

Sustainable Destinations Milford Sound Piopiotahi

Programme Board Community Representative - Call for Expressions of Interest

Overview of opportunity

The Department of Conservation is seeking expressions of interest for a local community member to join the Piopiotahi Milford Programme Board.

Local knowledge, expertise and context is vital to DOC's Piopiotahi Programme. By having a direct voice on the Board, the community representative will ensure a connection to community perspectives and practicalities at place.

The role is likely to be required until June 2027, with a review of the Board membership planned in November 2026.

Criteria

- Resident in Piopiotahi Milford Sound, Te Anau, or Manapouri with a close connection to and active within the community
- Small-to-medium business experience, especially in the visitor/tourism industry
- Governance experience
- Conservation ethos
- Knowledge of, or openness to learning more about Te Ao Māori

Programme background

The Milford Opportunities Project was an independently-chaired collaboration involving Ngāi Tahu, key central government agencies, local government and businesses. It was established to address tourism challenges at Milford Sound and was funded to deliver a business case to Ministers. Cabinet agreed a Government response to the business case earlier this year.

The Minister of Conservation has asked DOC to lead the next phase of planning and delivery for the programme. This work will include refining the business case and preparing for implementation and investment.

This is a multi-year programme with two key phases:

1. Transitional Phase (now until June 2027): Focused on planning and legislative changes (modernisation and access charging)
2. Implementation Phase: Likely to involve more capital-intensive investment and delivery.

Work in the next 18 months is likely to include overseeing the development of plans to improve the Milford corridor, unlock business and investment opportunities and deliver a new spatial plan and investment plan. It will also involve navigating how changing legislation is implemented at place, with new approaches to management planning and access charging.

Programme Board

Programme Board purpose

The Programme Board provides strategic advice and support to DOC, and oversight of the programme to enable the delivery of the outcomes and benefits. The Board itself does not have delegated authority to direct the programme, but it can make recommendations on key aspects.

All Board members are expected to participate fully to support the programme's success.

Formal terms of reference for the Programme Board have been agreed by members at its first meeting on 12 November 2025 and are attached.

Role of the community representative

The community representative member will bring local context, ensuring decisions are informed by local insight and fostering accountability to the people that any changes will impact the most.

In addition, the community representative will be required to provide a connection to the Te Anau community reference group when this group is established.

Other requirements

Conflicts of interest

There needs to be confidence that any decisions made by DOC or the Programme Board are impartial and made for the right reasons and are not influenced by the interests of members. Potential conflicts of interest are better dealt with upfront rather than as they occur. An Interests Register has been established and will be maintained for the Programme Board.

Time commitments

The Board will meet as required to fulfil its role. Meetings will usually be for a half day. Meetings will be virtual or face to face. Meeting frequency and duration will be reviewed after the February meeting which will be held face to face in Invercargill and include a visit to Milford. In addition to Board meetings, the community representative will be expected to attend meetings of the Te Anau community reference group when this is established.

Remuneration

To be discussed with short listed candidate(s).

How to apply

Please:

- Provide a short overview of your skills and experience relevant to the criteria contained in this call for expressions of interest
- Outline any conflicts of interest (real or perceived) and how you would intend to manage them.

Expressions of interest should be provided no later than **9 January 2026** to milfordproject@doc.govt.nz. If you would like to discuss, please get in touch via the project inbox.