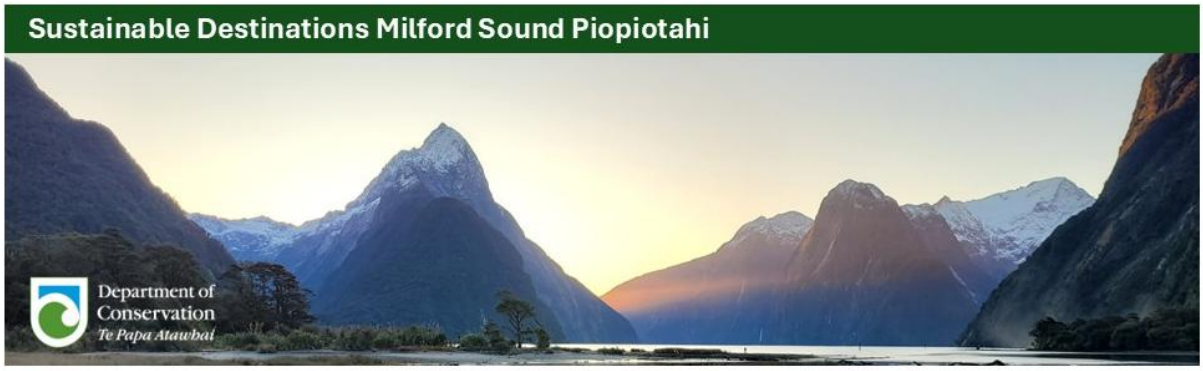


Milford Sound Piopiotahi Programme Board meeting summary

Date: 16 October 2026

Venue: Distinction Hotel, Te Anau

Chair: Penny Nelson

Board members: Jana Davis, Nadia Wesley-Smith, Barry Bragg, Dave Beeche, Phil O'Reily, Rob Phillips, Nora Burghart, Sarah Greaney, David Butt

Other attendees: Catherine Wilson (DOC), Clare Stringer (DOC), John Lucas (DOC), Grant Tremain (DOC), Sarah Baddeley (MartinJenkins), Ben Craven (MartinJenkins)

Summary

- The latest Milford Programme Board meeting was an important opportunity for members to engage with key stakeholders and hear directly from community members in Piopiotahi Milford Sound and Te Anau.
- Prior to the meeting, on 15 October the Board undertook a day of engagement, visiting Piopiotahi and attending The Te Anau Business Community Pre-Summer Get-Together hosted by Great South in the evening. The Milford Board had a useful meeting with the MSTL Board and the chairs agreed to stay in regular contact. They were joined by the new Director-General of DOC Peter Chrisp and previous Director-General Penny Nelson in her role as Board Chair.
- The Board visit to Piopiotahi gave them a renewed energy and urgency to bring about change for Milford with a shared vision of a truly world-class experience.
- Staff and visitor safety continues to be a priority for the Board. The current focus is on improved alignment and clear roles between Emergency Management Southland, the Department of Conservation, Environment Southland, NEMA, and other agencies with safety responsibilities.
- With a very busy summer coming up for Piopiotahi, the Board considered visitor projections and transport needs to ensure that all visitors have a great experience. DOC is working with MSTL and others to make all possible improvements to transport and parking at Piopiotahi ahead of this peak period. A park-and-ride from Knobs Flat will be trialled during the busy part of the season.

- The Board agreed that confirming a spatial plan for Piopiotahi and the Milford Road corridor is a priority to provide certainty and clear direction for the local community and businesses. Staff accommodation and future transport flows/parking are critical issues for the spatial plan and will be discussed further at the 10 December meeting. Any decisions will be made alongside key visitor safety considerations.
- The Board discussed how to facilitate private investment, work in partnership with current operators, and create new business opportunities which benefit people and place.

Next meeting

- The next Board meeting is planned for 10 December online.