

NEW ZEALAND

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
TE POU ATAWHAI TAIAO O AOTEAROA

**External Communications and
Engagement Plan**

Approved: 18 June 2019

To be reviewed annually at the start of each financial year

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A. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to ensure a consistent approach to communication and engagement from the New Zealand Conservation Authority. Primary messages, audiences, communication channels and spokespersons are identified, as are methods for evaluating the effectiveness of the Authority's communications.

B. Context – The Authority

B.1 Role

The role of the New Zealand Conservation Authority *Te Pou Atawhai Taiao O Aotearoa* (the Authority) is to provide independent advice to the Minister of Conservation and the Director-General of Conservation. It is closely involved in conservation planning and policy development affecting the management of public conservation areas administered by the Department of Conservation, as it approves the statutory strategies and plans which set objectives for their management.

The Authority is serviced by the Department of Conservation and is a member of the New Zealand Committee of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The Authority recognises the importance of relationships with Treaty partners, and that it is responsible for giving effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

B.2 Authority strategic priorities

Statutory role for management planning and land status

- Review, advise on and approve Conservation Management Strategies and National Park Management Plans.
- Provide advice on matters pertaining to all conservation lands.
- Meet requirements for the Authority as specified in Treaty of Waitangi settlement legislation and give on-going effect to the principles of the Treaty. Also, provide advice in response to requests from settlement negotiation parties.

Influence and advocacy on nationally significant conservation issues

- Provide advice to the Minister and D-G in the context of conservation in today's economy, the governance requirements, and strategic advice on public policy documents and legislation.
- Advise on and advocate for conservation efforts to control and eradicate pests and weeds, and biosecurity.
- Advise on and advocate for the management of visitors on public conservation lands and waters
- Advise on and advocate for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Advise on and advocate for rivers and other freshwater ecosystems.
- Advise on and advocate for the marine environment, with a focus out to 12 nautical miles, but also including the EEZ.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Review and advise on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department's conservation management.

- Self-review the Authority's performance.

B.3 Members

Members are appointed for a three-year term and may be re-appointed. The current term of all Authority members expires on 30 June 2020.

The Authority has thirteen members appointed by the Minister of Conservation:

- two appointed after consultation with the Minister of Maori Affairs
- two appointed after consultation with the Minister of Tourism
- one appointed after consultation with the Minister of Local Government
- one appointed on the nomination of Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu
- one appointed on the recommendation of the Royal Society of New Zealand
- one appointed on the recommendation of Forest and Bird
- one appointed on the recommendation of the Federated Mountain Clubs
- four appointed from public nominations

Members of the Authority do not represent the person or organisation that nominated them for membership. Members are expected to work in the interests of the Authority as a whole.

The Minister will have regard for the interests of conservation, natural sciences, and recreation in making the appointments. The Minister appoints one of the members as Chair.

C. Plan objectives

1. The Authority's mandate and national role can be clearly identified through its various communication throughout the year. Stakeholders and the wider public understanding of the role and functions of the Authority is increased.
2. Support and advocate on important conservation issues in New Zealand.
3. Ensure constructive and positive communication with stakeholders and be open and accessible to them.
4. Provide direction for regular engagement with key stakeholders throughout the year.
5. Advocate for the effective and proactive management of international and local visitors with respect to conservation lands and MPAs.
6. Encourage recreation activities on conservation lands.
7. Encourage the work of volunteers to improve conservation outcomes.
8. Advocate for the protection, conservation, and recovery of our natural biodiversity.
9. Advise on how to balance the needs of all users of public conservation lands – hunters, walkers, trampers, cyclists, visitors etc.
10. Advise on how to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, to and for iwi and their issues.

D. Key messages

- Conservation matters to the long-term well-being and prosperity of all New Zealanders.
- New Zealanders' have a strong identification with the country's beautiful physical environment and affinity with nature.
- Conservation of New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity is vital.
- New Zealand's nature and protected conservation areas are world-renowned and deserve protection and investment to sustain them over time.

- Conservation plans are vital to managing and stewarding protected areas whether they be National Parks, a Scientific Reserve or Marine Reserves through time.
- The threats to conservation – weeds, pests, biosecurity incursions – require proactive management, a diverse tool kit of responses and on-going innovation to ensure that biodiversity, landscapes, waterways and wetlands, coast margins, marine areas are not eroded.
- The Authority supports the use of 1080 to control predators of native biodiversity and the proactive development of alternative toxins and methods of predator eradication including exploring the potential of gene technologies.
- Maori are actively engaged in conservation and in a post-Treaty Settlement era want to play a stronger role in the oversight of setting strategic direction and priorities. The world view of Maori with respect to conservation is different to non-indigenous New Zealanders – Mātauranga Māori has been developed through generations of observation and experience and provides valuable insights to effective conservation.
- The Ngai Tai ki Tamaki Supreme Court decision gives greater recognition to the role of iwi in managing concessions on conservation land.
- The engagement and involvement of the public in conservation is vital. Volunteers play a very important role.
- Conservation Boards provide for community and iwi representation; and are the ‘handshake’ between the Department and the public; and a mechanism for holding the Crown to account with respect to conservation funding and actions.
- New Zealand welcomes all visitors to its conservation estate and undertakes appropriate monitoring to ensure the environment is not compromised.
- New Zealand is active in international conservation groups and initiatives; and via the IUCN and other events the Authority keeps well-informed of international trends and developments.

E. Stakeholders

The New Zealand Conservation Authority has a wide range of stakeholders throughout New Zealand and some internationally. Engagement with them forms an important part of the Authority’s role to advise on and achieve conservation outcomes. Members of the Authority volunteer a large amount of their time spent on its work, our stakeholder engagement efforts need to be targeted to give the best effect.

E.1 Table of Stakeholders

The following table should be reviewed annually; a comprehensive list is included as Appendix A.

Stakeholder	Authority Liaison/ Point of contact	What we want to achieve/ their information needs	What channels
Minister of Conservation	NZCA Chair and Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication about the direction of NZ conservation Timely advice on conservation issues as requested Their/our focuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZCA Meeting dinners, an invitation is always extended to the Minister Pre-meeting briefings and Aide Memoir NZCA advice to the Minister Annual Report
DOC SLT and Chief Science Advisor	NZCA (Meetings) & Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication about the direction of NZ conservation and DOC work Timely advice on conservation issues as requested Their/our focuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZCA meetings, invited to talk about and discuss relevant topics NZCA advice to DOC (e.g. science plan, public conservation engagement)
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Simon Upton	NZCA (Meetings) & Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication about the direction of NZ conservation Their/our focuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual catch-up during NZCA meetings Letters, to and from
Conservation Boards	All NZCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication for conservation issues within their region Their/our focuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Chair's hui hosted by NZCA Liaison attendance to CB meetings NZCA meetings within CB district Chair's letter following NZCA meetings
Iwi /Imi	All NZCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the nuances of tikanga and mātauranga Māori for individual tribes Assurance that their cultural interests being considered Who to contact if they/we need to be in touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important to respond to queries and maintain open communication NZCA website
Other Government Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZCA (Meetings) NZCA servicing staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication for conservation issues within their region Their/our focuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZCA meetings, invited to talk about and discuss relevant topics (public can attend except during 'in-committee' agenda items Direct contact via email NZCA website
Tourism NZ & TIA			
Office of Treaty Settlements			
Local Government NZ			

E.2 Communication channels

Appropriate use of communication channels will vary depending on the stakeholder and our communications will be developed for specific media and audiences. The key objective for all media is that the communication is easy to understand. It is important to make sure that one or more of the key messages are included in each communication which comes from the Authority.

Below is a breakdown of some of the key communication channels.

Website

www.conservationauthority.org.nz

The Authority website is currently the primary means of communication with the public and it holds a large amount of information, past and present.

It includes information on:

- The role of the Authority
- Members
- Member appointments and responsibilities
- Meeting dates, minutes and agendas
- Meeting updates from the Chair
- Publications
- Policies
- Annual reports
- Submissions on conservation issues
- Advice to the Minister and/or Director-General
- Strategic Priorities

Symposiums/hui

Running and organising these events is an important way the Authority can engage with stakeholders.

Currently the Authority runs an annual hui for Conservation Board Chairs every year. This involves all Chairs coming together for a 2-day hui to discuss matters of mutual interest, engage with each other and discuss priorities for Conservation Boards.

Media releases

The Chair is responsible for authorising media releases on behalf of the Authority. Unless agreed and otherwise specified by the Authority, the Chair is the official spokesperson for the Authority. All media enquiries to members are to be referred to the Chair and Executive Officer.

All media releases and comments are to be advised to the both the Minister of Conservation and Director General on a 'no surprises' basis. The Department media manager will wherever possible be provided the opportunity to make input to media releases.

The Authority does not make regular media releases. Consideration may be given to making a public media release prior to every meeting, or alternatively at the beginning of each year, informing the public of meeting dates, times, venues and important agenda items.

After a media release the Authority should be prepared to respond to media enquiries and in doing so raise its profile. The Chair should always be available to field any questions and comments which result from the media release.

See Appendix B for a media release template.

Independent Reviews

The Authority may commission independent papers or reviews on key topics of conservation concern. The need for this may arise when there are significant issues requiring an independent perspective, to facilitate NZCA advice on such issues.

Facebook

The Authority does not yet have a presence on social media and consideration will be given during 2019 to the benefits of establishing an actively maintained social media presence. Some 1.9 million Kiwis access Facebook every day, and so it may be an effective way to communicate with the public about the work we do and how they can get involved.

Social media to be effective requires daily monitoring, with options for diverse content including photos, what is going on, answering queries, interesting and relevant articles, new videos, Q and A with Authority members, blogs, etc.

E-Newsletter

Consideration will also be given in 2019 of the merits of developing a quarterly/four monthly e-newsletter to raise the profile of the Authority and communicate its advocacy and other work more broadly than the present Chair's Letter, Meeting Minutes and other postings to the Authority's website.

Examples of information in an e-newsletter could include:

- Member profiles
- Current reviews
- Board activities

An alternative option could be to join forces with the conservation board newsletter given many stakeholders experience e-news overload.

E.3 Minister of Conservation

Clear and timely communication is always to be undertaken with the Minister. This includes prioritising ministerial advice and responses to ensure the flow of information and appropriate communication. Communications include:

- An 'aide memoire' briefing of forthcoming Authority meetings setting out priority topics on the agenda
- A pre-meeting discussion with the Minister centred on the aide-memoire and other matters of importance to her/him.
- Post-meeting advice on specific topics discussed at Authority meetings.
- Responses to specific requests from the Minister.
- 'No surprises' advice on media enquiries.

- A Briefing for the Incoming Minister (BIM) setting out conservation opportunities and concerns, and the Authority's strategic priorities.

F. Action plan

<i>Date</i>	<i>Audience</i>	<i>Channel</i>	<i>Key message/content</i>	<i>Person responsible</i>
Annually	All stakeholders and the NZ public	Website	Review, 'Who the NZCA is and what we do'	NZCA servicing officers
Twice annually	Specific CBs	NZCA Meeting	Issues within the Boards rohe are brought to the NZCAs attention, and vice versa.	NZCA
Twice annually	Iwi leaders in the regions	NZCA meeting	NZCA need to engage with Iwi leaders at a more personal level. Ask iwi leaders to attend our out of Wellington meetings respective of the Rohe we are visiting, to discuss any issues they wish	NZCA Chair and servicing officers
August, annually	CB Chairpersons	NZCA annual Chairperson hui	Discuss matters of mutual interest, to continue engagement between one another and to discuss priorities for Conservation Boards	NZCA Chair, and members in attendance
May – August, annually	All stakeholders	NZCA Annual Report	Important events and matters that occurred in the past financial year	NZCA Chair and servicing officers
Multiple times yearly	CB, other NZCA member liaisons	Liaison meetings	Issues within their regions/areas of concern are brought to the NZCAs attention, and vice versa.	NZCA members
As appropriate	All stakeholders	NZCA meetings/ symposiums/ hui	Invitations are sent out to individuals/ organisations/ community groups as appropriate.	NZCA servicing officers

<i>Date</i>	<i>Audience</i>	<i>Channel</i>	<i>Key message/content</i>	<i>Person responsible</i>
As appropriate	MOC, DOC D-G	Letters, submissions, Advice	NZCA members to decide on submissions/ responses as required, refer to key messages above.	NZCA members and servicing officers
Prior to each NZCA meeting/start of the year	All stakeholders	Website	NZCA next meeting time, location and key agenda items	NZCA servicing staff

Further to this plan:

- Each year media coverage relating to the work of the board should be monitored and evaluated as to whether the key messages are being delivered.
- In addition to the formal Authority meetings and liaison roles, members will be involved with committees and other sub-groups when required.
- NZCA members are encouraged to attend a Te Pukenga Atawhai course, run by the Department.

G. Evaluation

G.1 Measures of success

A system to measure the success of this plan is crucial to its success. The following measures should be assessed annually to ensure the plan is active and of use:

Objective	Measure
The Authority's mandate can be clearly identified through its various communication throughout the year.	Responses are to be analysed annually as to whether key messages are being delivered.
To be aware of any support and advocacy that may be necessary throughout New Zealand surrounding important conservation issues.	Members are continuously bringing issues of importance to NZCA meetings from their experience/engagement with stakeholders. Communication and engagement with Conservation Boards is consistent.
Constructive and positive communication with stakeholders and being open and accessible for them.	Stakeholders participation is valued, and this is reflected in feedback. Feedback received from stakeholders throughout the year is positive and constructive. Every communication contains a clear contact point for further information.

Objective	Measure
Sustained engagement with all stakeholders throughout the year.	Stakeholders have actively participated, or been consulted, within the NZCA workplan annually.
Stakeholders will better understand the role and functions of the NZCA.	Numbers of visitors to websites & NZCA meetings exceed prior years.

G.2 Critical issues

1. The Authority needs to operate on a no surprises basis – where this has not been able to be proactively managed the Chair should liaise directly with the Minister’s and D-G’s office and provide briefing information on the context, key issues and responses to these.
2. The Interface between new technology, legislation and social licence to operate such as that related to genetics, biocontrol, drones-remote sensing which are nascent, not yet permitted or approved but with tight controls under the HSNO or other Acts.
3. The Authority must give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi – refer to the Authority’s policy *Giving Effect to Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987* for guidance.

G.3 Review schedule

This plan will be reviewed annually at the first meeting of the year (February). It is intended to be a living document subject to change as necessary.

APPENDIX A

Stakeholder	Authority Liaison/ Point of contact	What we want to achieve/ their information needs	What channels
Minister of Conservation	NZCA Chair and Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication about the direction of NZ conservation Timely advice on conservation issues as requested Their/our focuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZCA Meeting dinners, an invitation is always extended to the Minister Pre-meeting briefings and Aide Memoir NZCA advice to the Minister Annual Report
Department of Conservation			
D-G	NZCA (Meetings) & Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication about the direction of NZ conservation and DOC work Timely advice on conservation issues as requested Their/our focuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZCA meetings, invited to talk about and discuss relevant topics NZCA advice to DOC (e.g. science plan, public conservation engagement)
Chief of Governance	NZCA (Meetings) & Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication regarding DOC work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZCA meetings, invited to talk about and discuss relevant topics NZCA advice to DOC
DD-G People and Engagement			
DD-G Operations			
DD-G Corporate Services			
DD-G Biodiversity			
DD-G Partnerships			
DD-G Kahui Kaupapa Atawhai,			
DD-G Policy and Visitors			
Conservation Boards			
Te Hiku o Te Ika	Nicole Anderson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication for conservation issues within their region Their/our focuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Chair's hui hosted by NZCA Liaison attendance at CB meetings NZCA meetings within CB district Chair's letter following NZCA meetings
Northland	Nicole Anderson		
Auckland	Nicole Anderson / Mick Clout		
Waikato	Mick Clout		
Bay of Plenty	Mark Brough		
Tongariro Taupo	Kerry Prendergast		
Taranaki / Whanganui	Mark Brough		
East Coast Hawkes Bay	Rauru Kirikiri		

Stakeholder	Authority Liaison/ Point of contact	What we want to achieve/ their information needs	What channels
Wellington	David Barnes		
Chatham Islands	Edward Ellison		
Nelson Marlborough	Robyn Jebson		
West Coast <i>Tai Poutini</i>	Gerry McSweeney		
Canterbury Aoraki	Tony Lepper		
Otago	Tony Lepper		
Southland	Jan Riddell		
Other			
Iwi/imi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All NZCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the nuances of tikanga and Mātauranga Māori for individual tribes Assurance that their cultural interests being considered Who to contact if they/we need to be in touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important to respond to queries and maintain open communication NZCA website
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Simon Upton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZCA (Meetings) & Executive Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication about the direction of NZ conservation Their/our focuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual catch-up during NZCA meetings Letters, to and from
LINZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZCA (Meetings) NZCA servicing staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication for conservation issues within their region Their/our focuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZCA meetings, invited to talk about and discuss relevant topics (public can attend except during 'in-committee' agenda items) Direct contact via email NZCA website
MFE			
MPI			
Local Government of New Zealand			
Fish and Game Council			
Predator Free 2050 Ltd			
Game Animal Council			
NGOs – WWF, Forest & Board			
NZ community and volunteer conservation groups			
IUCN			
NZ Research providers			
Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA)			
Walking Access NZ			

Stakeholder	Authority Liaison/ Point of contact	What we want to achieve/ their information needs	What channels
Tourism NZ			
Cycle NZ			
Office of Treaty Settlements			

APPENDIX B

NEW ZEALAND

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

TE POU ATAWHAI TAIAO O AOTEAROA

Media release

(Insert Date)

[Headline]

(Body Text)

[Please ensure you are using at least one of the following key messages, as in the Plan]

- Conservation matters to the long-term well-being and prosperity of all New Zealanders.
- New Zealanders' have a strong identification with the country's beautiful physical environment and affinity with nature.
- Conservation of New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity is vital.
- New Zealand's nature and protected conservation areas are world-renowned and deserve protection and investment to sustain them over time.
- Conservation plans are vital to managing and stewarding protected areas whether they be National Parks, a Scientific Reserve or Marine Reserves through time.
- The threats to conservation – weeds, pests, biosecurity incursions – require proactive management, a diverse tool kit of responses and on-going innovation to ensure that biodiversity, landscapes, waterways and wetlands, coast margins, marine areas are not eroded.
- The Authority supports the use of 1080 to control predators of native biodiversity and the proactive development of alternative toxins and methods of predator eradication including exploring the potential of gene technologies.
- Maori are actively engaged in conservation and in a post-Treaty Settlement era want to play a stronger role in the oversight of setting strategic direction and priorities. The world view of Maori with respect to conservation is different to non-indigenous New Zealanders – Mātauranga Māori has been developed through generations of observation and experience and provides valuable insights to effective conservation.
- The Ngai Tai ki Tamaki Supreme Court decision gives greater recognition to the role of iwi in managing concessions on conservation land.
- The engagement and involvement of the public in conservation is vital. Volunteers play a very important role.
- Conservation Boards provide for community and iwi representation; and are the 'handshake' between the Department and the public; and a mechanism for holding the Crown to account with respect to conservation funding and actions.
- New Zealand welcomes all visitors to its conservation estate and undertakes appropriate monitoring to ensure the environment is not compromised.
- New Zealand is active in international conservation groups and initiatives; and via the IUCN and other events the Authority keeps well-informed of international trends and developments.

Ends

[Important - please send your draft media release to the Chair and for peer review for sign off before it goes to the media]