



OIA 19-E-0048 docCM 5716565

15 Feb 2019



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, dated 25 January 2019. You requested the following:

- Any reports and/or communications about the safety of the Cape Kidnappers Walking Track by the Department of Conservation.
- All communications between Gannet Beach Adventures and the Department of Conservation since 2016.

Background

The Cape Kidnappers Walking Track was developed as part of a network of five 'Day Hikes' selected from existing DOC tracks. The network was developed following research undertaken with Tourism New Zealand involving nearly 6,000 people both domestically and internationally to identify the types of activities our visitors most want to do. Showing how well-regarded New Zealand is as a walking destination, at home and abroad, the research looked at the motivations and barriers that inform what walks people choose. It found that 60% of New Zealanders and (over the last 3 years) 73% of our overseas visitors participated in walking/hiking. It revealed that short walks (30 minutes to 3 hours) and Day Hikes (3 to 8 hours), were the most popular types of walks and that there are seven key factors people consider when deciding on the suitability of a walk. The factors include different levels of fitness of the walkers; the landscapes and scenery; time to complete the walk; time available on the day; the terrain of the walk; unique experiences to see and do and the facilities available on the walk.

Informed by the research, DOC proposed a potential list and then checked with local rangers, iwi and communities to see which of these existing tracks were ready to provide experiences appropriate for people's time, competencies and expectations. Walks were selected by a project team involving a range of DOC staff including DOC's Recreation, Tourism and Historic Unit who led the product development work

Proposed Day Hikes were assessed by local staff on whether they were able to accommodate increased visitors. Staff also considered potential biodiversity, biosecurity and cultural impacts from having more people walk the tracks.

As part of this exercise some walks were withdrawn on staff recommendations. The expectation from this exercise was that tracks would be excluded if there were any specific visitor safety concerns.

In the case of the Cape Kidnappers Walk, staff from DOC's Napier office provided advice on stakeholder views and operational considerations. The walk covers several land tenures, with the beach section, from the Clifton start, following unformed public road administered by Hastings District Council, and sections of private land. This is the section where the rockfalls have occurred. DOC manages the land at the end of the Walk at Cape Kidnappers.

Throughout the process concerns have been raised about visitor safety issues in relation to the rockfall hazard on the beach section of the track. This included a review of the visitor risk assessment of the hazards on the track to identify all risk present. DOC has largely focused its risk management work on the section of the track on public conservation land. To help inform DOC on its risk management options Opus produced a Scoping Report for the Cape Kidnappers site (the 'site in this context includes the Cape Kidnappers gannet colony, walking track, and amenity area). The purpose of the report was to assist DOC with the identification of potential development options for the Cape Kidnappers site and provide high level information that to feed into the business case for development of the site. This report also contained a Preliminary Geotechnical Report which was a high-level assessment of the geological and geotechnical conditions.

The following documents fall within the scope of your request for:

- Any reports and/or communications about the safety of the Cape Kidnappers Walking Track by the Department of Conservation.
- All communications between Gannet Beach Adventures and the Department of Conservation since 2016.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	6 Sept 2017	Risk Assessment for Cape Kidnappers track	Released in full
2	Unknown	Consultation signoff by Regional Operations Director	Released in full
3	11 Oct 2017	Memo to Operations Managers	Released in full.
4	13 Oct 2017	Short/Day Walks analysis	Released in full.
5	2018	Short/Day Walks Monitoring and Evaluation 2018	Released in full
6	10 Nov 2017	Cape Kidnappers redevelopment Options Analysis	Released in full
7	From 2016	Communications between Gannet Beach Adventures and the Department of Conservation since 2016.	Released in full
8	Various	Communications about the safety of the Cape Kidnappers Walking Track by the Department of Conservation.	Released in full

DOC takes this matter and the safety of visitors extremely seriously. Immediately after the incident we initiated an internal review to examine our processes, identify underlying causes and inform future work. We won't be in a position to comment further until this review is complete.

In the meantime, we are working closely with Hastings District Council who are managing the response to the landslides at Cape Kidnappers. The beach and Cape Kidnappers reserves will remain closed while a geotechnical assessment of the landslide is being carried out.

If you wish to discuss this with the Department, please contact Mike Davies Senior Visitor Advisor on by email at 

Yours sincerely



Steve Taylor
Director, Heritage and Visitors
Department of Conservation

