Murihiku Regeneration
140 Charlton Road
PO Box 114
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12 June 2026

To: The Department of Conservation

Letter of Support for Heritage Expeditions to Gain Long Term Concession and Permit Applications

Tēnā koutou,

I am pleased to provide my support for Heritage Expeditions and the long-term concession and permit applications currently being progressed with the Department of Conservation.

Heritage Expeditions has been a longstanding contributor to the southern region and has established a reputation built on responsible operations, environmental stewardship, meaningful community engagement and a genuine commitment to the places in which it operates.

The company has consistently demonstrated that conservation and economic aspirations can work together when approached thoughtfully and responsibly. Through its activities, Heritage Expeditions contributes not only to regional employment and economic activity, but also to wider conservation awareness, heritage interpretation and the promotion of New Zealand's unique environmental values to international audiences.

The southern regions face both opportunities and challenges as we seek to create sustainable economic futures while protecting the natural and cultural values that define Murihiku and the wider South. Organisations willing to make long-term commitments to these outcomes should be encouraged through frameworks that provide appropriate certainty and stability.

The proposed longer-term concessions would enable Heritage Expeditions to continue investing in its operations, workforce, vessels, conservation partnerships and regional relationships. Such investment supports local communities while also strengthening New Zealand's position as a world-leading destination for conservation-focused expedition tourism.

I have observed the manner in which the Russ family approaches its responsibilities and I am encouraged by the emphasis they place on environmental integrity, long-term thinking and constructive relationships with iwi, communities and stakeholders. Their commitment extends beyond commercial outcomes and reflects a broader understanding of stewardship and responsibility.

From both a regional development and governance perspective, long-term concession certainty provides an opportunity for proven operators to continue contributing positively to conservation objectives while supporting sustainable economic growth and employment within southern communities. Heritage Expeditions has continued to work constructively with us through our Murihiku ki te Tonga Programme.

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For these reasons, I support Heritage Expeditions' applications and respectfully urge the Department of Conservation to give favourable consideration to the long-term concession and permit arrangements requested.

Ngā mihi



Terry Nicholas, MNZM
Portfolio Director
Upoko o Hokonui Rūnanga