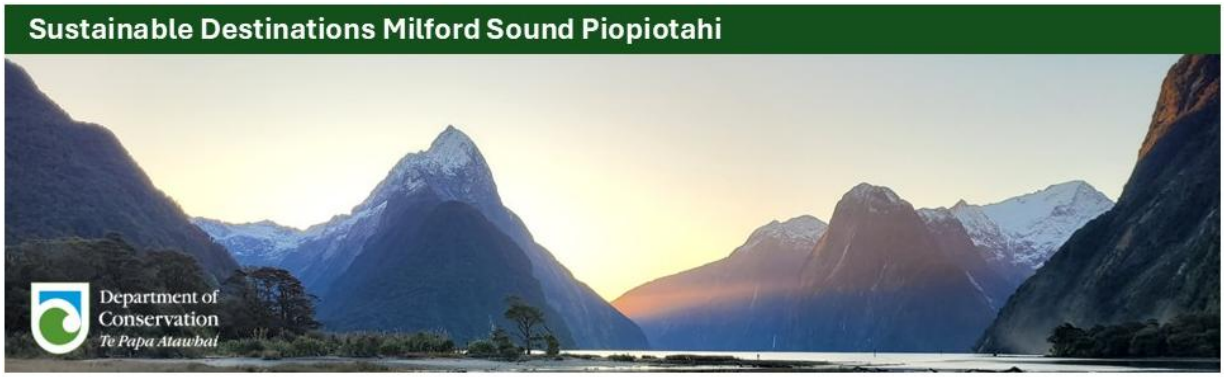


Milford Sound Piopiotahi Programme Board meeting summary

Date: 13 August 2026

Venue: Dunedin

Chair: Catherine Wilson (DOC)

Board members: Jenn Bestwick (Independent), Jana Davis (Ngāi Tahu), Nadia Wesley-Smith (Ngāi Tahu), Barry Bragg (Ngāi Tahu), Dave Beeche (Independent), Phil O'Reilly (Independent), Sarah Greaney (Community Representative), Rob Phillips (attending on behalf of Stephen Hall, Environment Southland)

Other attendees: DOC Piopiotahi Programme Team members

Summary

- Safe evacuation plans for the Piopiotahi community in the event of an earthquake is a priority for the Board. Lessons from the recent earthquake were shared, with strong support for immediate measures to be taken to improve staff and visitor safety.
- Work to activate Ngāi Tahu's cultural presence at Piopiotahi is progressing, with Ngāi Tahu Board members engaging with Papatipu Rūnaka (local Ngāi Tahu councils) members to determine appropriate location and design of entranceway pou whenua and overarching cultural presence plan.
- The Board reflected on changes to the operating environment since their inception in November 2025, including the likely timeframes for implementation of an international visitor access charge and new statutory planning regime for public conservation land through the Conservation Amendment Bill.
- The importance of coordination between government agencies, Treaty partners, local businesses, and the community was reiterated throughout discussions. Local and central government committed to lean in and coordinate on decision-making at Piopiotahi.
- Jenn Bestwick has stepped down from the Board to focus on other commitments, following extensive involvement in MOP including as chair of phase three. Her astute analysis and insight will be greatly missed, and the Board wishes her well in her future endeavours.

Next meeting

The next Programme Board meeting is planned for October in Te Anau and Piopiotahi.