

7 August 2025

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 11 June 2025, in which you asked for:

1. A list of all the individuals, groups, organisations, agencies, and/or departments DOC consulted with regarding Fish & Game reforms, between January 1 and June 5 2025.
2. The dates on which these individuals, groups, organisations, agencies, and/or departments were consulted.
3. The time DOC spent in consultation with each of these individuals, groups, organisations, agencies, and/or departments.
4. Any associated documentation (eg, briefing documents, presentations, reports, written feedback, etc) exchanged between DOC and these individuals, groups, organisations, agencies, and/or departments.
NB: The request for associated documentation shouldn't include correspondence, only substantive information, such as briefings or commentary or written feedback attached to correspondence that outline ideas, recommendations or concerns about Fish & Game, or raise matters or suggestions about the reforms.
5. Any draft Fish & Game reforms and/or proposed wording provided to DOC officials by either Ministers or external parties.
6. Briefing documents sent to Ministers on changes to Fish & Game between January 1 and June 5 2025.
7. Feedback sent to DOC by Ministers on those briefing documents.

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA).

On 30 June 2025 we extended the timeframe to respond to your request to 7 August 2025 (20 working days) due to the quantity of information sought and the consultation necessary.

Your questions and our responses are listed below.

In response to questions 1 – 4

For context, the work to improve Fish and Game New Zealand's (Fish and Game's) governance and organisation was developed by the former Minister for Hunting and Fishing, Hon Todd McClay.

Minister McClay initiated a targeted engagement approach, seeking views from all Fish and Game councils and 20 Post Settlement Governance Entities (PSGEs) who have a statutory relationship or arrangement with Fish and Game in their settlement act or deed. As part of this, in December 2024 Minister McClay sent letters to these Fish and Game Councils and PSGEs

seeking views on how Fish and Game could improve its governance and organisation. These views were gathered over December 2024 – February 2025.

In early 2025, Hon James Meager, Minister for Hunting and Fishing, agreed to progress this work and met with all Fish and Game councils to discuss their views. As this was led by the Minister, these engagements are not captured as part of this request.

DOC supported the Minister’s engagement by reaching out to wider iwi and hapū who do not have a statutory relationship or arrangement with Fish and Game, and to support PSGEs wishing to provide verbal feedback to the Minister’s request. These engagements, alongside agency consultation on the *Fish and Game New Zealand Governance and Organisational Improvements Amendment Bill* Cabinet paper, are in scope of your request.

DOC also consulted relevant agencies on the draft Cabinet paper and draft regulatory impact assessment, which are in scope of this request.

Table 1 below outlines who DOC engaged with, the dates and duration of these engagements, and any substantive documentation associated with these engagements.

Table 1: DOC consultation with PSGEs on Fish and Game Reforms (1 January – 5 June 2025)

Who	Date	Duration	Documentation
Mana Ahuriri Trust	13 January 2025	Less than an hour: raising the Minister’s letter and asking if any further information was needed by the PSGEs on the subject.	No documents in scope as no substantive exchange between DOC and Mana Ahuriri Trust.
Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa	<p>22 January 2025: email, agenda for upcoming hui, added Minister McClay’s letter re consultation on changes within F&G for discussion.</p> <p>24 January 2025: hui, discussed F&G letter, NWNA said they had not seen it; the letter was forwarded (TM02786 attached).</p> <p>13 February 2025: email, a hui agenda with the F&G consultation listed as a topic for follow up.</p> <p>11 March 2025: phone call, asking if NWNA intended to</p>	Approximately four hours.	Items 1-3 in attached document schedule.

	<p>respond to the request for comment; answer was yes.</p> <p>17 February 2025: email, from NWNA with feedback.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā • Rangitāne Tamaki nui a Rua • Rangitāne o Wairarapa 	24 January 2025	Less than an hour: preparing and sending email.	Item 4 in attached document schedule.
Maungaharuru-Tangitū	29 January 2025	Less than an hour: raising the Minister's letter and asking if any further information was needed by the PSGEs on the subject.	No documents in scope as no substantive exchange between DOC and Maungaharuru-Tangitū.
Hineuru Iwi Trust	13 February 2025	Less than an hour: raising the Minister's letter and asking if any further information was needed by the PSGEs on the subject.	No documents in scope as no substantive exchange between DOC and Hineuru Iwi Trust.
Te Uru Taumatua	21 February 2025	Less than an hour: preparing meeting minutes, conversation at hui.	Items 5-6 in attached document schedule.
Tamatea Pokai Whenua	26 February 2025	Less than an hour: raising the Minister's letter and asking if any further information was needed by the PSGEs on the subject.	No documents in scope as no substantive exchange between DOC and Tamatea Pokai Whenua.
<p>Agencies who provided substantive feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Primary Industries • Office of Treaty Settlements and Takutai Moana - Te Tari Whakatau. <p>Agencies who provided minor feedback or acknowledgement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Internal Affairs • Ministry for the Environment 	17-29 April 2025	Estimated 16 hours: sending/responding to emails and considering/actioning feedback.	Items 7-10 in attached document schedule.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Māori Development – Te Puni Kōkiri. <p>Agencies who were informed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Treasury Ministry of Justice Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Public Service Commission Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment. 			
[Name withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA]	8 May 2025	Less than an hour to prepare and send email.	Item 11 in attached document schedule.

Advice

5. Any draft Fish & Game reforms and/or proposed wording provided to DOC officials by either Ministers or external parties.

DOC did not receive any draft Fish and Game reforms or proposed wording from either Minister or external parties. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act, as the information requested does not exist.

6. Briefing documents sent to Ministers on changes to Fish & Game between January 1 and June 5 2025.

The documents captured by the question are listed in items 12-24 of the attached document schedule.

DOC has interpreted the request for 'briefing documents sent to Ministers on changes to Fish & Game between January 1 and June 5 2025' as substantive advice to Ministers on legislative changes to Fish and Game. For this reason, some material that provides information on Fish and Game reforms (e.g. to support external meetings), but does not provide new or substantive advice, has been considered out of scope.

Some material in scope has already been publicly released. Final versions of the Cabinet paper and regulatory impact statement can be found here: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/fish-and-game-councils/>.

7. Feedback sent to DOC by Ministers on those briefing documents.

DOC primarily receives feedback from the Minister for Hunting and Fishing through regular meetings. The most substantive feedback is referenced in briefing 25-B-0147 [item 18].

Information release

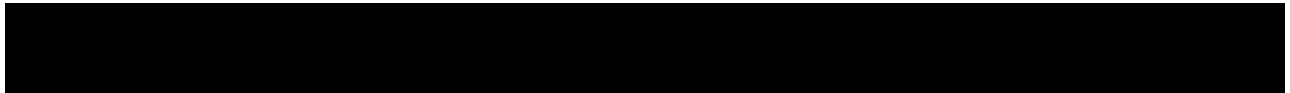
I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents identified above, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the OIA, as applicable:

- personal information, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people,
- advice still under consideration, section 9(2)(f)(iv) – to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials,
- free and frank expression under section 9(2)(g)(i) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs,
- advice subject to legal privilege, under section 9(2)(h) – to maintain legal professional privilege, and
- out of scope.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the OIA.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on DOC's website.



Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Thomas'.

Sam Thomas
Director Policy
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Document schedule

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
Documents in scope of questions 1-4			
1	24 January 2025	Letter attached to email: TM02786/24-B-0567 Hon Todd McClay letter to Te Rūnanga o Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa.	Released in part – under section 9(2)(a)
2	17 March 2025	Email: Re: Follow up re: phonecall	Released in part – under section 9(2)(a)
3	17 March 2025	Summary of internal email exchange: substantive information captured within internal correspondence between Department of Conservation staff	Released in full
4	24 January 2025	Email: Fish and Game – Minister of Hunting and Fishing seeking advice.	Released in part – under section 9(2)(a)
5	21 February 2025	Meeting minutes: AOP: Authorising Environment Committee	Released in part – out of scope
6	21 February 2025	Memo: AOP: Authorising Environment Committee	Released in full
7	30 April 2025	Email exchange with Ministry for Primary Industries: Re: For response by 29 April: Draft Cabinet paper Fish and Game	Released in full

8	30 April 2025	Email exchange with the Office of Treaty Settlements and Takutai Moana: Te Tari Whakatau: Re: For response by 29 April: Draft Cabinet paper Fish and Game	Released in part – under section 9(2)(a)
9	17 April 2025	Attachment to items 7-8: Draft Cabinet paper: Fish and Game New Zealand Governance and Organisational Improvements Amendment Bill	Released in full
10	17 April 2025	Attachment to items 7-8: Draft regulatory impact statement: Strengthening and modernising Fish and Game New Zealand	Release in part – section 9(2)(g)(i)
11	8 May 2025	Email: Key messages for Fish and Game	Released in part – under section 9(2)(a)
Documents in scope of questions 5-7			
12	24 January 2025	Briefing: 25-B-0011 – Hunting and Fishing Portfolio - Initial Briefing and Immediate Decisions	Refused – soon to be proactively released
13	24 January 2025	Attachment to item 12 [briefing 25-B-0011]: Briefing to the incoming Minister for Hunting and Fishing	Refused – available at: https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/role/publications/bim-2025/bim-hunting-and-fishing-january-2025.pdf

14	4 February 2025	Briefing excerpt: Attachment C: Summary of policy development to date [from 25-M-0005 – Meetings with Fish and Game Councils]	Released in full
15	4 February 2025	Briefing excerpt: Attachment D: Analysis of Fish and Game New Zealand responses to Minister McClay's November letters [from 25-M-0005 – Meetings with Fish and Game Councils]	Released in part – 9(2)(g)(i)
16	24 March 2025	Status report: Minister for Hunting and Fishing – Status report week beginning 24 March	Released in part – 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(g)(i)
17	28 March 2025	Briefing: 25-B-0120 – Final policy decisions to strengthen and modernise Fish and Game	Refused – available at: https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/statutory-bodies/fish-and-game-councils/briefing-final-policy-decisions-to-strengthen-and-modernise-fish-and-game.pdf
18	8 April 2025	Briefing: 25-B-0147 – Clarifications for final policy decisions to strengthen and modernise Fish and Game	Refused – available at: https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/statutory-bodies/fish-and-game-councils/briefing-clarifications-for-final-policy-decisions-to-strengthen-and-modernise.pdf
19	16 April 2025	Briefing: 25-B-0157 – Fish and Game New Zealand draft Cabinet paper	Released in part – 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(h)
20	16 April 2025	Attachment to item 19 [briefing	Released in full

		25-B-0157]: Draft Cabinet paper Fish and Game New Zealand Governance and Organisational Improvements Amendment Bill	
21	16 April 2025	Attachment to item 19 [briefing 25-B-0157]: Draft regulatory impact statement: Strengthening and modernising Fish and Game New Zealand	[See item 10 – same version]
22	5 May 2025 and 13 May	Talking points: 25-K-0012: Cabinet Paper Talking Points: Fish and Game New Zealand Governance and Organisational Improvements Amendment Bill	Released in part – under section 9(2)(a)
23	16 May 2025	Document: Fish and Game communication plan for discussion with Minister	Released in part – 9(2)(a)
24	16 May 2025	Document: Indicative map of Fish and Game Councils' position on the need for reform	Released in part – 9(2)(g)(i)