol (included in Appendix D).

The Department's Protocol with Ngāi Tahu for managing plant and animal cultural materials is attached as Appendix D. The Department is working with Papatipu Rūnanga and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu at the Rōpū Kaitiaki and Conservancy levels on the implementation of this Protocol and the customary use of other natural materials. Given the expected low level of customary use requests for the Park, there is merit in working with the issue at Rūnanga and conservancy levels.

### *Methods*

#### **4.3.1**

**1. Consider applications from Ngāi Tahu for the customary use of indigenous plants and animals and other natural materials where:**

- **no commercial gain is to be derived;**
- **there is a justified need to use resources from within the Park;**
- **there must have been a traditional use of that species within the Park;**
- **the use is not excessive and the protection and preservation of any species being considered is ensured;**
- **appropriate measures are taken to avoid, remedy or mitigate the effects of taking the species or materials.**

**2. In considering such applications regard will be given to whether the resources are available outside the Park and/or the approval would enable a source of materials to be subsequently located outside the Park.**

**3 Work with Papatipu Rūnanga and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu at the Rōpū Kaitiaki and conservancy levels to give effect to the provisions of the Protocol on Cultural Materials as in Appendix D.**

### **4.3.2 Concessions General**

Many concessionaires operate in the Park and provide a valuable service to visitors. Their role in doing this is acknowledged throughout the Plan. This Plan section focuses on the process of considering applications for concessions in general. Other sections of the Plan are also relevant to the processing of concession applications, depending on the proposed concession activity.

#### *Policies*

#### **4.3.2(a)**

**To consider all applications for concession proposals and manage concessions in accordance with the relevant legislation, statutory planning instruments and the objectives and policies of this plan.**

#### **4.3.2(b)**

**To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu when managing concessions and have particular regard to the Tōpuni and Deed of Recognition for Aoraki and to the Department's Protocols with Ngāi Tahu for historic resources.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.3.2(a)** - It is important to consider all concession applications on their merits based on their potential effects, the relevant statutory framework, including planning instruments and this management plan.

Those exceptions, where a concession is not required to undertake an activity within the Park, are set out in section 17 O of the Conservation Act 1987.

There are a number of issues relating to concession applications. The first is ensuring that decision-makers receive adequate information to be able to consider applications.

Section 17S of the Conservation Act sets out the information that must be included in a concession application. A number of matters must then be considered in accordance with section 17U of the Act when deciding whether or not to approve an application. A description of the location of the proposed activity is basic to enabling the Department to determine the relevant visitor management setting(s).

Applicants must identify and provide information about the possible effects of their proposed activities. An appropriately detailed environmental impact assessment (EIA) may be required in accordance with section 17S(3). The Minister may, at the expense of the applicant, commission a report or review, seek advice from other persons or obtain relevant information from any source on matters relating to the application.

Consultation with Ngāi Tahu on each concession application may be undertaken by the Department as part of the Department's obligations arising from section 4 of the Conservation Act. See also Explanation 4.3.2(b).

Consultation may also be undertaken with the Conservation Board.

Concession applications are considered on a case-by-case basis. Appropriate conditions will be imposed and enforced to avoid, remedy or mitigate any potential adverse effects of the activity, structure or facility on the Park or Park visitors. These may include the Minister's standard conditions as well as, but not limited to:

- conditions on the activity, when and where it can be carried out and the scale of activity consistent with the visitor management setting(s);
- the provision of bonds to cover the costs of work required by the concession document;
- the restoration of the site and removal of structures or facilities at the expense of the concessionaire or the vesting of such facilities in the Crown, where appropriate, at the end of the concession term.

Concession opportunities may be publicly offered by:

- tendering the right to make an application;
- inviting applications; or
- carrying out other actions that may encourage specific applications.

Concession conditions may be included where the concessionaire is required to carry out activities relating to the management of any area, on behalf of the Minister.

Monitoring of concessions within the Park will become increasingly important as visitor use increases. The Department needs to be fully aware of the adverse effects of concessions, particularly cumulative effects, if it is to manage them effectively. For this reason where possible all new concessions granted for the Park and reviewed concessions should include monitoring provisions, which enable the terms and conditions of the concession to be adjusted as necessary, to ensure that any adverse effects can be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Approved monitoring programmes should be established to specifically address any issues of concern in a particular concession.

**4.3.2(b)** - The Tōpuni and Deed of Recognition for Aoraki (see Appendices B and C) and the Historic Resources Protocol (see Appendix D) apply here. The Director-General is required to:

- review conditions to be applied generally to new concessions;
- provide relevant information and consult with Ngāi Tahu and have particular regard to their views in relation to any survey to identify the number and type of concessions that may be appropriate within the Tōpuni area;
- inform Te Rūnanga of all concession applications for the Tōpuni area;
- when issuing concessions, request that the concessionaire consult with Te Rūnanga before using the cultural information of Ngāi Tahu.

This requirement should be integrated with the monitoring programmes mentioned above.

## *Methods*

### **4.3.2(a)**

**1. Require information from applicants and others as necessary, to enable the Department to adequately assess the potential beneficial and adverse effects of concession proposals.**

**2. Applications will also be considered having regard to, but not being limited by, the following provisions<sup>2</sup>:**

- **this management plan;**
- **the General Policy for National Parks;**
- **the purposes and other provisions of the National Parks Act 1980 and other relevant legislation;**
- **the status of the National Park as part of the South-West New Zealand (Te Wāhipounamu) World Heritage Area;**
- **the status of that part of the Park within and affected by the Aoraki/Mount Cook Tōpuni;**
- **the nature of the activity;**
- **the necessity for and the type of any structure, or facility or activity proposed;**
- **the effects of the proposed activity, structure or facility, including a consideration of the cumulative effects;**
- **the availability of alternative locations (including outside the Park);**
- **the ability of the applicant to carry out the activity, including any industry qualifications/standards that may exist;**
- **measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate potential adverse effects on the Park's natural, historic and cultural values including, but not limited to:**
  - a) **indigenous plants and animals and ecosystems;**
  - b) **archaeological and historic sites;**
  - c) **landscape, landforms and geological features;**
  - d) **natural quiet and natural darkness;**
  - e) **the principles and purposes on which national parks were founded;**
- **the outcome of consultation with Ngāi Tahu interests as a result of section 4 Conservation Act obligations and measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate potential adverse effects on Ngāi Tahu values, where these measures do not conflict with the National Parks Act (see also Method 4.3.2(b));**
- **any environmental impacts assessment (EIA);**
- **any relevant submission(s) made by the public;**

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<sup>2</sup> It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all relevant information in an application by reference to Part IIIB Conservation Act 1987.

- measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate potential adverse effects on recreational values, including but not limited to:
    - a) hut use and capacity. General provisions are included under the visitor management setting criteria in section 1.3.5.1. Where a concession application proposes to use a facility administered by the New Zealand Alpine Club or New Zealand Deerstalkers Association, the organisations will be notified of the concession proposal and provided sufficient time to comment;
    - b) track systems, both on and adjacent to, affected track systems;
    - c) public access;
    - d) noise levels;
    - e) public use and enjoyment of the area concerned;
    - f) a facility maintenance levy;
  - the effects (physical, social, cultural and other) on visitors in the Park when a concession activity is occurring;
  - any proposed means of advertising the concession activity within the Park.
  - the effects on both visitor and other public expectations for the preservation of national park values, that derive from the history of national park establishment.
3. Except as authorised by the Director-General, off-site<sup>3</sup> advertising by any medium within the Park will be allowed only where it is in accordance with a concession.
4. Concessions will be monitored, in addition to other Park user monitoring, throughout the term of this Plan to determine compliance with concession provisions and establish and/or maintain baseline data on visitors and their effects on natural, historic and cultural resources and recreation opportunities.

#### **4.3.2(b)**

1. The Department will consult with tākata whenua and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values in relation to managing concessions. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act as mentioned in policy 4.3.2(b).

2. When the Minister grants concessions that seek to use or promote Ngāi Tahu cultural information, the Minister will request that the concessionaire consult with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu through the tākata whenua before using that information

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<sup>3</sup> 'Off-site' includes any area of the Park not included within a concessionaire's lease, licence or permit area.

### **4.3.3 Aircraft and Airports**

Note that section 4.3.2 Concessions General applies whenever a concession is required and that in particular, Policy 4.3.2(b) and the Explanation and Methods arising from it, specify actions in respect of the interest of Ngāi Tahu in concessions.

#### *Policies*

#### **4.3.3(a)**

**To allow aircraft to land anywhere in the Park where that is essential for Park management purposes, while making best endeavours to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects on Park visitors.**

#### **4.3.3(b)**

**Except as provided by 4.3.3(a), to require aircraft landing and taking off in the Park to have a concession. Subject to policy 4.3.3(j), aircraft landing should occur only within the approved landing sites set out in Tables 1 to 5 and Figures 5 and 5A of this plan.**

#### **4.3.3(c)**

**No approval should be given that would increase aircraft activity or aircraft noise within the Park.**

#### **4.3.3(d)**

**To encourage quieter aircraft operations.**

#### **4.3.3(e)**

**Concession opportunities for aircraft to land in the Park may be publicly offered by tender or other processes, through inviting applications when existing concessions terminate or at any other time, where the adverse effects can be acceptably avoided, remedied or mitigated.**

#### **4.3.3(f)**

**To require concessionaires to be aware of and to adhere to, the Mount Cook and Westland National Parks Resident Aircraft User Group Environmental Policy (1999) and Park operational procedures, and to promote the same awareness and adherence to other aircraft operators.**

#### **4.3.3(g)**

**Aircraft facilities and services shall be consistent, as far as possible, with the visitor management setting.**

#### **4.3.3(h)**

**No further aircraft facility areas should be approved in the Park.**

#### **4.3.3(i)**

**To allow non-commercial hang-gliders, parapents and parachutes to land or take-off within the Park.**

#### **4.3.3(j)**

**Aircraft may be approved to land anywhere in the Park, or be excluded from specific parts of the Park, for the purpose of commercial wild animal recovery.**

#### *Explanation*

**General** - The term 'aircraft' in this policy section refers to fixed-wing planes, rotary-wing helicopters, microlights, balloons and gliders, as defined in the Civil Aviation Act 1990.

The operational control of aircraft in the airspace over the Park is the responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). In general, the CAA Rules state that aircraft shall not operate at less than 500 feet above any ground within a radius of 500 feet around the aircraft, unless they are landing, taking off or forced lower due to adverse weather. Over the Village the relevant height and radius is 1000 feet and 2000 feet respectively.

Flying in the mountain environment of the Park can be hazardous and requires consideration of weather, air turbulence, lighting, terrain, mountain flying basics and flight traffic procedures (see 'Navigating Rocks and Ice' in New Zealand Flight Safety, June 1995). Consideration of these aspects is needed both for flight safety and when setting realistic controls on aircraft use.

**P.4.3.3(a)** - Park management includes those works/activities necessary for the effective management of the Park. The use of aircraft is necessary to enable the efficient servicing of the Park (e.g. hut maintenance) and search and rescue operations. Aircraft undertaking authorised Park management may be permitted to land outside of designated landing sites and may also hover over the Park, but should make best endeavours to minimise any adverse effects of aircraft activity on Park visitors. Staff should notify Park visitors of such activity, where feasible.

Some huts may require the development of helicopter landing decks or pads to enable efficient hut servicing, as at Kelman Hut.

**P.4.3.3(b)** – Section 17ZF(5) of the Conservation Act 1987 defines landing of an aircraft, for the purposes of that section, in the following terms:

"... 'landing' includes the hovering of any aircraft and the setting down or taking on of goods or persons from an aircraft."

The Act requires that all aircraft landing in the Park, other than those permitted under policy 4.3.3(a), shall be authorised through a concession (refer to policy 4.3.2 for concessions). It enables the Minister to place the necessary conditions on aircraft operators landing in the Park in order to minimise adverse effects on the natural values of the Park and on other Park visitors.

Section 17ZF(2) of the Conservation Act 1987 requires that the concession shall be in the possession of the operator and shall have been sighted by the pilot in command of the aircraft prior to landing or taking off. It is also important that the

registrations of all aircraft permitted to land in the Park (outside of the airport) are known by the Department and that any changes are authorised by the Department in writing.

Scenic flights are a significant means of use and enjoyment of Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. The flights are for scenic observation, which implies gentler flying, not thrill-seeking (see 1.3.5.2). Scenic over-flights of the Park operate with both helicopters and fixed-wing planes from outside the Park. Ski planes and helicopters land at specified glacier snowfield and ridge-top sites. Aircraft are also used for access to mountain huts for climbers, to glaciers for skiers, and for heliskiing.

The extent to which fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft are proportionally used depends on the tourist market, the terrain and flying distances. In Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park the industry preference is currently for fixed-wing, while the reverse is true in the adjoining Westland / Tai Poutini National Park. For both types of aircraft the management issue is their effect and it is not clear cut that one or other type has more or fewer effects.

**P.4.3.3(c) & (d)** - Although aircraft do provide a practical and useful means of access for Park management and visitors, with minimal physical impact on the Park compared with other mechanical methods, they do have other effects.

Such effects include impacts at particular sites and on cultural values, the disruption of natural quiet and values of solitude, space, scenic and other intrinsic values; and effects on the enjoyment, inspiration, recreation and other benefits that visitors gain from the Park, including knowing one is in a place into which aircraft are not allowed to fly or land. Many of these values are part of the visitor management setting of an area (see 1.3.5.1 Visitor Management Setting).

The principal effect of aircraft activity is its impact on natural quiet. The *Visitor Strategy* (1996) refers to natural quiet as '...the natural ambient conditions or the sound of nature'. It is an important component of visitors' appreciation of a national park. In protecting natural quiet, visitors and the tourism industry need to be aware of their responsibilities to other visitors. In particular, aircraft noise should not detract unduly from visitor experiences. In response to noise concerns, the Department, in liaison with the industry, has developed a methodology to record visitor awareness of and annoyance with, aircraft noise (see Booth, Jones and Devlin, 1997, and the monitoring reports Ladd 1998, Toxward 1999, Ladd 2000 and Horn 2001, McManaway & Bellringer 2002). Working from the methodology the Department has defined 'trigger' levels that allow preventative action to be taken as visitor dissatisfaction climbs towards or exceeds the trigger.

Tables 1 to 5 of this plan, presented at the end of this Aircraft and Airports section, list the approved landing sites within the Park and any permitted uses for each of the sites, within a wider management framework. The landing sites are also shown on Figures 5 and 5A. These permitted uses have been established based on consideration of the activities carried out by non-aircraft based Park visitors in the parts of the Park adjoining the landing sites.

**P.4.3.3(e)** – Aircraft use of the Park is a significant management issue. The number of aircraft authorised to land within the Park will therefore be managed at an

FIG 5: AORAKI/MT COOK AIRCRAFT LANDING SITES

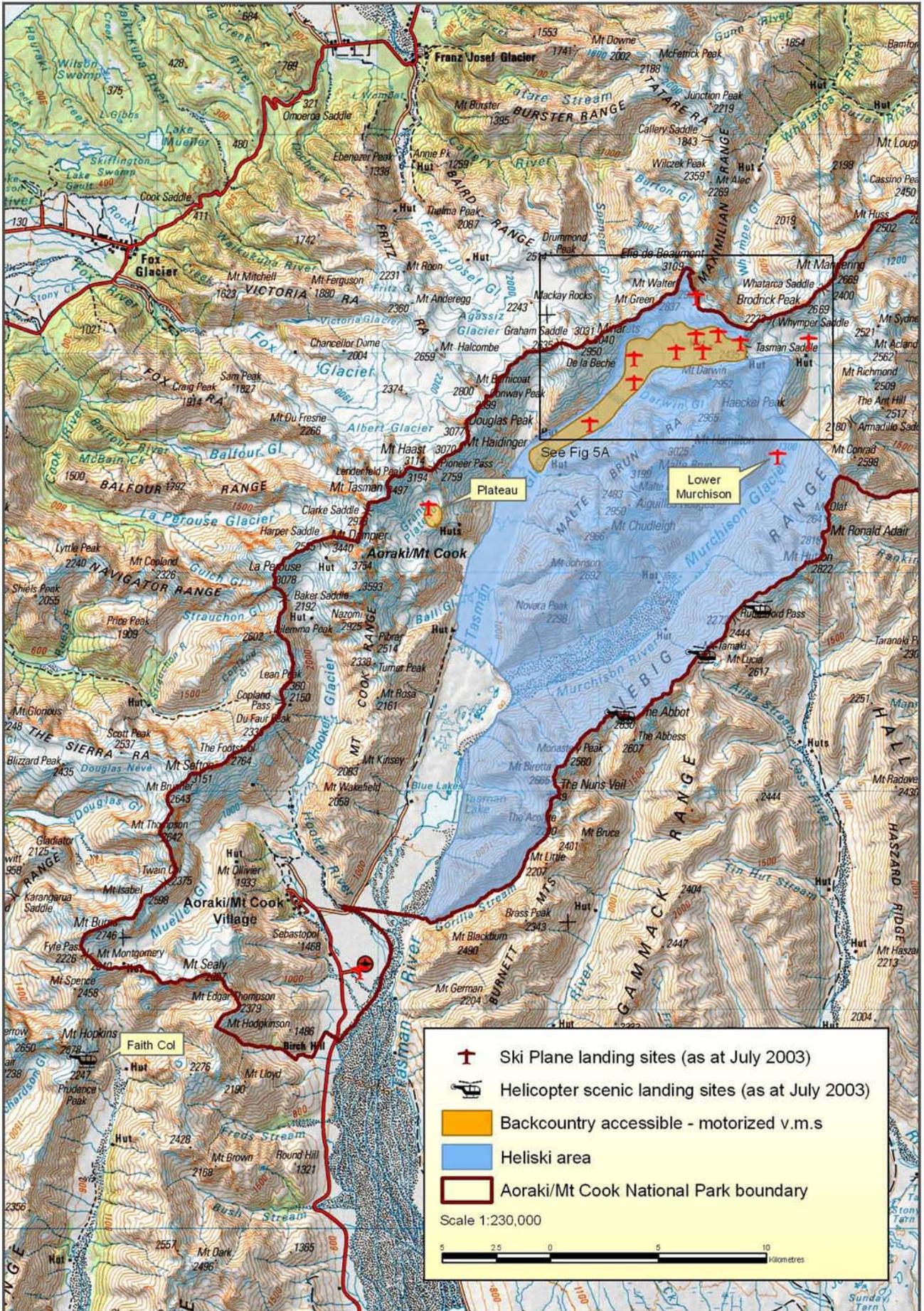
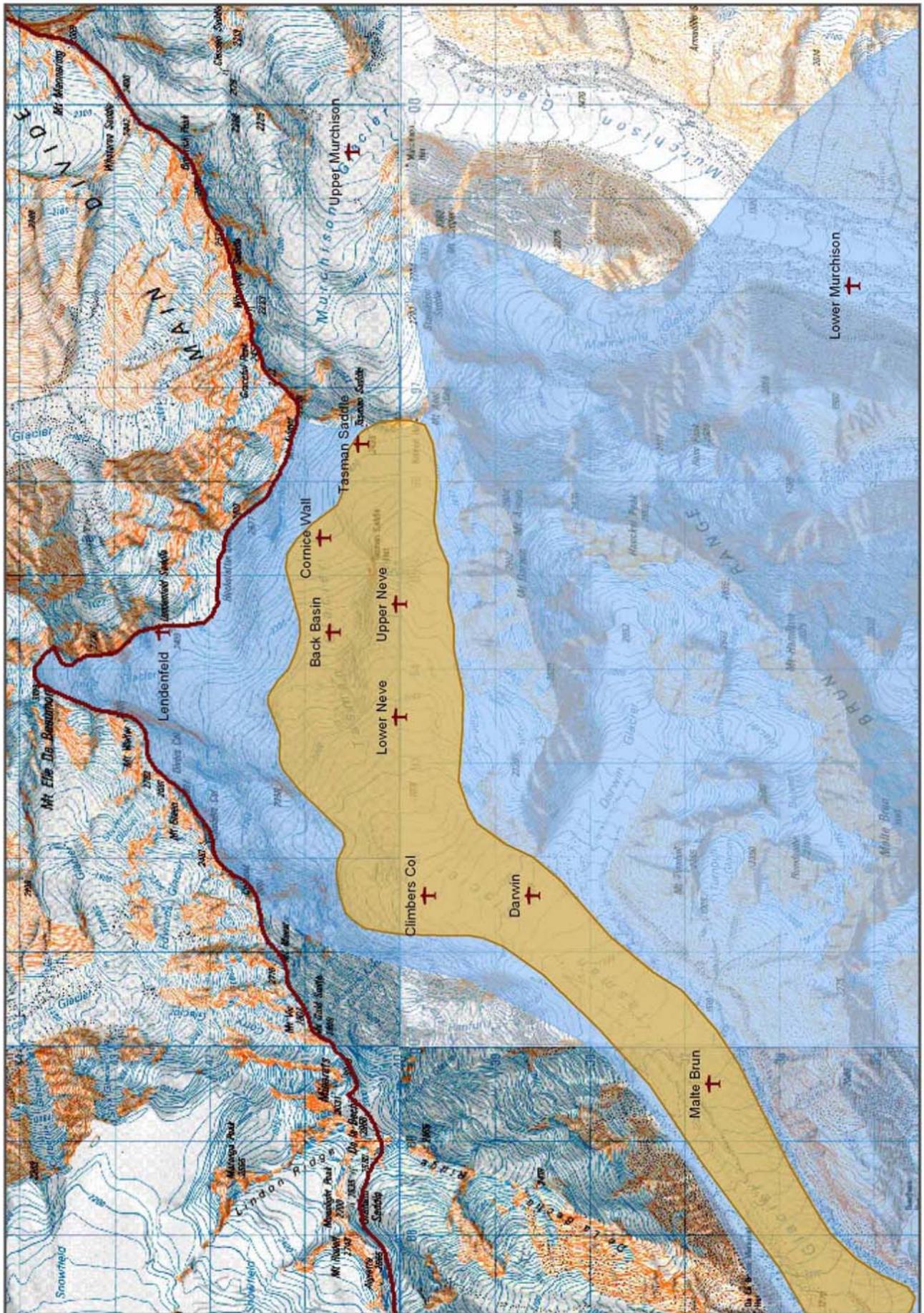


FIG 5A: AORAKI/MT COOK AIRCRAFT LANDING SITES - DETAIL



acceptable level consistent with the preservation of the Park's natural and historic values and the visitor interactions and expectations set out in Appendix J.

**P.4.3.3(f)** – Scenic and other aircraft traffic in both Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park and Westland/Tai Poutini National Park is considerable (see above). It is recognised that the Mount Cook and Westland National Parks Resident Aircraft User Group (consisting of local concessionaires and other commercial operators over-flying the Parks) represents only part of the total aircraft traffic over-flying the Parks. However, the User Group has developed policies and protocols that not only seek to ensure the safety of aircraft through agreed flight paths and practices, but also address social impacts caused by aircraft on ground users.

Flight paths and practices aimed at mitigating effects on ground users are being developed in close consultation with the Department. They include revised flying heights and routes, adopting quieter flying techniques and avoiding climbers and other parties in the Park where possible. These matters are addressed through the *Mount Cook and Westland National Parks Resident Aircraft User Group Environmental Policy* (1999) and have been adopted by each company within the User Group. A copy of the Policy is included as Appendix H.

Requiring all aircraft concessionaires operating within or immediately adjoining the Park to adhere to the Policy will ensure that they are made aware of the formally agreed and necessary flying procedures and safety practices.

The Policy addresses adverse impacts within the Park. Should the Policy be revised at any time and no longer be consistent with the intent of this Management Plan, then the User Group should be notified as soon as possible and a decision made as to whether policy 4.3.3(f) of this Plan should still apply. A plan change would be required in consultation with the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board to remove or change this Plan policy.

**P.4.3.3(g) & (h)** – There are (as at 2003) three existing aircraft facility areas in the Park - the Aoraki/Mount Cook Airport, the Birch Hill grass airstrip and the Park management helipad in the Village.

The airport and the helipad are within the "Highways, roadside opportunities and visitor service sites" and the airstrip within the "front-country" visitor management settings of the Park (see 1.3.5.1 Visitor Management Settings).

Existing aircraft services (landings) are mainly to sites within the "backcountry accessible – motorized" or "backcountry walk in" visitor management settings where a level of services is appropriate, but some control is also necessary.

The ski plane concessionaire has a snow groomer at the Tasman Glacier head within the "backcountry accessible - motorized" visitor management setting, to maintain its heavily used Climbers Col landing site. The use of such a vehicle has minimal effect away from the landing site and does help contain the long-term concession ski plane activity to fewer sites.

Airdrops may be permitted within the Park for management purposes only, such as for search and rescue purposes, but not for other purposes, such as recreation, unless otherwise authorised by the Minister.

The Aoraki/Mount Cook Airport is a development of the current lease-holder, from which fixed-wing and rotary-wing (helicopter) aircraft are operated under sub-leases. National link flights are allowed and charter flights also operate. The airport is subject to a lease expiring in 2012, but with two 30-year rights of renewal.

The Birch Hill grass airstrip has been available for infrequent recreational aircraft landings for which Department consent is required, although it is not a good airstrip for pilots unfamiliar with it and its approaches. The strip is also used a few times yearly by ski planes, which having developed hydraulic problems, are unable to retract their skis for a safe landing on Aoraki/Mount Cook Airport's sealed airstrip, the nearest alternative grass airstrip being in Omarama. Justification for retaining the strip is minimal for recreational use, but retaining a very low-key, minimal structure, natural grassland airstrip for ski plane emergencies, with area-experienced pilots, is acceptable. Retaining such a strip would have minimal effect on the Park's entranceway values (see 4.1.2 Landscape Management).

The Village helipad, used for Park management purposes, is located to avoid disturbing Village visitors.

Because of previous Park policy and the concessionaire control of Aoraki/Mount Cook Airport, no helicopter base facilities (other than a landing area) have yet been provided to service concessionaire needs. Previous Park policy has also sought to avoid a proliferation of buildings and development on the limited areas of the Park accessible by road. For this reason as well as because of, the limited availability of accommodation space in the Village and the need to avoid adverse effects on visitor management settings, it is undesirable that any new aircraft operators have base facilities inside the Park.

**P.4.3.3(i)** – Non-commercial hang-gliders, parapents and parachutes do not require approvals in terms of the National Parks Act 1980 and the need for control of these operations is not considered to be necessary at this time. Attention is drawn to the 4.2.4 Roads, Parking Areas and Vehicles policy that restricts vehicles to roads, parking areas and camping areas. Fliers of hang-gliders and parapents and parachutists will be expected to take appropriate safety precautions (see 4.2.2 Recreational Activities), including contacting local aircraft operations prior to flights.

**P.4.3.3(j)** - The Wild Animal Control Act 1977, as amended 1997, provides for the granting of concessions to authorise wild animal recovery operations. It is acknowledged that the extermination of introduced animals, as far as possible, within the Park is consistent with section 4(2)(b) of the National Parks Act 1980, but conditions may be placed on these concessions to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on other Park users. Unless otherwise stated in an approved concession document, aircraft authorised to undertake commercial wild animal control within the Park shall not be limited to the approved landing sites set out in Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this Plan.

See also Method 4.1.5(a) & (b) which allows aircraft landings at Liebig Hut for recreational hunters assisting with wild animal control.

## *Methods*

### **4.3.3(b), (c), (d) & (e)**

1. Landing rights may be issued in accordance with the other objectives and policies and the "Management actions" in Tables 1 to 5 of this Plan and may include:

- the maximum number of permitted landings annually at any one landing site;
- the maximum number of permitted landings at any one landing site per day;
- the permitted use(s) of each landing site;
- any restrictions on the time or season for specific landing sites;
- maximum noise level emissions as measured by aircraft industry standards;
- a requirement for aircraft to shut down on landing to enable visitors to experience the Park's alpine areas in natural quiet;
- a specified term.

2. A condition, in any concession approved for aircraft landing in the Park, should require the concessionaire to fund, or to contribute to funding and conduct, or contribute to conducting, an annual visitor monitoring programme. Such a programme is to measure the adverse effects of aircraft in the Park, using a method endorsed by the Department.

3. When concessions are being considered for aircraft scenic flight landings outside the Park the adverse effects of such flights over the Park should be a concession consideration. In particular, this will apply to the Mueller and Hooker valleys and to the Murchison Valley should monitoring indicate a problem. Quieter aircraft will be encouraged, favoured or required.

### **4.3.3(f)**

1. Maintain a close working relationship with the Mount Cook and Westland National Parks Resident Aircraft User Group and the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand to assist in the management of adverse aircraft effects in the Park.

2. Recommend a condition, in any concession approved for landing aircraft within the Park, which encourages the concessionaire to be a member of the Mount Cook and Westland National Parks Resident Aircraft User Group and requires the concessionaire to comply with the *Mount Cook and Westland National Parks Resident Aircraft User Group Environmental Policy (1999)* and all other provisions of this plan.

### **4.3.3(g)**

Require the ski plane concessionaire to seek a concession for the location and operation of the snow groomer at the Tasman Glacier (Climbers Col) landing site. Recommend to the Minister that the use of the snow groomer

at this heavily-used landing site is appropriate within the relevant visitor management setting.

#### 4.3.3(j)

Any concession approved for commercial wild animal recovery, should contain a condition requiring that the concessionaire notify the Department and the Mount Cook and Westland National Parks Resident Aircraft User Group in writing of the approximate period during which they will be operating within the Park, and provide a description and registration number of the aircraft to be used.

#### *Explanation of Methods*

Because of the complexity of this Aircraft and Airports section an 'Explanation of Methods' is also provided.

#### **M.4.3.3(b), (c), (d) & (e)**

1. The current concession for commercial fixed-wing aircraft operations resident in the Park extends well beyond the term of this reviewed management plan. Additional concessions for operators wishing to have an operational base in the Park or wishing to use Aoraki/Mount Cook airport, will be considered only where they can gain access to the airport, because of the policy restrictions on additional aircraft facility areas. An exception to this will be airport use on a temporary or casual basis, which is permitted in terms of the existing lease. Amendments to this lease are subject to negotiations with the Minister and will need to take into account the matters within 4.3.2 Concessions General, as would any new concession. Non-commercial fliers may make their own private arrangements with the airport operator.

2. For the purpose of this Plan, the baseline against which aircraft effects will be measured is the year 2001 level of aircraft use. This level of use has been generally constant since 1998 when the yearly aircraft monitoring began. Landing right quota has been based on measures to limit adverse effects. Annual aircraft landings authorised within the Park should be limited to:

- the allowed 7000 Pilatus/Cessna ski plane landings of the current renewable concession or some lesser or equivalent passenger carrying capacity should a change of aircraft type be requested by the concessionaire. In fact only just over 5000 of these allowed landings occur annually as at 2002 and there is no indication of a significant future increase in these landings;
- an unspecified, but still 'limited', number of helicopter landings approved through concessions to approved operators for up to 5-year terms for the purposes of positioning recreationists<sup>4</sup> and filming only. Landings should be limited to the landing sites in Tables 1 to 4. The limitation on the number of landings for positioning recreationists comes from the more or less constant yearly number of mountaineers and skiers entering the Park over the past 20

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<sup>4</sup> "positioning recreationists" means the flying-in of people who are fully equipped for mountaineering and/or skiing and for staying overnight in a high-altitude alpine environment.

years, although monitoring will be undertaken to determine the extent of any change in the use of aircraft for access;

- landings for a helisking concession operation at locations within the landing area in Figure 5;
- a minor use of TALPs (temporary aircraft landing permits) for pre-flight approvals for aircraft landings and/or for purposes not covered by the above (e.g. for utility servicing or research purposes), subject to the policies of this Plan.

The above landings are based around the current aircraft use patterns. Should circumstances change, such as deteriorating snow conditions making ski plane use more restrictive and hence helicopter use more favoured, or changed or different recreational activities seeking different aircraft use patterns, then the Department may reassess the above landing limits in accordance with the objectives and policies of this Plan.

3. Landing numbers, frequencies and times at landing sites will be considered in recognition of the visitor management settings and Tables 1 to 5.

4. Additional landing opportunities should be granted only where:

- the concession applicant or existing operator can demonstrate through the results of monitoring that their proposed operation will not result in adverse effects (including cumulative effects) on the Park or Park visitors; and
- the concession applicant or existing operator complies with all relevant legislation and the relevant objectives and policies of this Plan; or
- the Minister authorises additional aircraft to land within the Park in accordance with policies 4.3.3(a) or (i).

5. Where a concession applicant proposes to operate a type of aircraft within the Park that is different from existing authorised aircraft, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the aircraft will not create a greater adverse effect than the existing aircraft types. This acknowledges the advances that existing operators have made to reduce the noise of their aircraft and seeks to ensure that these advances are not lost. A significant consideration when looking at changes in aircraft type will be the desirability for scenic flight aircraft to shut down their engines after landing, so that visitors can experience natural quiet.

6. The monitoring of aircraft impacts within the Park shall be in accordance with guidelines in *The Effects of Aircraft Overflights on Recreationists in Natural Settings* (Booth, Jones and Devlin, 1997) or other guidelines approved in writing by the Department.

When monitoring indicates a problem, then it will be addressed in accordance with method 4.3.3(f) and at the expiry of a concession via paragraph 7 following.

7. Landing opportunity concessions may be publicly offered through inviting applications when existing concessions terminate or where the results of monitoring indicate that additional aircraft could be permitted to land within the Park without creating an unacceptable adverse effect. Where the results of this monitoring indicate that the level of adverse effects is unacceptable, i.e. 25% or more of visitors reporting dissatisfaction with aircraft, new landing opportunity concessions should not be granted.

Where landing opportunity concessions are publicly offered through inviting applications, each concession application received will be assessed and scored against weighted attributes that will be advised at the time of notification and that may include, but are not limited to:

- qualifications and standards. The applicant meets CAA rules, including part 119 and 135 requirements of the CAA rules or other such standards as CAA may require;
- measures that a concession applicant may take to reduce adverse effects on Park values and visitors. Such examples may include new technologies or CAA approved flying practices;
- previous aircraft operational record. Where a concession application is received from an operator who has previously operated within the Park, particular regard shall be had to any efforts undertaken to mitigate the adverse effects of their aircraft on Park values and visitors. Where a concession application is received from an operator who has not operated within the Park previously, evidence should be sought from the applicant that demonstrates efforts undertaken to mitigate the adverse effects of their aircraft during previous operations, where possible.

Approved landing sites are those set out in Tables 1 to 5 of this plan.

Each landing opportunity concession should be limited to a term not exceeding five years to enable the results of monitoring to be incorporated into concessions, where necessary.

#### **M.4.3.3(f)**

1. Following consultation with the Mount Cook and Westland National Parks Resident Aircraft User Group during the review of this plan, the User Group confirmed that if the Department indicated those areas of the Park which it would prefer aircraft to avoid or to fly high over, it would seek to address these concerns.

Areas of concern addressed by the User Group include not flying in close proximity to the summit of Aoraki/Mount Cook or any of the other major peaks on the Main Divide, particularly when climbers are seen en-route.

To ensure that other areas of concern can be identified throughout the life of this plan, any complaints received by the Department regarding aircraft operating in or over the Park shall be forwarded in writing to the chairperson of the User Group and a copy put on the relevant file (the names and addresses of complainants should be deleted unless they agree otherwise). The User Group has confirmed that it will treat all complaints seriously and will address concerns raised.

The Mount Cook and Westland National Parks Resident Aircraft User Group and CAA have invested considerable time and effort in the review of this plan. This professional relationship will be fostered.

2. Concessionaires' compliance with the User Group environmental policy will ensure that all concessions authorised to land within the Park will be aware of the User Group and their procedures for flying within the Park. These flight paths and heights have been established not only for safety, but to mitigate the adverse effects of aircraft on Park visitors. The Department will require any concessionaire

operating aircraft, who is new to the Park, to meet with the User Group to ensure a full briefing is received on local flying protocols.

**M.4.3.3(j)** - Aircraft authorised to operate within the Park for the purposes of wild animal control are likely to hover or land in areas outside of “approved landing sites”. It is therefore important that the Department and the User Group know when aircraft will be operating for wild animal control purposes within the Park

The concessionaire shall notify the Department and the User Group of the aircraft to be used and approximate times they will be operating within the Park each month. The Department shall record the aircraft movements and aircraft registration and make this information available to the public through the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Visitor Centre.

TABLE 1: LOWER TASMAN/HOOKER AIRCRAFT

	<b>Lower Tasman &amp; Lower Hooker valleys</b>	<b>Birch Hill airstrip</b>	<b>Mount Cook Airport</b>
Visitor management settings	Backcountry 'walk in' & bc accessible - motorized; Front country; Highways etc.	Front country	Highways etc.
Description	Glacial, terminal lakes, moraine, fluvial-glacial outwash plain and lower glacial walls and braided riverbeds with grass, shrub, tussocklands, silver beech, alpine plants and herb fields.		
Recreational use	Sightseeing, scenic drives, shopping, dining, camping, 4WD tours, boat tours, art, picnicking, photography, cross country skiing, mountain biking, nature study, walking, education, special events (festivals), parapenting, ski-mountaineering		
Purpose	To enable visitors to experience a moderate to high degree of natural environment experience, although the sights and sounds of civilisation may pervade in many areas.		
Permitted uses/activities	Scenic overflights	Emergency ski plane landings only	Commuter & scenic flights, loading point for other aircraft related activities.
Management actions	Monitor aircraft noise to ensure altitude restrictions over Village are effective.	Monitor emergency use and fire risk.	-Recognise as aircraft service area. -Monitor overall noise levels.

TABLE 2.1: TASMAN AIRCRAFT

	<b>Tasman backcountry accessible –motorized area</b>	<b>Lendenfeld</b>
Visitor management settings	Backcountry accessible – motorized (see Figure 4 & section 4.2.1)	Backcountry remote
Description	Glacier, peaks, neve, icefalls, snowfields.	
Recreational Use	Mountain craft instruction, guided skiing/day skiing, ski-mountaineering, climbing, photography/filming.	
Purpose	To enable visitors to experience the Park's alpine areas and be positioned within the park for a range of alpine recreation activities.	
Permitted uses/activities	Scenic snow landing, filming, positioning recreationists.	
Management actions	Monitor noise, flight paths. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kelman Hut landing pad is for Park management purposes only.</li> <li>- Require a concession for locating and operating a snow groomer at the Climbers Col site.</li> </ul>	

TABLE 2.2 TASMAN AIRCRAFT

	<b>Plateau Hut</b>
Visitor management settings	Backcountry accessible – motorized (see Figure 4 & section 4,2,1)
Description	Glacier, peaks, neve, icefalls, snowfields.
Recreational use	Mountain craft instruction, guided skiing/day skiing, ski-mountaineering, climbing, photography/filming.
Purpose	To enable visitors to experience the Park's alpine areas and be positioned within the Park for a range of alpine recreation activities.
Permitted uses/activities	Scenic snow landing, filming, positioning recreationists.
Management actions	Monitor noise, flight paths.

TABLE 3: MUELLER AND HOOKER AIRCRAFT

	<b>Mueller Valley</b>	<b>Hooker Valley</b>
Visitor management settings	Backcountry 'walk in', accessible – motorized, remote and more-remote.	
Description	Glacier, peaks, moraine, neve, terraces, icefalls, snowfields and screes with alpine herb fields, mosses and lichens.	
Recreational use	Mountain craft instruction, ski-mountaineering, kayak tours, climbing, tramping, photography/filming nature study.	Walking, picnics, tramping, art, nature study, photography/filming, hunting, climbing, ski-mountaineering
Purpose	To enable visitors to have close contact with nature, with minimal aircraft interaction.	To enable visitors to have close contact with nature, with minimal aircraft & human interaction, especially in upper valley.
Permitted uses/activities	Management and wild animal control, positioning recreationists at Barron Saddle	Management and wild animal control only
Management actions	Advocate for and/or require over-flight height limits and quieter aircraft. Specify a southern flight area to/from the Barron Saddle landing site.	Advocate for and/or require over-flight height limits and quieter aircraft. Monitor natural quiet to ensure any limits are effective. Seek aircraft avoidance of or higher minimum flight heights over Harper Saddle.

TABLE 4: MURCHISON & GODLEY AIRCRAFT

	<b>Lower Murchison Valley</b>	<b>Murchison Glacier</b>	<b>Godley</b>
Visitor management settings	Backcountry remote		Backcountry walk in, accessible– motorized, remote and more-remote
Description	Glacial outwash, moraine, screes, terminal lake, terraces, icefalls, with mosses, lichens, alpine herbs, sub-alpine shrublands and silver beech.	Glacier, peaks, neve, icefalls, icecliffs.	Glacial outwash, moraine, screes, terminal lake, terraces, icefalls, riverbeds, with mosses, lichens, alpine herbs, sub-alpine shrublands and silver beech.
Recreational use	Hunting, mountain craft instruction, climbing, ski-mountaineering, tramping, photography & filming, nature study.	Climbing, mountain craft instruction, ski-mountaineering, photography & filming.	Hunting, climbing, ski-mountaineering, tramping, 4WD.
Purpose	To enable visitors to have close contact with nature, with minimal human interaction, though air access may be used. Outdoor skills, challenge and risk are very important.		To enable visitors to have close contact with nature, with minimal aircraft & human interaction. Outdoor skills, challenge and risk are very important.
Permitted uses/activities	Positioning recreational hunters (see Method 4.1.5(a) & (b))	Positioning recreationalists, filming, scenic snow landings	Wild animal control and management only.
Management actions	Monitor adverse effects from overflights & landings on Liebig Range. No helicopter landings within 50 metres of Liebig Hut.		Seek overflight operators recognition of remote values, including natural quiet.

TABLE 5: HELISKIING AREA.

	<b>Tasman and Murchison Valleys</b>
Visitor management setting	Backcountry remote and backcountry accessible – motorized
Description	Glacier, peaks, neve, icefalls and snowfields.
Recreational use	Mountain craft instruction, guided skiing/day skiing, ski-mountaineering, climbing, photography/filming.
Purpose	To enable visitors to experience the Park’s alpine areas and be positioned within the Park for heliskiing activities.
Permitted use/activity	Heliskiing
Management actions	Specify minimum landing distances from huts, as in Tables 2.1 and 4. Clarify any required approvals distinction between ‘heliskiing’ and ‘extreme downhill skiing events’. Note 1.3.5.2 Visitor Groups. Specify concession conditions to avoid heliski use conflict with other, ground-based, visitors in the park, both in the location and timing of activities.

#### **4.3.4 Guiding**

Note that section 4.3.2 Concessions General applies whenever a concession is required and that, in particular, Policy 4.3.2(b) and the Explanation and Methods arising from it, specify actions in respect of the interest of Ngāi Tahu in concessions.

##### *Policy*

#### **4.3.4(a)**

**To consider guiding concessions within the Park subject to the following or any additional criteria:**

- **the proposed operation's consistency with the visitor management setting(s) within which the activity is to be undertaken;**
- **the provision of a concessionaire safety plan;**
- **the applicant's demonstrated ability to provide accurate interpretation on the Park's values.**

#### **4.3.4(b)**

**Between 30 November and 1 May each year, only one concessionaire group of a specified maximum size should be permitted to stay at Mueller Hut or associated camping areas on any one night and that such concessionaires be administered on a booking system.**

##### *Explanation*

#### **4.3.4(a)**

1. Guiding as covered by this policy takes a number of forms. In the lower altitude parts of the Park it can include bus tours and guided walks, while in the alpine areas it can include climbing ascents, climbing instruction courses, ski mountaineering and pass crossings.

When assessing applications for guiding, consideration should be given to the visitor management setting(s) within which the activity is to occur. It is important that concession activities are consistent with and do not dominate these setting(s).

2. Professional alpine guides provide for a greater public use and enjoyment of the Park than might otherwise be obtained. They provide the skills and experience necessary to guide clients through some of New Zealand's most challenging alpine terrain. In addition, clients gain an appreciation of the Park's natural, historic and cultural values and often learn the necessary skills to undertake alpine activities by themselves. Due to the nature of the Park's alpine conditions it is essential that alpine guides are appropriately qualified. The New Zealand Mountain Guides Association currently certifies guides and can advise of suitable standards.

Industry qualifications/standards for some other concession activities are still being established. Where an industry standard has been set, the Department will support this. For all guiding concessions the Department requires a concessionaire safety plan, in all cases audited by an independent auditor. This requirement helps ensure that Park visitors are purchasing a professional service when guided within the Park.

3. The Department will always seek the provision of accurate interpretation of the Park's values from guiding concessionaires. In addition Ngāi Tahu will also request this in respect of Ngāi Tahu cultural information (see Policy and Method 4.3.2(b)).

**4.3.4(b)** – This policy does not apply to existing alpine guiding concessionaires who typically guide climbers in the Park and operate in groups of fewer than five people. The policy may apply at such time as these concessions are renewed.

Hut and nearby camping statistics for Mueller Hut identify a potential, if not actual, overcrowding issue. The construction of a new, larger hut in 2002/03 and associated camping is expected to draw attention from guided visitor groups, as has happened at Welcome Flat in the adjoining Westland/Tai Poutini National Park. This could exacerbate any overcrowding issue. The hut is already receiving high use for the period from November through to May each year, with overcrowding being experienced from December to February and again around Easter. A restriction on concessionaire use will be introduced if and when needed, to help reduce crowding during this period.

Any one concessionaire may book two nights in any seven-day period, a maximum of eight nights in any one calendar month for the restricted season (November - May), for a maximum party size of 6 clients plus guide, with no concessionaire lockers to be allowed. Bookings would be accepted up to one year in advance. This does not enable a concessionaire to book bunk space, but simply ensures that only one concessionaire will be at Mueller Hut on any one night. A booking system for all users of the hut may be introduced (see policy 4.2.7a), but this does not necessarily follow from introducing a concessionaire system.

The maximum concessionaire party size equates to one quarter of the hut's public use accommodation. This is considered the desirable limit for the time being given the former hut's (12+ person occupancy) frequent overcrowding by predominantly independent visitors and the Department's desire to maintain and increase this independent recreational opportunity. If the future reveals periods when less-than-full hut use is apparent, a relaxation of concessionaire limits may be considered. Concessionaire lockers will not be allowed as many concessionaires may use the hut, hut space is limited, and part of the recreational opportunity experience is being a backcountry adventurer (see 1.3.5.2) with a degree of equipment independence.

To ensure that there are fair and reasonable opportunities for companies to undertake guiding to Mueller Hut, the Minister may publicly tender the concession opportunity when it becomes available and limit the time period of concessions.

Concession fees will be set in accordance with the Department's standard operating procedure and will not be the primary condition of tender.

For alpine accommodation needs generally, see 4.2.7 Huts.

*Method*

**4.3.4(b)**

**Applications to guide to the Mueller Hut and camping area may be publicly invited through a tender process, as existing concessions terminate. The term of the concessions should not exceed 5 years and not include rights of renewal.**

### **4.3.5 Existing Club Lodges**

#### *Policy*

#### **4.3.5**

**The retention within the Park of existing club lodges where the club exists for an approved Park activity and the building receives a significant level of appropriate use for that activity, should be allowed by means of concessions.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.3.5** - There are three club lodges in the Park. These are:

- Unwin Hut – a group of several buildings beside SH 80 (NZ Alpine Club);
- Wyn Irwin Hut – just north of Foliage Hill (Canterbury Mountaineering Club);
- Thar Lodge – also just north of Foliage Hill (NZ Deerstalkers Association).

Club lodges have a privileged position in the Park, in that club members have priority or exclusive use of them. This is in contrast to the club-owned mountain huts, which are available to the public, as well as to club members (see 4.2.7 Huts).

This policy applies only to the existing club lodges. Any other club wishing to establish a lodge should apply for a site in the Village (see 6.1.1 Village Layout and Site Allocation).

Clubs that have lodges in the Park are expected to make full use of their facilities as a base for the activities for which the club exists. If they fail to do so, or if substantial use is occurring for non-club activities, then the reasons for the presence of the lodge in the Park, especially separate from the Village-provided accommodation areas, are brought into question.

As was common in national parks and conservation areas, the lodges have permits issued on the discretion of the Minister, but none of the three existing lodges has a concession. Nationally this situation is changing and concessions are being required, primarily to ensure that the lodges and their activities are managed consistently with other structures and activities within the parks and areas and with the legislation.

Clubs are obliged to abide by the requirements of the Mackenzie District Council regarding building permits, licensing as residential institutions and fire safety measures. See also 4.3.9 New and Existing Buildings.

To maintain standards for the lodges, minor additions or alterations that improve the service offered to club members, but which do not increase the amount of accommodation, may be permitted. Any alterations, additions or replacements will have to be in accordance with 4.3.9 New and Existing Buildings, a concession and any local body requirements.

#### *Method*

#### **4.3.5**

**Advise the clubs of the need for concessions, process their concession applications and cancel the existing permits.**

### **4.3.6 Utilities and Easements**

Note that section 4.3.2 Concessions General applies whenever a concession is required and that in particular, Policy 4.3.2(b) and the Explanation and Methods arising from it, specify actions in respect of the interest of Ngāi Tahu in concessions.

#### *Policy*

### **4.3.6**

**To consider applications to place utilities and easements in the Park where:**

- **their purposes are essential for the public good and cannot reasonably be achieved outside the Park;**
- **the use is not inconsistent with the Park's visitor management setting(s) within which the utility or easement is to be located;**
- **their adverse effects can be avoided, remedied or mitigated.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.3.6 - Utilities and easements include:**

- telecommunication sites and lines;
- hydrological and weather stations;
- water supply pipelines;
- sewerage system pipelines;
- transmission lines and associated structures;
- access ways (roads and tracks).

Communications between the Village, Airport and the rest of the country traverse the Park. There are radio facilities at the Visitor Centre and Airport, television and Department radio translators on Wakefield Ridge and underground telephone lines alongside State Highway 80. Electric transmission is by overhead lines to a sub-station behind Unwin Hut, then underground to and around the Village.

Hydrological and/or weather recording stations are located at various sites in the Park, providing information for the Department, NIWA, Meridian Energy and Environment Canterbury. These stations aid Park management and safe concession activity and provide advance notice of river flows for the downstream Waitaki River and hydroelectric power system.

For the upper Godley more-remote part of the "remote" visitor management setting area of the Park, utilities or easements should be permitted only where the proposed activity will not have any adverse effects and it is not possible to locate the utility elsewhere. This "remote" setting is managed as an area of minimal modification and the presence of utilities are likely to have adverse effects on the Park's natural values and on the visitor experience. The existing NIWA hydrological gauge on Panorama Ridge in the Godley Valley should be retained as an existing use exception.

Roads to communication facilities should not be permitted (see 4.2.4 Roads, Parking Areas and Vehicles); developments should be capable of construction and

maintenance by helicopter. The Minister may approve one-off landings in the Park for undertaking essential works to utilities, in accordance with policy 4.3.3(b).

Solar power with standby batteries is preferred for all powered facilities. Where electric supply is necessary its placement underground may be required.

The placement of survey monuments will be constrained to permanent ground marks. Beacons erected for particular projects should be removed when projects are completed. Minimal clearing of vegetation may be permitted when carried out under the supervision of the Department.

In all but exceptional circumstances, telephone lines should be underground. Above-ground radio and telephone facilities at the Airport may need to be made particularly visible as an aircraft safety measure, but in general, facilities should be designed and painted to blend into the environment, as far as possible.

The television and radio translators on Wakefield Ridge should retain their unobtrusive appearance.

General guidance for the assessment of utility and easement applications is provided in sections 5.4.2.2 and 5.4.2.4 of the *Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy 2000*.

The utility provisions listed are to be considered in addition to the general concession provisions. They provide specific guidance to help minimise any potential adverse effects on the Park's natural, historic and cultural values.

The policies and objectives of this Plan will identify other key factors that need to be considered when assessing an application. Examples include design principles, archaeological sites and adverse effects on the Park's natural, historic and Ngāi Tahu values and on the visitor experience.

### *Method*

#### **4.3.6**

**Process applications for utilities and easements in accordance with the provisions in 4.3.2 Concessions General and give effect to the following provisions:**

- **Ensure that utilities are consistent with the relevant legislation, the visitor management setting criteria and the other policies and objectives of this plan;**
- **New and existing telecommunication operators are to co-site on existing sites, where technically possible and use designs that will minimise visual and other effects. This may require a concession provision requiring the operator to upgrade the site with improved technology, as it becomes available;**
- **Public access will be preserved, except in exceptional circumstances, where access conflicts with public safety;**
- **The maintenance and construction of facilities will be carried out through access from existing roads, on foot or by helicopter, wherever practicably possible.**

- Removal of obsolete structures and buildings from the site as technology changes and restoration of the sites if no longer used, will be required;
- All sites will be kept in a clean, tidy and well-maintained state;
- Sites subject to a concession will be kept to the minimum area necessary for the utility;
- Above-ground utility services will be avoided, where practicable.

### ***4.3.7 Stone/Gravel Removal and Mining***

#### *Policy*

#### **4.3.7(a)**

To consider applications where necessary and otherwise allow stone and gravel removal from approved sites within the Park, for building, roading, tracks, river protection works and/or maintenance purposes in the Park.

#### **4.3.7(b)**

To consider applications for stone and gravel removal from approved sites within the Park for the essential construction and maintenance of State Highway 80 adjoining or within close proximity to the Park.

#### *Explanation*

**4.3.7(a) & (b)** - Exempt from the Crown Minerals Act 1991 restrictions is the removal of Crown owned minerals (which include gravel and rock) from the Park for use in the Park for any reasonable domestic, road making or building purpose (section 8(2) of Act). Also exempt is the removal of any sand, shingle or other natural material from the bed of a river or a lake, these removals being covered by section 13 of the Resource Management Act and administered by Environment Canterbury.

Section 50(2) of the National Parks Act 1980 allows for the collection of stone, gravel or similar substances found in the Park, for use in the construction of buildings or facilities. The large volume and replenishing nature of material in riverbeds makes this possible with minimal environmental impact.

During the 1999 construction of the stopbanks along the banks of Glencoe and Black Birch streams to provide flood protection to the Aoraki/Mount Cook Village, material was taken from the riverbeds of Glencoe and Hoophorn streams. For stopbank work of this nature and for roads, tracks, buildings and other uses in the Park, it is important that local stone and gravel is used wherever possible, to retain the geological integrity of the Park and its associated environs (e.g. by avoiding incongruous stone colours).

The management of State Highway 80 requires the removal of stone and gravel build-up in riverbeds within the Park upstream and downstream of highway bridges. For both the integrity reason above and to avoid invasive weed introductions, it is better that this material is used for highway construction and maintenance, rather than bringing material into the Park environs from areas outside the Park.

Prospecting or exploring for, or mining of Crown owned minerals, is generally administered under the Crown Minerals Act 1991. Mining operators are required to gain a minerals permit from the Minister of Commerce, resource consent from the local authority and landowner consent by way of an "access arrangement". A 1997 amendment to the Crown Minerals Act does however, effectively prohibit access arrangements within national parks, for all but very low impact activities.

Given its geology, the Park is unlikely to receive attention for exploration or prospecting.

### *Methods*

#### **4.3.7(a)**

**Consent may be granted, by concession where needed, for the collection and use of stone, gravel or similar substances, in approved buildings and their associated access (see 4.3.9 New and Existing Buildings and 6.2.10 Buildings and Architectural Standards), or for the construction of Park roads, Park tracks and stopbanks. Collection should be on an occasional basis from sites which are as far as possible away from public use areas and areas of introduced plant infestation (see 4.1.4 Introduced Plants). The most suitable sites are active riverbeds, where periodic flooding can erase any sign of the extraction. Potential adverse effects must be considered (see 4.2.10 Environmental Protection and 4.3.2 Concessions General, as appropriate), particularly of vehicle access to the site (see 4.2.4 Roads, Parking Areas and Vehicles).**

**Consent under the Resource Management Act 1991 will be obtained, where applicable.**

#### **4.3.7(b)**

**Consent may be granted by concession for the collection and removal of stone, gravel or similar substances for use in the construction and maintenance by Transit New Zealand of State Highway 80 (see 4.2.3 Recreational Facility Management, and 4.2.4 Roads, Parking Areas and Vehicles). Collection will be subject to the same criteria as for the collection of material for building and other purposes.**

**Consent under the Resource Management Act 1991 will be obtained, where applicable.**

### ***4.3.8 Grazing***

#### *Policy*

#### **4.3.8**

**Livestock grazing within the Park should be phased out.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.3.8** - While grazing is not considered to be in keeping with the primary purpose of the National Parks Act 1980, it can be permitted under Section 51 of the Act and in accordance with the General Policy for National Parks. For areas that have been traditionally grazed, a management plan may make provision for grazing, under specific terms.

The Birch Hill flats were, at one time, part of a pastoral occupation licence that reverted to the Crown and became part of the Mount Cook National Park when gazetted in 1953. Grazing continued to be authorised in this area of the Park, up to the Unwin Hut to Hooker Corner fenceline, until the 1989 Mount Cook National Park Management Plan sought to phase it out. This policy was revised in a 1991-95 review (see Mount Cook National Park Management Plan Proposed Grazing Amendment Birch Hill Flats 1991). This review recognised the difficulties of Park boundary fencing to exclude straying stock, the reduced natural values of the main grazed area and then allowed for grazing subject to a concession, with monitoring and other conditions (see the 1995 plan amendment). No concession was taken up, but informal grazing has continued.

During the 1991-95 review, an issue not fully addressed was vehicles on the sealed State Highway through the Park from time to time colliding with straying stock. To avoid this either the highway would need to be fenced, as it is through the adjoining Glentanner pastoral run or the stock removed. Fencing of SH 80 passing through the Park is unlikely to be acceptable on landscape, public access and other park objective grounds, the adverse landscape impact of fencing having been recognised in the 1991-95 review. This reinforces that grazing in the Park must cease.

A solution may lie in the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 tenure review process for the adjoining pastoral run, from which the grazing stock originate. In particular, grazing on lands adjoining the Park may cease, in which case grazing within the Park can and will also cease. The tenure review outcome should soon occur and informal grazing could be tolerated (with liability/risk minimising measures) until the grazing can cease.

Failure to find a solution through the tenure review process would mean requiring a concession application, as agreed in the 1995 review, with particular attention on visitor safety and liability issues.

Following any phase-out period for grazing, wandering stock will be covered by the 4.1.5 Introduced Animals and Domestic Animals policies.

## *Methods*

### **4.3.8**

1. The Department will work with the adjoining pastoral runholder through the tenure review process to find a solution that prevents stock straying into the National Park.

2. Until such time as a solution under 1 above is found and implemented, the Department will liaise with Transit New Zealand and the runholder to minimise the risk of vehicle/stock collisions.

3. Should a solution under 1 above not be found, then a concession for grazing should be sought, subject to the following matters, as established through the 1995 plan review. An additional requirement will be to address the issue of stock control, visitor safety and accident liability. The 1995 plan review matters include:

- a concession of no more than five years' duration for sheep grazing. In considering whether to issue a licence, full consideration will be given to the grazing policy in the *General Policy for National Parks* and the impacts of the concession on the National Park values;
- any concession must meet all of the following criteria;
  - a) no more than one grazing concession may be issued at one time;
  - b) an environmental monitoring programme will be established. This will include an assessment of native vegetation composition and diversity. This will provide factual information to assess the impacts of grazing in the Park;
  - c) appropriate conditions will be set and enforced regarding sheep numbers, grazing period, area and fencing;
- any concession for grazing will not be re-issued if the environmental monitoring programme demonstrates that approved grazing has resulted in:
  - a) significant environmental deterioration;
  - b) prevention of significant native vegetation regeneration;
- the boundaries of the area where the concession may be considered will generally be the Tasman River, the southern boundary of the Park, the existing fenceline on the hill slope between the Sawyers and Hoophorn Streams, the terrace below the existing fenceline on the hill slope south of the Hoophorn Stream and a line across the flats between Unwin Hut and Hooker Corner, but excluding Unwin Hut and Mount Cook Airport. The fence south of the Hoophorn Stream will be required to be moved down-slope to reduce the landscape impact;
- boundaries will be such that any fencing along them will, as far as possible, have minimal impact on the landscape quality of the Park;
- to avoid the need for highly visible roadside fencing along State Highway 80 the support and co-operation of Transit New Zealand will

be sought for the retention of a cattle stop across the road at Unwin Hut, as long as grazing continues;

- any concession for grazing will allow for areas to be excluded from grazing if any of the following occurs:
  - a) a need develops for additional picnic or roadside stopping areas (see 4.2.6 Camping, Picnicking and Shelters);
  - b) if there is a need to provide facilities or permit other concession activities on areas being grazed;
  - c) any historic site management is required (see 4.1.6 Historic Resources);
  - d) any flora or fauna management monitoring is required.

### ***4.3.9 New and Existing Buildings***

Note that section 4.3.2 Concessions General applies whenever a concession is required and that in particular, Policy 4.3.2(b) and the Explanation and Methods arising from it, specify actions in respect of the interest of Ngāi Tahu in concessions.

#### *Policies*

##### **4.3.9(a)**

**To keep buildings and structures outside the Aoraki/Mount Cook Village amenities area, to a minimum.**

##### **4.3.9(b)**

**To ensure that where buildings are necessary in the Park, they are compatible with and appropriate to, the landscape and visitor management setting in which they are to be located.**

##### **4.3.9(c)**

**To require new public buildings adjacent to Park roads to provide access and basic facilities for people with disabilities. Other Park facilities, including public buildings already existing, should cater for people with disabilities, where feasible.**

##### **4.3.9(d)**

**To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu, as expressed in the Deed of Recognition for Aoraki.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.3.9(a) & (b)** - The National Park is an area of predominantly natural values. Outside of the Village amenities area, the Park should not have any more buildings or permanent structures than are essential for the enjoyment of the outdoor environment or the safety of the visiting public or for management purposes.

These policies are in addition to the concessions requirement of section 17U(4) Conservation Act 1987 which requires the consideration of other potential locations or the use of an existing structure.

The Department's Visitor Asset Management Programme (VAMP) defines the required design standards for all structures available for use by the public on land administered by the Department. Nothing in this Plan allows for lesser standards to be used in the Park.

It is important that the natural landscapes are not compromised by development. All designs should be consistent with the visitor management setting and developments should harmonise with the landscape and enhance people's experience of it. A general guide is as follows:

- materials which relate the structure to the site will wherever possible, be selected; and

- the design should recognise where appropriate, historical and cultural elements which are present in the landscape.

These criteria also apply to renovations of existing buildings.

Proposals for the development of new facilities must be accompanied by a landscape analysis identifying the potential impact of the development on the Park's natural landscape values.

Alpine huts are acknowledged as a traditional use of the Park. Their design needs to reflect the snow and wind loading requirements.

**4.3.9(c)** - The legislative requirement for the provision of access for people with disabilities to public buildings applies to both Crown and non-Crown buildings. The access required is that which is suitable for wheelchairs.

**4.3.9(d)** – In addition to the section 4.3.2 Concessions general provisions, the Deed of Recognition for Aoraki has further applicability here. The Director-General is required to provide relevant information and consult with Ngāi Tahu and have particular regard to their views in relation to the location, construction and relocation of any structures or huts within the Tōpuni area.

#### *Method*

#### **4.3.9(d)**

**The Department will consult with tākata whenua and where required or appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values in relation to the location, construction and relocation of any structures or huts within the Tōpuni area. For all *Deed of Settlement* matters both tākata whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu must be consulted. "Consult" includes all of the relevant actions required of the Department under the provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act as mentioned in policy 4.3.9(d).**

#### ***4.3.10 Promotional Activities, Filming, Photography and Art Painting***

Note that section 4.3.2 Concessions General applies whenever a concession is required and that, in particular, Policy 4.3.2(b) and the Explanation and Methods arising from it, specify actions in respect of the interest of Ngāi Tahu in concessions.

##### *Policies*

#### **4.3.10(a)**

**Such activities above should be consistent with the visitor management settings and existing access, having regard to their effects both positive and adverse and whether their adverse effects can be adequately avoided, remedied or mitigated, in each case having regard to the purposes of the National Parks Act.**

#### **4.3.10(b)**

**All such activities above that would not be consistent with the visitor management settings or existing access, should be considered only in conjunction with public notification or where adequate public consultation has been clearly demonstrated.**

##### *Explanation*

**4.3.10(a) & (b)** – The activity of filming and photography ranges in scale from just one or two persons and hand-carried equipment for a few hours, to groups of ten to thirty persons for a few days, to many people for weeks or months, such as for feature films. As the scale increases, so does the amount of auxiliary equipment, vehicles, temporary buildings and aircraft use and the overall scale of effect. The cumulative number of activities also increases the scale of effect. Promotional activities tend to be small to medium scale and short-term and art painting tends to be very small scale.

The policies are designed to preserve the Park's natural and other values (see 1.3 Background) which is a fundamental object of the National Parks Act, while recognising the right of the public to enjoy freedom of access to and enjoyment of these unique natural features and managing the increasing pressure, particularly from commercial interests to use these features for promotional or other activities.

In considering a concession application for promotional activities, filming, photography or art painting, the other policies of this Plan also need to be considered where associated activities, such as aircraft and vehicle use, temporary structures and animal use, are desired. Aircraft use does require a separate concession – see 4.3.3 Aircraft and Airports.

Visitor management settings (see 1.3.5.1 ROS and Visitor Management Settings, and Appendix J) are a method used in this Plan to identify and provide for a range of visitor experiences and recreational opportunities within the Park, consistent with the purposes of section 4 National Parks Act and visitor expectations. Provisions for access to and within the Park, are consistent with the visitor management settings.

The attention of filming concession applicants will be drawn to *A guideline for filming within the rohe of Ngai Tahu* (2002).

Where any of the above activities also involves State Highway 80 the approval of Transit New Zealand is required (see 4.3.13 State Highway 80).

The management of filming and photography is still an evolving matter in both New Zealand and overseas national parks. There has been little monitoring of such activity within the context of national park legislation and general policy and this lack should be addressed (see 4.3.11 Research and Monitoring).

In accordance with its legislative functions, the Department will continue to promote and advocate for conservation and national park preservation principles, through methods such as industry liaison, consultation on guidelines, support for Park interpretation and documentary projects and encouraging artistic interpretation, such as through the Department's involvement with Creative New Zealand (see 4.2.9 Interpretation).

### ***4.3.11 Research and Monitoring***

Note that section 4.3.2 Concessions General applies whenever a concession is required and that, in particular, Policy 4.3.2(b) and the Explanation and Methods arising from it, specify actions in respect of the interest of Ngāi Tahu in concessions.

Research undertaken by the Department for Park management purposes does not require a concession.

#### *Policies*

##### **4.3.11(a)**

**To encourage and undertake research in accordance with relevant legislation, for the benefit of Park management and/or conservation knowledge in general about the Park, provided that such research does not detract from the protection of the Park's natural, historic or cultural values.**

##### **4.3.11(b)**

**Monitor Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park for any social, cultural and/or physical impacts of visitor use and for changes to the natural and historic values of the Park.**

##### **4.3.11(c)**

**To acknowledge the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu with taonga species and cultural materials and have particular regard to the Department's Protocols with Ngāi Tahu for cultural materials, and to the Deed of Recognition for Aoraki.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.3.11(a)** - Research can fill gaps in knowledge of the Park's natural resources, the natural processes at work in the Park, usage by visitors and the interactions between the Park and Park users. Where this research has little or no impact on the environment of the Park and visitors to the Park it may be carried out in accordance with the other policies and objectives of this Plan and any conditions that may be imposed. This can assist Park management, public safety, and interpretation of the features of the Park to visitors.

The Department shall request a copy of all reports on research undertaken in the Park.

Applications to undertake research should be lodged with the Department at least two months prior to the proposed research commencing. This enables the proposal to be assessed to ensure that it can be undertaken in the Park without causing an unacceptable adverse effect on the Park's natural, historic or cultural values or on Park visitors. When a concession is required, the applicant should check with the Department about processing requirements (see 4.3.2 Concessions General).

Whereas researchers have the free right of access of the general public, prior approval is required to collect samples, erect structures and use aircraft access outside of approved landing sites. The taking of samples for scientific research or educational purposes could have adverse effects on Park values. Applications for

collecting purposes are best assessed through the concession process, as this allows for an assessment to be made of possible adverse effects. It also allows conditions to be placed on the activity to avoid, remedy or mitigate any potential adverse effects.

If the effects of collecting samples become unacceptable in specific areas of the Park, then further requests to collect samples from these areas should be declined until such time as the Minister considers appropriate.

Research proposals involving visitor questionnaires or interviews, need careful consideration to ensure that the research does not adversely affect the visitors' experience within the Park.

**4.3.11(b)** – Monitoring programmes will be continued and/or developed to provide visitor use information, to determine if visitor use management is satisfactory, and to determine if concession conditions are being adhered to. Monitoring of the Park's natural and historic values will also occur in accordance with the provisions set out in 4.1 of this Plan. Monitoring will inter alia, consider the following matters:

- Ecological effects by concessionaire activities;
- Visitor numbers and visit duration in various parts of the Park;
- The relative levels of concessionaire visitor and independent visitor activity;
- Visitor perceptions, expectations, satisfaction;
- Public expectations about how the Department manages the Park;
- The numbers of parties visiting huts as an indicator of the number of "positioning-recreationist" aircraft landings (see 4.3.3 Aircraft and Airports);
- Park-wide aircraft noise mapping;
- Filming issues management within this and in other New Zealand and overseas national parks;
- Changes to the above over time.

**4.3.11(c)** – Taonga species are identified in Appendix E and the relevant provisions of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 outlined in 4.1.1 Indigenous Plants and Animals. Any research or monitoring involving taonga species should refer to section 4.1.1.

The Department's Protocol with Ngāi Tahu for managing plant and animal cultural materials includes a provision requiring consultation in respect of any competing request for cultural materials, such as for research (see Appendix D, clause 4.3(d)).

The Deed of Recognition for Aoraki, under sections 212 – 213 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, also applies here. The Director-General is required to provide relevant information and consult with Ngāi Tahu. Particular regard is to be had to their views in relation to any survey to assess current and future visitor activities or any survey to identify the number and type of concessions which may be appropriate within the Tōpuni area.

*Methods*

**4.3.11(c)**

1. If a taonga species is sought policy 4.1.1(c) shall apply.
2. The Department will consult with tākata whenua and where required or appropriate Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, from the early stages of proposed undertakings that will affect Ngāi Tahu values. This is in relation to any survey to assess current and future visitor activities or any survey to identify the number and type of concessions which may be appropriate, within the Aoraki Tōpuni area.

### ***4.3.12 Military Manoeuvres, Exercises and Training***

#### *Policy*

**4.3.12 To allow military use of the Park in accordance with the 1990 Defence Training Agreement.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.3.12** - The Department and the New Zealand Defence Force are parties to a *Defence Training Agreement* signed 8 March 1990. The agreement provides for military training on state areas, as defined by the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977 and includes land administered by the Department subject to conditions to protect natural and historic resources and the experience of visitors.

Military manoeuvres and exercises are generally considered to be incompatible with the natural values of the Park. Occasions may arise however, where it is important in the wider national interest that areas within the Park are available for training in particular skills, such as climbing.

The military has provided valuable assistance to Park management in the past - for example, with helicopter support for search and rescue exercises and hut maintenance. These exercises are clearly of benefit to the Park and Park visitors.

This Plan identifies values of importance to Ngāi Tahu and recommends when consultation should be undertaken. If there is any doubt as to whether a proposed military exercise will impact on Ngāi Tahu values, consultation should be undertaken with tākata whenua and where appropriate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

In addition to considering effects on natural, historic or cultural values, it is important that particular regard is had to the experience characteristics of the visitor management setting(s) in which the military exercise is to occur. For example, the remote experience setting is managed to provide for a remote experience opportunity. Group sizes of concessionaires are restricted to a maximum of eight people and the landing of aircraft will generally not be permitted. A military exercise involving considerable personnel would be inconsistent with this setting and would be likely to adversely impact on other visitors to that setting.

A particular exercise could however, be an exception if it were authorised by the Minister in writing, as being for Park management purposes or clearly for the wider national interest.

Where military exercises are likely to involve the use of Park huts or public facilities administered by the New Zealand Alpine Club or the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association, the Club or Association should be notified prior to the activity taking place.

#### *Method*

### **4.3.12**

**When assessing the appropriateness of a military exercise, have particular regard to any adverse effects on the Park's natural, historic and cultural values and to the consistency of the exercise with the visitor management setting(s) in which it is to occur.**

## 4.4 WORKING WITH OTHERS

### *4.4.1 Community Relationships*

#### *Policy*

##### **4.4.1**

**To establish and maintain effective working relationships with those communities, individuals and organisations that have statutory roles or who are interested in:**

- **the preservation and protection of natural, historic and landscape values within the Park; and/or**
- **the recreational use and cultural values of the Park; and/or**
- **the sustainable management of natural and physical resources on land not administered by the Department adjoining the Park.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.4.1** - Although the Department can appropriately manage the Park and adjoining land that it has been charged to administer, there are external influences that can affect the Park and there are conservation gains that can be had by working with communities. Through establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with adjoining landowners, managers and key interest groups, the Department will be able to learn new management practices and advocate for known management practices that will avoid, remedy or mitigate possible adverse effects on the Park. In some instances this relationship may include interested parties where there are clear mutual benefits to be gained from working together. Examples include mountaineering clubs and guides, universities, neighbouring land owners/managers, concessionaires, tākata whenua, community groups and other associates in the public generally.

It is particularly important to notify interested parties of any proposed activities or works that are significant and not considered to be part of the day-to-day management of the Park. These would include, for example, a new track or hut development.

#### *Method*

##### **4.4.1**

**Use community relationship tools including direct consultation, electronic and other newsletters, public notices and Area office open-days, to ensure that interested parties are kept well informed about the management of the Park.**

#### **4.4.2 State Highway 80**

Policies

##### **4.4.2(a)**

**To have regard to State Highway 80 which, while not part of Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, facilitates access to and visitor experience of the Village and the Park itself.**

##### **4.4.2(b)**

**Maintenance and improvement works to State Highway 80 should be allowed where they may encroach into the Park, in order to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the highway and access to the Park, in accordance with the *Roading Guidelines*.**

##### **4.4.2(c)**

**To consult with Transit New Zealand regarding visitor facility development and associated access which may affect the safe and efficient operation of State Highway 80 and regarding activities on the Highway that may affect the Park's values and public enjoyment of them.**

#### *Explanation*

**4.4.2(a)** - State Highway 80 is recognised as an essential route to the Aoraki/Mt Cook Village and the Park. It is controlled and managed by Transit New Zealand ("Transit") which is a Crown entity created by the Transit New Zealand Act 1989.

Section 55(1) of the National Parks Act 1980 states "This Act shall not confer on the Minister or the Department any jurisdiction or authority with respect to any public road that is within the boundaries of the park." Transit recognises the "Highways, roadside opportunities and visitor service sites" visitor management setting along the Highway (see 4.2.1 Access within the Park), but management of the Highway will be by Transit in accordance with the Transit New Zealand Act 1989.

**4.4.2(b)** - Transit's mission is to provide a safe and efficient state highway system which meets the needs of road users and the communities it serves. In order for Transit to ensure that State Highway 80 is a safe and efficient highway, it is necessary to carry out ongoing protection, maintenance and improvement works. It is also important However, that the State Highway be protected, maintained and improved and activities on the Highway managed, in a way that acknowledges and maintains the values of the Park.

Much of State Highway 80 is a recently constructed highway and is therefore unlikely to require road realignment or major works, except in response to unpredictable major flood damage from several streams to the east or the Tasman River to the west. The Highway is set in an open landscape where the likelihood of sightline obstruction and road shading by vegetation is minor; hence the need for roadside vegetation management is less.

Consultation with Transit will be promoted to ensure that any maintenance or improvement works that may encroach into the Park are carried out in accordance with the *Roading Guidelines* set out in Appendix C to the *General Policy for National Parks* (1983).

Liaison and consultation with Transit will be promoted on matters such as trimming of vegetation (Section 4.1.1), landscape works (Section 4.1.2), protection works (Section 4.1.3), introduced plants (Section 4.1.4), visitor facility management (Section 4.2.3), roads, parking areas and vehicles (Section 4.2.4), camping, picnicking and shelters (Section 4.2.6), visitor safety and emergency services (Section 4.2.8), signs and interpretation (Section 4.2.9), taking of road materials (Section 4.3.7), grazing of livestock adjacent to the State Highway (Section 4.3.8), promotional activities within the Park (Section 4.3.10) and the State Highway 80/Lower Terrace Road junction realignment (Section 6.2.2).

**4.4.2(c)** - From time to time Transit approves non-roading activities along the Highway, such as car advertisement filming or information signage, subject to conditions to minimise disruption of, or distraction from, public use of the Highway. These activities however, can still affect Park visitors' appreciation of the Park's entranceway values, especially if filming is from a helicopter flying over the Park.

#### *Methods*

#### **4.4.2(b)**

**1. Consent may be granted for State Highway maintenance and improvement works that encroach into the Park, with agreed conditions that reflect the provisions of the *Roading Guidelines*.**

**2. Transit will be strongly supported and encouraged to use all reasonable means to avoid and if necessary, control any introduction of invasive weeds within the road reserve and will be required to do so when operating within the Park. Department guidance on weed species will be given in accordance with section 4.1.4 Introduced Plants.**

**3. For areas within the Park a permit may be issued to Transit under section 5(1) National Parks Act 1980 for the management of vegetation alongside the State Highway in accordance with the following guidelines:**

- **The maintenance of the natural appearance of indigenous vegetation;**
- **The avoidance of any identified sensitive areas;**
- **The retention of significant visual features or views;**
- **The maintenance of adequate sight lines;**
- **The minimisation of icing because of shading;**
- **The need to spray with Department approval only.**

#### **4.4.2(c)**

**1. Consultation will be maintained with Transit to ensure that any adverse effects on the safe and efficient operation of State Highway 80 from visitor facility development within the Park can be avoided, remedied or mitigated.**

**2. A Park entrance sign will be maintained at the Park boundary. Only approved State Highway signs and Park signs will be permitted in the Park. Signs within the road reserves are subject to the *Roading Guidelines*.**

**3. The Department will seek ongoing consultation on non-roading activity approvals sought from Transit and seek conditions that reflect the Park entranceway value of the State Highway, the adjoining visitor management setting and the Plan's desired aircraft controls. The Department will also seek appropriate wording on signs that direct visitors to the Park and /or Village.**

