Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Memo: Online regional iwi leaders hui

To	Minister of Conservation	**Date submitted**	26 February 2025
Reference	25-B-0055	**DocCM**	DOC-7884913
Security Level	**In Confidence**		
From	Ruth Isaac, Deputy Director General - Policy and Regulatory Services [redacted]		
Subject	Online hui with regional iwi leaders on March 5th and 6th		
Attachments	Attachment A – Powerpoint presentation - Online regional iwi leaders hui Attachment B – Talking points - Online regional iwi leaders hui		

Purpose – Te aronga

1. This memo provides you with a presentation and talking points to support the six 30-minute-long online hui you are holding with regional iwi leaders across 5 - 6 March:
    - Wednesday 5 March: Four hui from 5 to 7pm
    - Thursday 6 March: Two hui from 10:30 to 11:30am
2. These will be assigned across five or six regional groupings, with one possibly for Te Pou Taiao representatives.
3. As public consultations of proposals to modernise the conservation system close on 28 February, the focus of the presentation covers:
    - Key themes we heard at the regional hui with Iwi and any initial reflections
    - The intention to engage with post-settlement governance entities (PSGEs) on approaches to upholding settlements and context about the plan for doing this
    - Next steps for the legislative process and further opportunities for engagement
    - Upcoming engagement opportunities on conservation issues such as the ANZBS Implementation Plan, Predator Free 2050 strategy review and the Visitor Network Strategy.
4. Te Arawhiti will provide content relating to Māori Land Court's jurisdiction over PSGEs.

Background and context – Te horopaki

5. Public consultations on proposals to modernise conservation land management and to explore charging for access to some public conservation land close on 28 February.
6. These online hui provide the opportunity to update iwi leaders on progress on your priorities, next steps, and to thank them for their participation in the 25 regional hui held so far on the proposals.

7. It also allows you to share information on upcoming engagement opportunities across other conservation topics such as Te Mana o te Taiao Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Plan, the Predator Free 2050 strategy review and the Visitor Network Strategy.

Views from Iwi will inform the Conservation Amendment Bill

8. DOC held a range of engagement sessions across November 2024 to February 2025, including 25 regional hui with Iwi.
9. Iwi shared a range of views across both public consultation documents.
10. Key themes heard from modernising conservation land management hui included:
    - general agreement that the management planning system was overly complex and that more can be done to make management planning work for iwi
    - that the number and volume of concessions iwi are expected to engage in is too high, and interest in alleviating some of that burden
    - a view that iwi often did not get a 'look-in' for new concession opportunities, and interest in opening up the concessions system to new concessionaires - including iwi concessionaires – through ways such as competitive allocation processes instead of first-in-first serve
    - good feedback on how iwi rights and interests ought to be considered during any concession allocation process
    - interest in how land exchange and disposal might be set up to meet iwi land ownership aspirations
    - interest in more involvement in how management policies and plans are developed, or how concessions are assessed
    - seeking more specific details about how their settlements would be upheld if the proposed changes go ahead
    - concern about any changes to the existing boundaries set by Conservation Management Strategies and Plans, taking account of planning redress

11. Key themes heard from exploring charging for access to some public conservation land hui included:
    - general support for the idea of access charging at most hui, depending on how it was implemented
    - strong support for charging international visitors for access to public conservation land, from both revenue and visitor management perspectives
    - some views around exempting Māori from charging
    - mixed views were heard around exempting all Māori from access charging, or just Iwi with mana whenua in that rohe
    - a strong interest to be involved in decisions on how revenue from access charges is allocated
    - reasonable consensus that at least some of the proceeds should be spent where it is generated
12. This feedback will be considered as DOC further refines policy detail.

Upcoming engagement opportunities on other conservation issues

Te Mana o te Taiao Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Plan

13. From June to December last year, DOC received feedback from Iwi/Hapū and Māori organisations on the proposed critical actions for the next implementation plan for Te Mana o te Taiao - Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (ANZBS).
14. We are now preparing to release a discussion document in April 2025 for a period of 8 weeks. More information will be shared with Iwi/Hapū around this time.
15. This will give the opportunity for anyone to make a formal written submission on the proposals should they wish. Two public webinars are planned during this time which will be advertised on the DOC website. In communications to Iwi/Hapū and Māori organisations, DOC will specifically encourage attendance and highlight the webinars as a key opportunity to engage.

Predator Free 2050 strategy review

16. As part of the public consultation for the Predator Free 2050 strategy review, DOC will be hosting a small number of public regional meetings in areas across the country where significant Predator Free 2050 operations are underway.
17. DOC is planning to run the Predator Free 2050 Strategy review and Te Mana o te Taiao Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy Implementation plan engagements together, where it makes sense to do so. What this looks like is yet to be planned out in detail and may include a mixture of online webinars and in-person meetings. This will be confirmed in due course.
18. It is intended that these meetings celebrate the hard work communities do for Predator Free 2050 and provide opportunities for direct presentations and discussion with the public. DOC will invite local Iwi/Hapū to these events to hear their perspectives on the national strategy for Predator Free 2050 once locations and times are confirmed.

Visitor Network Strategy

19. The Visitor Network Strategy will set the direction to refine the visitor network, ensuring it meets the changing needs of visitors, is financially sustainable, and is resilient to the effects of climate change. There are likely to be opportunities to partner with Iwi/Hapū, commercial providers and NGOs to deliver quality visitor experiences.
20. The release of the Strategy is on hold while public consultation on modernising conservation land management and charging for access occurs, and as a clearer cost and revenue picture is developed.
21. In mid-2025 we will provide you with comprehensive advice on costs and revenue, including potential divestment and other future scenarios.
22. Engagement with Treaty partners and targeted stakeholders to discuss the size and shape of their local networks could from occur in mid-late 2025 subject to Cabinet agreement.

World Heritage Tentative List review

23. DOC is reviewing Aotearoa New Zealand's World Heritage Tentative List. This is NZ's list of natural and cultural heritage sites with strong potential to be inscribed as globally significant UNESCO World Heritage sites. Sites need to be on this List before they can be nominated for World Heritage status.
24. The review is overdue; the Tentative List is from 2007, and the UNESCO guidance advises to review tentative lists at least every 10 years.

Timeline of the review

25. DOC intends to launch the public call for Expressions of Interest for sites to be considered for the Tentative List during April 2025.
26. Once this is launched, it will take approximately 18 months to develop a final Tentative List (following UNESCO guidelines for the process). The process is made up of 3 months for Expressions of Interest and 6 months for applications proper. After applications close, the due diligence, recommendation and approval process will take another 9 months.
27. Concurrently, DOC will be reviewing the existing Tentative List sites to assess whether they ought to remain on the List.

Iwi engagement

28. Engagement with iwi is planned and will be categorised into three broad groups:
    - iwi/hapū associated with existing World Heritage sites;
    - iwi/hapū that have tentative sites in their region or we know have an active interest in pursuing a site; and
    - other iwi/hapū that may have a broader interest.
29. The purpose, nature and timing of engagement will vary with the different groups. DOC is seeking to start conversations before the public launch with iwi/hapū with World Heritage or Tentative List sites.
30. DOC intends to offer this as a potential agenda item for the Iwi Chairs Forum in July to discuss the opportunity of the Tentative List review, e.g. the process and timeline, and why this is something iwi may want to pursue for themselves e.g. benefits of World Heritage, and also responsibilities of World Heritage.

Risk assessment – Aronga tūraru

31. This is a good opportunity to let iwi leaders know about plans to engage with PSGEs on approaches to uphold Treaty settlements.
32. There is an expectation that government work closely with Treaty partners to ensure that settlement commitments that are likely to be impacted by these changes, are provided equivalence in the new system.

Next steps – Ngā tāwhaitanga

33. You will receive advice this week on engaging PSGEs on upholding settlements under the Conservation Amendment Bill [25-B-0059 refers].
34. Officials propose to engage with PSGEs on their settlement commitments from April to July this year.
35. While this engagement is underway, it is planned that policy decisions on the new conservation management framework are obtained from Cabinet in May and June, so Bill drafting can begin. These decisions will be informed by feedback received in submissions and heard during regional hui but will leave space for where conversations on settlements get to. There may therefore be opportunity for an additional round of Cabinet decisions after engagement with PSGEs.
36. The second half of the year will then be focused on drafting the Conservation Amendment Bill, with the intent to introduce it to the House around November/December this year.

ENDS

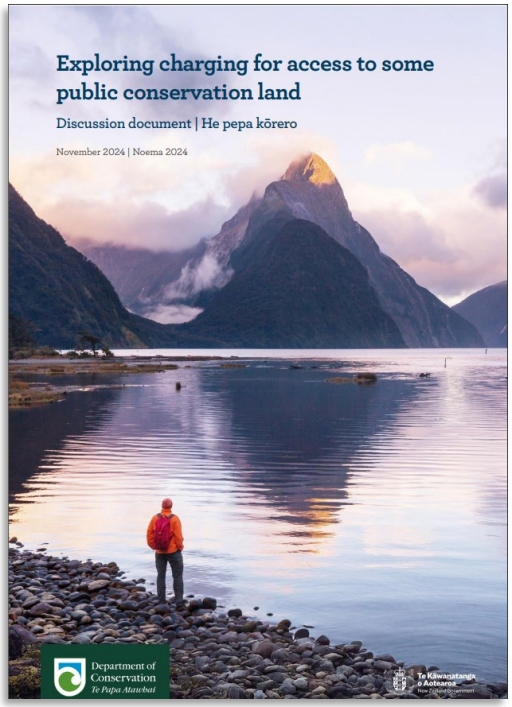
He kōrero

Wrap up of
public consultations
and looking forward

March 2025

Public consultations

- Public consultations: 15/11/24 – 18/02/25
- Engagement sessions:
  - ✓25 regional hui with Iwi
  - ✓4 public sessions
  - ✓15 stakeholder sessions



Key themes from regional hui with Iwi

Modernising conservation land management

- Management planning - Complex
- Concessions
    - Engagement burden
    - Timeframes
- Land exchange and disposal – Iwi
- Upholding Settlements

Key themes from regional hui with Iwi

Exploring charging for access to some public conservation land

- General support overall
- Strong support - charge international visitors
- Feedback on exempting Iwi/Māori
- Deciding how revenue is allocated
- Reasonable consensus - proceeds spent where generated

Upcoming engagement with PSGEs

- Treaty settlements will be upheld
- Letters to PSGEs proposing principles and engagement from now - July
- Proposed approach to uphold settlement commitments:

Less substantive impacts on settlements e.g. updating references to new planning documents	**Substantial impacts on settlements** e.g. Iwi specific roles in preparing and approving planning documents to be translated to new system
Work through primarily via correspondence, with DOC available to engage as follow-up.	Closer engagement to develop ways to uphold the integrity of the redress and practical ‘equivalents’ in the new system.

- Further engagement between DOC and some PSGEs to test key considerations
- Regular kōrero with Pou Taiao technicians

Broader work: Concessions performance and targets

- Key Target - reduce processing times
- Customer facing technology
- 1318 in Sept ‘24 to 1177 March ‘25
- Expectation: No applications older than one year

Next steps

Legislative process and opportunities for engagement

Apr – Jul 2025

DOC engages with PSGEs on settlements

May – Jun 2025

Cabinet decisions (excl. settlements)

Jun – Oct 2025

Bill drafted, with first National Conservation Policy Statement

Nov – Dec 2025

Bill introduced

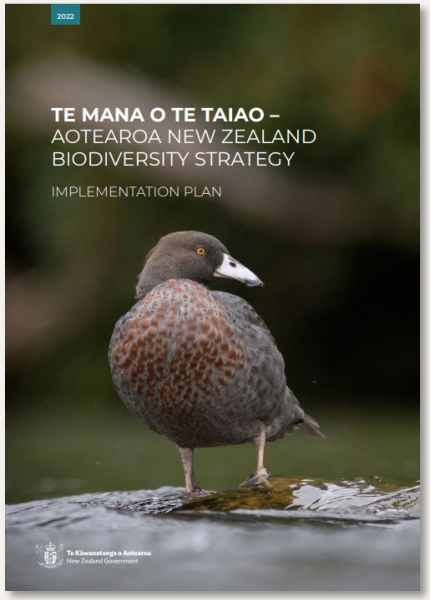
Early 2026

Select committee

Mid 2026

Bill passed

Upcoming engagement opportunities



Te Mana o te Taiao - Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy Implementation plan

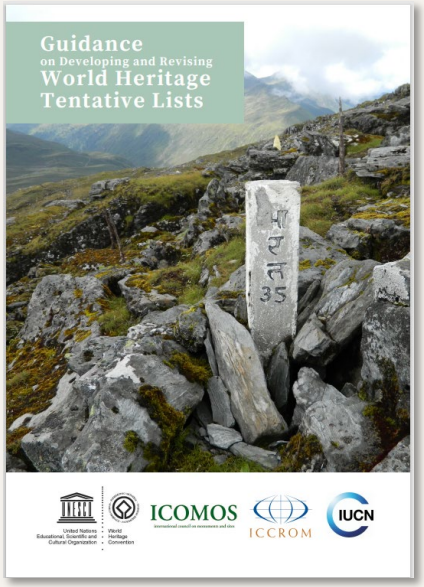
- Early engagement June – December 2024
- Iwi/Hapū and Māori organisations engaged
- April 2025: Release discussion document for next implementation plan
  - 8 week consultation
  - Planned public webinars

Predator Free 2050 strategy review

- Meetings with PF2050 landscape projects:
  - Celebrate communities
  - Provide information on the review
- Local Iwi/Hapū encouraged to attend
- Aim to align with *Te Mana o te Taiao Implementation plan* engagement
- Details to come

Visitor Network Strategy

- Realign DOC’s visitor network to:
  - better meet visitor needs
  - improve financial sustainability
- Potential opportunities for Iwi/Hapū
- Mid-late 2025: Engage Iwi/Hāpu and key stakeholders



Revise World Heritage Tentative List review

Sites considered to have outstanding universal values with strong potential to achieve World Heritage status and increase recognition of New Zealand's prime cultural sites.

Revise Aotearoa New Zealand's World Heritage Tentative List:

- Iwi/Hapū/local aspirations and expectations
- International practice
- Reflect sites that enjoy broad support
- Identify high potential sites

From April 2025 engaging with Iwi/Hapū with on:

- Existing World Heritage sites
- Sites on the current Tentative List
- Known World Heritage aspirations

Māori Land Court jurisdiction over PSGEs

- Supreme Court judgement (Nikora v Kruger)
- Crown view on PSGE accountability
- Option to resolve via settlement legislation
- Separate to Te Ture Whenua reform

He pātai?

Attachment B: Talking points for online hui with regional iwi leaders - March 5 & 6, 2025

Slide #	Topic	Talking points
1	Introduction	• Kia ora koutou, thank you for joining me this evening.
2	Public consultation on proposals to modernise the conservation system	• I spoke with you last year, just before launching the two discussion documents for public consultation in November to: 1) modernise the conservation management system and, 2) explore charging for access to some public conservation land. • These discussion documents have started a nationwide conversation. • Over the past few months, I've seen the discussions all over social media and the news and my team had great kōrero with people all over the country. • Public consultation recently closed on Friday 28 February. • DOC held engagement sessions across that time. This included: o 25 regional hui with Iwi o 4 public sessions o 15 stakeholder session
3	Key themes heard at the regional hui with Iwi	• Thank you all for taking the time to participate in the regional hui and sharing your views with DOC. .As I told you when we began, it was very important to me to allow as much time as possible for these conversations to take place. • I will be working through various feedback to refine the proposed changes. Modernising.conservation.land.management • During hui, we heard general agreement that the management planning system was overly complex, iwi often felt they didn't get a 'look-in' for new concession opportunities, and iwi often felt overwhelmed with the number of concessions they were expected to comment on.

		• We heard more can be done to make management planning work for iwi. • We heard that the number and volume of concessions iwi are expected to engage in is too high. It doesn't always work for iwi to comment on individual concessions, rather than having a say on how concessions are managed more widely. We heard interest in alleviating some of that burden by baking in ways to have more upfront conversations about actual activities on conservation land, and how that should be managed. • Similarly, we heard a lot of interest in opening up the concessions system to new concessionaires - including iwi concessionaires – through things like competitive allocation processes instead of first-in-first-serve. • We heard some concerns about timeframes not being realistic for plans and concessions, given the need for iwi input. • We had a lot of good feedback on how iwi rights and interests ought to be considered during any concession allocation process. We heard there is currently no consistency about how or when iwi rights and interests are considered, and that greater clarity was needed. • We heard a lot of interest in how land exchange and disposal might be set up to meet iwi land ownership aspirations. • I also heard that there are ways in which the proposals can be strengthened. • Some iwi raised that they wanted more involvement in how management policies and plans are developed, or how concessions are assessed. • Some iwi understandably asked for more specific details about how their settlements would be upheld if the proposed changes go ahead, and what the system could look like in practice. • We will also need to carefully consider settlement redress when making any changes to the existing boundaries set by Conservation Management Strategies and Plans. • I have asked DOC to provide me with options in relation to your feedback, which I will consider over the next few months.

4		Exploring.charging.for.access.to.some.public.conservation.land • There was general support for the idea of access charging at most hui, depending on how it was implemented. • There was strong support for charging international visitors for access to public conservation land, from both revenue and visitor management perspectives. • Some views were shared around exempting Māori from charging. • Mixed views were also heard around exempting all Māori from access charging, or just Iwi with mana whenua in that rohe. • There was a strong interest to be involved in decisions on how revenue from access charges is allocated. • We also heard reasonable consensus that most of the proceeds should be spent where it is generated. • Your feedback is important. As with the concessions proposals, DOC is now working on more detail on what the proposed changes could look like in practice. • DOC will provide that advice in the next month.
5	Upcoming engagement with PSGEs on approaches to uphold settlements	• Upholding the intent of Treaty settlements is a bottom line for me, and we will be engaging with PSGEs in good faith. • This is important for proposed changes to conservation planning documents, concession processes and land exchange and disposals. • I will be writing to all PSGEs shortly proposing a specific way forward to uphold your treaty settlement redress. • I know some settlements provide specific planning redress – often Iwi-specific planning documents or chapters in these documents, or roles in the preparation and approval of conservation planning documents. o In these cases, I expect we may need more time working with you to develop ways to

		uphold the intent of the redress and practical 'equivalents' in the new system. • For settlement commitments where the proposed changes would have a less substantive impact on settlements (e.g. changing references to reflect new planning documents), I will propose that we deal with this primarily via correspondence. ○ DOC staff will still be available to discuss proposals with PSGEs, but I would like to resolve any questions or uncertainties on this type of redress as soon as possible. • I'm proposing more substantive hui between DOC and some PSGEs to test key considerations and issues as we work towards practical solutions. • I have also asked DOC to set up regular discussions with Pou Taiao technicians, who I know will support the interests of all PSGEs alongside direct engagement by DOC.
6	Broader work: Concessions performance and targets	• Alongside looking at law change, I have also set targets for DOC to improve its performance in processing concessions, and I am closely monitoring this. I want DOC to do things faster and use technology better. • We're already seeing improvement. The overall number of live applications is coming down through concerted efforts from 1318 in September to 1177 this month. • Another key target is reducing the time taken to process concessions, in particular cutting the number of concessions taking over a year almost entirely. I expect that by mid-2026, no applications will be older than one year, with very few exceptions (such as litigation). • I have asked for weekly reports on these numbers and am expecting to see improvements.
7	Next steps for the legislative process and further opportunities for engagement	• I have asked DOC to engage with PSGEs on their settlement commitments from April to July this year. • While this engagement continues, I plan to seek Cabinet decisions in May and June, so Bill drafting can begin. These decisions will be informed by feedback received in submissions and heard during regional hui, but will leave space for where

		conversations on settlements get to. There may therefore be an additional round of Cabinet decisions after engagement with PSGEs. • The second half of the year will then be for drafting the Conservation Amendment Bill, so it can be introduced to the House around November/December. • The first National Conservation Policy Statement (NCPS) could also be drafted alongside the Bill. This is the document that would replace the Conservation General Policy and General Policy for National Parks. • If all of that proceeds to schedule, the Bill would likely be at select committee in the first few months of next year. • My goal is then to pass the Bill before the election.
8	Upcoming engagement opportunities on conservation	• As I have previously signalled there are other priorities that I want to talk to you about. In particular, the next Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Plan, changes to the Predator Free Strategy, and the strategy work on the future of New Zealand's visitor network.
9	Discussion Document for Te Mana o te Taiao - Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Plan	• From June to December last year, we received feedback from Iwi/Hapū and Māori organisations on the proposed critical actions for the next implementation plan for Te Mana o te Taiao - Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (ANZBS). • Thank you for your considered feedback on this important work. • DOC is planning to release the ANZBS discussion document in April with an 8-week consultation period and DOC hosted webinars. We will send you further information closer to the time. • This will be the opportunity for anyone to make a formal written submission on the proposals should they wish.
10	Predator Free 2050 strategy review	• DOC will also be holding a small number of meetings with PF2050 Landscape projects and their associated communities as part of the public consultation for the Predator Free 2050 strategy review.

		• Meetings will celebrate the hard work communities do for PF2050 and provide opportunities for direct presentations and discussion with the public. • I'm keen for DOC to hear from local Iwi/Hapū at these events to ensure their perspectives are captured as we consider next steps on the national strategy for Predator Free 2050 (locations and times are TBC). • I've asked DOC to run the Predator Free 2050 Strategy review and ANZBS Implementation plan engagements together, where it makes sense to do so.
11	Visitor Network Strategy	• I have asked DOC to review the visitor network to make sure it meets the changing needs of visitors, is financially sustainable, and is resilient to climate change. • The work is an opportunity to drill down into what DOCs role is in providing visitor experiences. In certain circumstances, particularly where the experience does not align with DOCs strategic direction, this could mean reducing their offering. This could potentially provide opportunities for iwi/hapū or other parties to own or maintain some visitor experiences. • We're looking at regional consultation with Treaty Partners and targeted stakeholders in the second half of 2025.
12	World Heritage Tentative List review	• DOC is reviewing Aotearoa New Zealand's World Heritage Tentative List. Sites need to be on this List before they can be nominated for World Heritage status. • Alongside DOC's commitment to being an honourable Treaty partner, UNESCO also places a strong emphasis on engagement with indigenous people and local communities and expects full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the preparation of Tentative Lists. • The review is an opportunity to make sure sites on the list meet World Heritage criteria and have iwi/hapū support. • Engaging with iwi will be important to ensure they are aware of the opportunity to propose sites for listing and are well informed of the benefits and

		responsibilities associated with World Heritage status. Timeline.and.engagement • We're proposing to launch the public call for Expressions of Interest for sites to be considered for the Tentative List in April 2025. Based on UNESCO guidelines, it will take approximately 18 months to have a final Tentative List. • The public application process is made up of 3 months for expressions of interest and 6 months for proper applications. • Engagement with iwi is categorised into three broad groups: o iwi/hapū associated with existing World Heritage sites, o iwi/hapū that have tentative sites in their region or we know have an active interest in pursuing a site, and; o other iwi/hapū that may have a broader interest. • DOC will start conversations with iwi/hapū before the public launch. • DOC plans to offer this as a potential agenda item for the Iwi Chairs Forum in July to engage with wider iwi.
	Māori Land Court jurisdiction over PSGEs	• In October 2024, a Supreme Court judgment (Nikora v Kruger) found that post-settlement governance entities are subject to the supervisory jurisdiction of the Maori Land Court under Te Ture Whenua Maori Act 1993. • It is the Crown's view that this was not contemplated in the development of the PSGE framework, that the jurisdiction of the Maori Land Court would apply. • In our view, there are sufficient accountability mechanisms through the establishment of your PSGEs and what is required under your respective Trust deeds. • I am shortly to seek Cabinet agreement to a one-off legislative solution, for PSGEs who formally request it, to amend your settlement legislation to disallow the relevant Te Ture Whenua Maori Act clauses for your PSGEs.

		• As this matter is about PSGE policy, rather than the broader Te Ture Whenua reforms I am contemplating, this will be addressed as a separate matter.
13	Closing remarks/Patai	• Thank you for your time today. I appreciate your attendance and involvement across this important mahi. • Questions?