

29 September 2025

DOC Whangārei
2 South End Avenue
PO Box 842
Whangārei 0140
whangarei@doc.govt.nz
Ref: OIAD-5612

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 29 August 2025, in which you asked a range of questions about the *alienation of Public Conservation Land* in Bream Bay, Whangārei, and possible concessions regarding Whangārei District Council (WDC).

Following email correspondence on 28 August – 1 September between you and [REDACTED], Statutory Manager Northern North Island, you confirmed that you were seeking the following information:

1. *An understanding of what Public Conservation Land (PCL) DOC has alienated to various community or commercial bodies, and WDC, including a table to demonstrate:*
 - a. *What was the total area of Public Conservation Land (PCL) prior to the various alienations to community bodies?*
 - b. *What area of PCL was alienated to each of the following, including date, area, rental fees or purchase price, and recipient:*
 - Racecourse
 - Golf Course
 - Refinery pipelines
 - Whangārei District Council (WDC), specifically:
 - Wastewater Ruakaka
 - Wastewater Waipu
 - Proposed Wastewater Ruakaka Extension
 - Landfill
 - Transfer Station
 - Any other alienations not listed
2. *What is the commercial value (rental or purchase price) of the land WDC has identified for its current interests?*
3. *Would WDC still want the land if they had to pay a commercial value for it?*
4. *Is DOC considering a commercial concession with an appropriately set commercial value for the land?*

5. *Has DOC asked WDC how much they have collected from developers as development contributions over the last 25 years?*
6. *Has DOC asked WDC how much has been collected as reserve contributions?*
7. *How much has WDC spent in the Marsden Ruakaka area on new reserves?*
8. *Has WDC contributed to DOC to improve amenities on PCL in the area?*
9. *The processing or otherwise of a concession currently for any party including the WDC*
10. *Has the WDC shared a plan for future needs re infrastructure including was this ext into PCL forecast or planned?*

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

Context

You have defined alienation of land as “*land removed from day-to-day management and control*” of DOC and thus the removal of public access. In responding to your request, we have reviewed both digital and paper records and could not find evidence of any PCL in the Bream Bay area being removed from the day-to-day management of DOC since the department was established in 1987. Therefore, the following response provides general information about the status of land you have referred to in your request.

Please note that any changes to land management prior to 1987, when DOC was established, is excluded from this response.

Some of your questions seek information that is not held by DOC but may be held by WDC. We attempted to transfer those questions under section 14 of the OIA but did not receive confirmation of receipt. Therefore, we recommend that you contact WDC directly where noted below.

Your request

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *An understanding of what Public Conservation Land (PCL) DOC has alienated to various community or commercial bodies and WDC, including a table to demonstrate:*
 - a. *What was the total area of Public Conservation Land (PCL) prior to the various alienations to community bodies?*
 - b. *What area of PCL was alienated to each of the following, including date, area, rental fees or purchase price, and recipient:*
 - *Racecourse*
 - *Golf Course*
 - *Refinery pipelines*
 - *Whangarei District Council (WDC), specifically:*
 - *Wastewater Ruakaka*
 - *Wastewater Waipu*
 - *Proposed Wastewater Ruakaka Extension*

- *Landfill*
- *Transfer Station*
- *Any other alienations not listed*

As noted above, DOC has not “alienated” PCL in the Bream Bay area. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information is not held. General information about the specific areas you have listed is outlined below.

- *Racecourse* – The Ruakaka Racecourse has been operating at the current site since 1974, prior to the establishment of DOC in 1987. This land was previously administered by Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) and transferred to Landcorp. It has never been managed by DOC. Further information is publicly accessible info on both the WDC website and Ruakaka racing websites.
- *Golf Course* – The Waipu golf course has been operating at site since approximately 1966. It appears that this land block of 54.2887ha was subject to a lease with the former Department of Lands and Survey, the responsibilities of which were distributed to DOC, LINZ and Landcorp in 1987. The land was sold prior to the establishment of DOC in 1987 – note that there is a section of PCL adjoining the course (1.05 ha) that continued to be leased by the Waipu Golf Course, as this was not included as part of that purchase.
- *Refinery pipelines* – The Refinery at Marsden Point commenced operations in 1964. The Crown transferred ownership of the associated fuel and seawater pipelines via the [State-Owned Enterprises \(Might River Power Limited\) Vesting Order 2014](#). The land is owned by the Crown and managed by the Department of Conservation. This pipeline has been in operation prior to the establishment of DOC in 1987. There are no lease fees.
- *Wastewater Ruakaka* – This is a retrospective lease as the pipeline was in place prior to establishment of the Department of Conservation in 1987. Variations have been made to the lease for additional mains to adjoin the existing pipeline, which have occurred when upgrading of the wastewater system has been required. The pipelines are underground and there are no lease fees.
- *Wastewater Waipu* – This is a retrospective lease as the pipeline was in place prior to establishment of the Department of Conservation in 1987. These pipelines are underground. There are no lease fees.
- *Landfill* - There was a landfill that was in operation at Uretiti prior to the establishment of the Department in 1987. The landfill has since been retired.
- *Transfer Station* – The Whangārei District Council holds a permit to operate a Greenwaste disposal facility (1.4 hectares) and a Transfer Station (0.6 hectares) at the site where the landfill operated. The transfer station and Greenwaste disposal facility operate on a smaller footprint than the original landfill. It appears that the land that was retired from use has been transferred to the Department. The council pays an annual lease based on the commercial value of the land
- *Ruakaka Campground* – The campground comes under the Ruakaka Domain Recreation Reserve. This has been under Control and Management prior to the establishment of the Department of Conservation in 1987. Based on publicly accessible information, this campground was established in the 1930s. The current Reserve Board

manages the campground on behalf of DOC. There is no record of the Department having altered the use of this reserve since 1987.

- *Waipu Campground* – The campground and neighbouring public amenities come under the Waipu Cove Domain Recreation Reserve. This has been under control and management prior to the establishment of the Department of Conservation in 1987. Based on publicly accessible information, the first Domain Board was appointed in 1943. The current Reserve Board manages the campground on behalf of DOC. There is no record of the Department having altered the use of this reserve since 1987.

3. What is the commercial value (rental or purchase price) of the land WDC has identified for its current interests?

This information is not held by DOC and is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the OIA. As noted above, we recommend you contact WDC directly for further information.

4. Would WDC still want the land if they had to pay commercial value for it?

This information is not held by DOC and is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the OIA. As noted above, we recommend you contact WDC directly for further information.

5. Is DOC considering a commercial concession with an appropriately set commercial value for the land? The processing or otherwise of a concession currently for any party including the WDC?

No applications from WDC have been received by DOC. However, the Waipu Cove Surf Life Saving Club have applied to renew their lease on the Waipu Cove Domain Recreation Reserve. This was publicly notified in June 2025.

6. Has DOC asked WDC how much they have collected from developers as development contributions over the last 25 years?

No. We recommend you contact WDC directly for further information.

7. Has DOC asked WDC how much they have collected as reserve contributions?

No. We recommend you contact WDC directly for further information.

8. How much has WDC spent in the Marsden Ruakaka area on new reserves?

This information is not held by DOC and is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the OIA. We recommend you contact WDC directly for further information.

9. Has WDC contributed to DOC to improve amenities on PCL in the area?

No.

11. Has the WDC shared a plan for future needs re infrastructure including this ext into PCL forecast or planned?

Yes. WDC has been holding public meetings regarding the Ruakākā Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade proposal and information on this proposed plan is publicly accessible. DOC has been consulted as part of the current preliminary design, investigation and assessment stage. Please refer to the WDC [website](#) for further information.

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) may be published on DOC's website.



Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sue Reed-Thomas".

Sue Reed-Thomas
Regional Operations Director, Northern North Island
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai