

s9(2)(a)

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27 May 2026

Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Thank you for taking the time to outline your views to the Department of Conservation (DOC) on 1 May 2026. Your complaint was forwarded to me as the Director of Regional Operations for reply.

You raised concerns about DOC's decision to remove a number of carparks at Dolomite Point, Punakaiki, and you believe DOC had insufficient evidence, particularly relating to safety.

An independent traffic assessment was completed to inform the proposed design changes, which concluded that the previous roadside parking layout at Dolomite Point led to uncontrolled pedestrian movements and road crossings. This created safety risks for both pedestrians and motorists, particularly during peak visitor periods. The Dolomite Point Redevelopment Project introduced a more structured and deliberate layout across the wider area, designed to improve overall safety outcomes. The redesign of the car park and state highway parking restrictions included engagement with New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA).

Key improvements include:

- Clear channelling and funnelling of pedestrian movement, particularly on the eastern side of the area
- Installation of a rock wall to guide safe pedestrian behaviour and reduce informal crossing
- Upgrade and expansion of the northern car park
- Some reduction in parking spaces in certain locations, offset by an overall increase in parking capacity across the area.
- Planned and partially implemented upgrades to the southern car park.

Collectively, these changes support more predictable pedestrian and vehicle movements, which contribute to an overall safer environment. NZTA agreed to the proposed layout and the associated safety and traffic management outcomes.

I note in the OIA document you reference, NZTA advises that the changes are expected to improve pedestrian visibility, reduce re-entry manoeuvres and help reduce distractions for drivers unfamiliar with the area. These considerations are particularly important with the anticipated increase in pedestrian activity at Dolomite Point after its redevelopment.

NZTA and DOC have made efforts to clearly communicate in correspondence and in the media, that the removal of the roadside parking formed part of a broader set of assessments and subsequent design decisions aimed at improving safety for all users, especially pedestrians.

The application to remove the roadside parks was initiated in 2020 and endorsed by NZTA in 2022. The recommendations arising from the independent traffic assessments, have not changed since that time. DOC is satisfied that appropriate processes were followed and that the decisions made were intended to achieve safer and more coherent outcomes across the site.

While I am hopeful you accept the above explanation and response, I appreciate you may continue to hold a different view on this matter. I thank you again for raising your concerns with us.

Nāku noa, nā

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Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai