[redacted]

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Ref: OIAD-9508

26 August 2026

Tēnā koe [redacted]

We refer to your request to the Minister of Conservation dated 26 July 2026 that was transferred to the Department of Conservation on 29 July 2026, for response.

You stated and asked for:

> *"Motor Camp lease at Lake Waikaremoana*
> *In the Wednesday issue of the Daily Post, Rotorua, on July 15th there was an article about the Waikaremoana Motor Camp and the sale to the Tuhoe Iwi Authority Te Uru Taumatua. The article stated the Department of Conservation had given management of the Waikaremoana Holiday Park, it held by lease, to Te Uru Taumatua.*
> *Pursuant to the Official Information Act I ask you to advise:*
> 1. *Detail of the lease agreement between the two Tūhoe trust boards with the Department of Conservation.*
> 2. *Is it a sublease of the motor camp, or has the Department of Conservation only given management to Te Uru Taumatua;*
> 3. *Was the lease of management agreement confirmed by the Maori Land Court?*
> 4. *When was the discussion with Te Uru Taumatua commenced? "*

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

Before proceeding further, we have outlined details regarding our approach to your request.

Approach to request
In addition to determining what information it holds, the Department must also decide how the information will be released. Section 16 of the OIA allows information to be made available in several ways in response to a request.

Information can be provided in a summarised form – particularly where relevant information is being drawn or extracted from more than one source, or extracted from a source that also contains other information that is out of scope of the request at hand. Please note the Department has decided to provide the information you have requested in a summarised form.

Department's response
Using your numbering, your questions and our responses are set out below.

1. *Detail of the lease agreement between the two Tūhoe trust boards with the Department of Conservation.*

In 1918, the Native Land Court (now Māori Land Court) found in favour of 700 owners from three iwi (Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Ruapani and Ngāti Kahungunu) concerning the ownership of the bed of Lake Waikaremoana (lakebed).

In the 1940s, the lake level was lowered as part of the development of a hydroelectric scheme. This created an area of flat land around the lake that was within the legal boundary of the lakebed.

The lakebed is Māori freehold land. It is owned as tenants in common by Tūhoe Charitable Trust Board (387 shares – previously known as Tūhoe-Waikaremoana Trust Board) and Wairoa-Waikaremoana Māori Trust Board (148 shares – previously known as Wairoa-Waikaremoana Trust Board) (together 'the owners'). The owners represent individuals from Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāti Ruapani.

In 1970, the owners agreed to lease the lakebed to the Crown. The lease is incorporated into the Schedule of the Lake Waikaremoana Act 1971. This Act validates the lease and defines the roles of the Trust Boards. For further details, please see:

Lake Waikaremoana Act 1971 | New Zealand Legislation | https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1971/152/en/latest/#DLM405573

The lease was for an initial period of fifty (50) years, with rights of renewal for further fifty (50) year terms in perpetuity. The rental is based on 5.5 percent of the value of the lakebed (5,210 hectares) and is reviewed every ten years.

Since 2016, there have been intermittent discussions and correspondence between Ministers, the Department and the owners on potential future management arrangements for the lakebed. These discussions included the Department's desire to divest from the Holiday Park business and its assets, which has now been achieved.

2. *Is it a sublease of the motor camp, or has the Department of Conservation only given management to Te Uru Taumatua*?

The Holiday Park has existed in some form on the site since at least the 1940s. The business has been owned and operated by the Department since 1987.

Due to the Holiday Park being on private land, there was no possibility of offering the assets to a party other than the owners. Following a closed process involving an offer exclusively to the owners of the Māori freehold land, which the Holiday Park assets sit on, the business was sold to Te Uru Taumatua, the Tūhoe iwi authority.

The sale and purchase of the Holiday Park was on commercial terms, based on independent valuations of the business, buildings and physical assets.

The Department ensured there was agreement for continued public access to the Holiday Park and Lake Waikaremoana.

3. *Was the lease of management agreement confirmed by the Maori Land Court?*

   There is no lease of management agreement. Consequently, there has been no need to confirm such a document with the Māori Land Court.

4. *When was the discussion with Te Uru Taumatua commenced?*

   From October 2023, the Department engaged with Tūhoe Charitable Trust Board, Te Urewera Board and the Wairoa-Waikaremoana Māori Trust Board on the matter of the lakebed lease - and from mid-2025, regarding the Holiday Park.

   During this engagement, the same information was supplied to all parties.

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 the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Jade Kinghazel
Director, Regional Operations – Eastern North Island
Department of Conservation | *Te Papa Atawhai*