

Sustainable Destinations

Piopiotahi Milford Sound

Te Anau, 30 September 2025

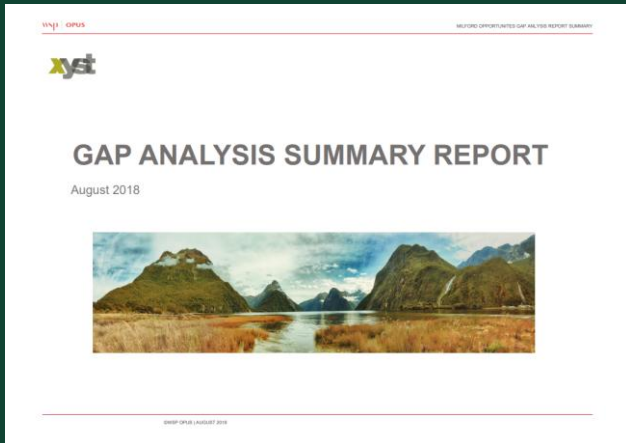


The Milford Opportunities Project (MOP) journey

MOP a collaborative approach

Stage 1 Gap analysis (2016 – 2018)

- Issue identification
- Public engagement
- Vision & values



Stage 2 Masterplan (2019 – 2021)

- Issue resolution
- Systems thinking
- Concept designs



Stage 3: Feasibility testing (2022 – 2024)

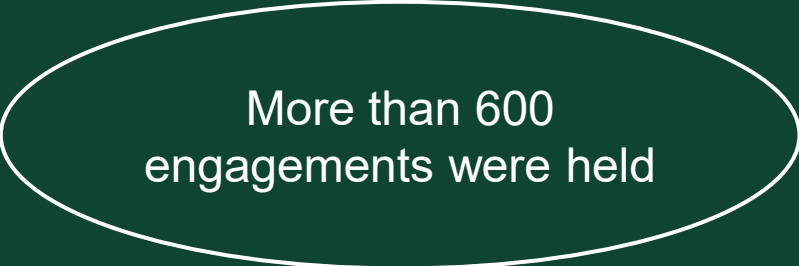
- Feasibility testing
- Stakeholder collaboration
- ‘Better Business Case’



Stage 3: MOP Board & Unit

Key consideration?

- The place and experience are protected
- Congestion and road safety issues are resolved
- Infrastructure responds to natural hazards, future demand and sustainability needs
- Recognition that the current management settings weren't working and hampering investment
- Strategic resetting to enable shared decision-making
- Ensure that Ngāi Tahu was recognised



More than 600
engagements were held

Investment objectives used in the feasibility testing

- World-class visitor system enhances conservation, business and community
- The future model is self-funding, sustainable and commercially viable
- Governance and mgmt. of the area is significantly improved
- Infrastructure is improved for efficiency, resilience and sustainability
- The role of Iwi is acknowledged, and te ao Māori values are embedded

The preferred option (Option 4)

- Immersive cultural experience with new visitor opportunities and corridor accommodation
- New approach to managed access
- IVAC to fund facilities (\$592M) and conservation (\$114M) over 10 years
- Independent statutory board & delivery unit managing the place as a 'Special amenities Area'
- New commercial opportunities for private investment
- Give effect to Ngāi Tahu rights, interests and aspirations
- Retention of managed private vehicle access, aerodrome and cruise-ship access – with impacts managed
- More resilient accommodation options for staff and visitors provided for



Hand-over

- The MOP Board delivered the MOP Business Case to Ministers – 27 June 2024
- MOP has officially been disestablished
- Some ex-MOP Board members are likely to have some involvement in the next phase of work
- The full Business Case (and supporting documents) are available on the Department of Conservation website:

www.doc.govt.nz/milford-opportunities



What DOC is progressing from the MOP Business Case

Catherine Wilson

DOC Director Heritage and Visitors

It's evident from the Milford Opportunities Project work...

- We need a shared view of direction of travel over next 10, 20 years...
- We need to change how decisions are made
- We need to untangle statutory processes to unlock the region's potential
- We need to address the 'cultural wasteland' (complete lack of cultural representation)
- We need to address visitor and worker safety, including on the road

*“The MOP Business Case makes a
compelling case for change.”
(Cabinet Paper 2025)*

Government intends to:

- Be more prominent in the stewardship of Milford Piopiotahi
- Be an honourable Treaty partner
- Collaborate on the issues that matter
- Deliver improvements rapidly along the corridor
- Work with businesses and concessionaires to make meaningful and timely progress





What Government will progress from MOP Business Case

- Investment in new and improved visitor experiences
- Ngāi Tahu's cultural footprint and interests
- Collaboration on hazards and congestion solutions
- Spatial planning
- Revenue and investment opportunities
- New management tools such as a 'Special Amenities Area'
- Managing concessions differently, providing greater certainty where we can

What proposals are off the table?

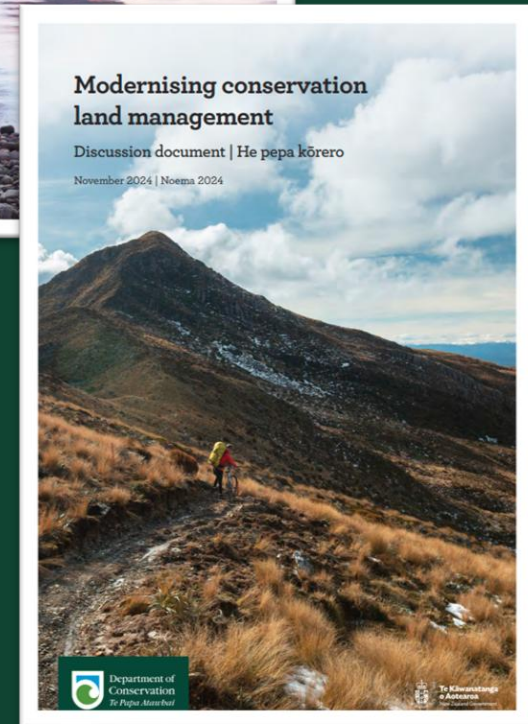
- Milford Sound Piopiotahi will remain within the Fiordland National Park with no separate governance entity

Legislative reform

The Prime Minister and Minister of Conservation made key announcements on 2 August:

- Investigation of access charging at four initial locations (including Piopiotahi Milford Sound)
- An efficient process for establishing Amenities areas on conservation land
- Streamlined and simplified management planning with a single layer of area plans
- An improved concession management and renewal processes (setting clear processes and timeframes, standardised pricing etc)

We have held targeted consultation on the National Conservation Policy Statement. This will inform what activities can be exempt or pre-approved in future.



Sustainable Destinations – Piopiotahi Milford Sound

Two-year work programme:

- Short-term investments to enhance visitor experience and cultural narrative
 - ✓ \$6.4m IVL investment secured – includes gateway pouwhenua
 - ✓ Ongoing pipeline of investment
- Working towards a new area plan and public consultation
 - ✓ Testing of a Special Amenities Area
- Develop concession outcomes and delivery plan
- Revenue and investment opportunities
- Short and medium-term transport improvements
- Infrastructure plans – working with 'Crown Infrastructure Delivery'
- Long-term governance and operational management model





Transitional governance

Cabinet has prioritised this programme for the Minister of Conservation, with progress monitored in the Prime Minister's regular updates

Transitional phase (12–24 months):

- Governance including mana whenua and 2 x independent members (Jenn Bestwick confirmed)
- Short-term delivery work
- Legislative changes (modernisation and access charging)

Implementation Phase:

- Likely to involve more capital-intensive investment and delivery and possibly different governance

Short term investments

- Deepwater Basin - New toilet/shelter, Landscaping, Parking.
- Working with Ngāi Tahu to deliver a new gateway Pou whenua and wider cultural elements
- Sinks Bridge – new short walk and viewing area
- Gertrude valley
 - new valley loop track and viewing area
 - improvements to the carpark and access from SH94
- Lake Marian Hinepitiwai – amenity improvements



DOC's wider work programmes

DOC's regional work programme is ongoing.

Planned/underway:

- The Chasm - new lookout
- Marian Falls Track - new bridge
- Deepwater Basin - boat ramp replacement
- The Divide - improved parking and safety

Completed:

- Cleddau Flood Bank
- Little Tahiti – landfill remediation





Questions / Pātai ?



Where to from here?

We will

- Share this presentation and a meeting summary on our website
- Keep you informed on the next phase of work and engagement.
- Send out a survey on short-term investments

Staying in touch

- Newsletter
- Web: www.doc.govt.nz/milford-opportunities
- Email: milfordproject@doc.govt.nz