

# **Submission to**

# **Department of Conservation**

on the

Draft Wellington Conservation Management Strategy

Date: 04 April 2017

#### Introduction

- 1. Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) is the peak body for the tourism industry in New Zealand. With over 1500 members, TIA represents a range of tourism-related activities including hospitality, accommodation, adventure and other activities, attractions and retail, airports and airlines, as well as related tourism services.
- 2. The primary role of TIA is to be the voice of the tourism industry. This includes working for members on advocacy, policy, communication, events, membership and business capability. The team is based in Wellington and is led by Chief Executive, Chris Roberts.
- 3. Any enquiries relating to this submission should in the first instance be referred to Steve Hanrahan, TIA Advocacy Manager at <a href="mailto:steve.hanrahan@tia.org.nz">steve.hanrahan@tia.org.nz</a> or by phone on 027 912 2624.
- 4. TIA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Wellington Conservation Management Strategy.
- 5. This submission is filed without prejudice to TIA's future position. Our ability to prepare a comprehensive submission responding to the draft Wellington Conservation Management Strategy relied on the provision by the Department of Conservation (DOC) of information relevant to the connection between the draft conservation management strategy and the benefits that would accrue.

### **Background Tourism Industry Aotearoa and Conservation**

- 6. Tourism Industry Aotearoa (**TIA**) partners with the Department of Conservation (**DOC**) in order to enhance conservation outcomes alongside promoting and supporting the growth of tourism.
- 7. TIA's goal is that the Wellington Conservation Management Strategy (**CMS**) improves the opportunities for domestic and international visitors to have access to positive outdoor experiences that will contribute to their overall visitor experience and individual well-being and to the resilience of local communities and tourism operators.
- 8. TIA seeks to ensure that the CMS provides for the preservation and protection of the natural environment of public conservation areas, whilst allowing improved and enhanced use and enjoyment for recreation and commercial users of these areas.
- 9. The Conservation Act 1987 (the **Act**) sets out the purpose of conservation management strategies (section 17D(1)):

The purpose of a conservation management strategy is to implement general policies and establish objectives for the integrated management of natural and historic resources, including any species, managed by the Department... for recreation, tourism and other conservation purposes.

- 10. The Act also enables one of the Functions of DOC "to foster the use of natural and historic resources for recreation, and to allow their use for tourism" to the extent that use is not inconsistent with its conservation. Accordingly, the CMS needs to align and provide for tourism and conservation concurrently.
- 11. Recreating visitors to public conservation areas are made up of a number of different groups; these include commercially paying visitors and self-guided visitors. TIA considers that all such users should have the benefit of the same experience from visiting a public conservation area and should therefore be treated as having equal value in planning documents. Private and commercially derived recreation needs to be explicitly and equally provided for, to manage for the optimum experience for all visitors.
- 12. The management of conservation areas and natural and historic resources is to be carried out by DOC in accordance with conservation management strategies, among other instruments identified in section 17A of the Act. The importance of emphasising the direct link between conservation and tourism within the CMS must be underlined therefore, helping both TIA and DOC to achieve their coordinated recreation and tourism goals.
- 13. Tourism operators provide significant benefits to public conservation areas in the form of engagement of people with natural places, concession fees, ongoing donations, enhancement of the natural environment, education benefits, and infrastructure development. Diverse use of the infrastructure within conservation areas should be encouraged and the maintenance of safe, quality visitor experiences supported by careful management and monitoring of conflict between different user groups.
- 14. In July 2015, TIA and DOC signed a formal partnership agreement which seeks to provide for both tourism and conservation in a mutually beneficial framework. The agreement optimised the vision, principles and goals between TIA and DOC as they formalised Project Groundswell. TIA is now currently working closely with DOC as they develop their visitor experience strategy. TIA sees the strategy as an opportunity for DOC to establish an internal approach to managing visitors that is coherent, streamlined and aligned with that of other government departments and the Tourism industry's 2025 framework. With the new DOC Visitor Strategy scheduled for adoption in 2017, all future CMS documents should reflect its vision and principles.
- 15. An ongoing close partnership between DOC and TIA will help enable the importance of preservation of natural resources and the ability for sustainable growth and innovation of tourism operations public conservation areas to be better catered for and kept front of mind. TIA considers that enabling visitors to enjoy and access public conservation areas provides a valuable opportunity to highlight the importance of New Zealand's public conservation land, and for visitors in turn to understand and care for those important places.
- 16. Integrated management and recognition of TIA as a conservation partner would also assist for business planning and for DOC to ensure it complies with its responsibilities in terms of oversight of conservation area use, including supporting a quality visitor experience for all recreational users of those areas. It

can also be supportive of early identification of conflicting use issues, and the provision of processes to resolve these. Integrated management policies would ensure that links between various resources (e.g. ecosystems, tracks and huts, aircraft landing zones, natural quiet, and landscapes) and the effects of activities associated with those resources are recognised and managed in an integrated way. TIA supports consistency in terminology, application, and general policies across all CMS documents administered wherever possible.

- 17. Provisions of the CMS should provide for the needs of the entire community of conservation area users, including iwi, visitors, tourism operators, researchers, and education, etc.
- 18. Provisions of the CMS should also provide sufficient flexibility to cover future innovation and technology that may impact public conservation areas. Currently the draft CMS is restrictive in its approach, and consideration must be made to allow the CMS to encompass the impact of future technological advances.
- 19. TIA truly believes that conservation and tourism can be managed in a way to benefit both. Where people are enabled to experience a natural conservation environment, they in turn become educated and connected to that place. This supports a sense of ownership, responsibility, and understanding for the values of conservation for such places. The key priorities of working with DOC to promote tourism and visitor experience through the CMS are to:
  - a) Collaborate closely between DOC and TIA internal strategies and strategic plans so as to share, combine, and promote tourism / conservation priorities;
  - b) Improve access to and opportunities of public conservation land for tourism operators through more responsive CMS provisions;
  - c) Achieve a consistent and transparent concession application and renewal process which provides certainty for stakeholders;
  - d) Ensure that limits on use of resources are only put in place in accordance with reliable evidence, that a preference is given for adaptive limit setting according to policies and set outcomes and that alternatives are considered to support tourism growth;
  - e) Implement effective monitoring and enforcement systems; and
  - f) Ensure CMS requirements are consistent with tourism industry best practice standards, including aligning with user group agreements and written best practice standards where relevant.

#### Consultation

- 20. TIA is concerned and disappointed about the lack of public consultation employed for this CMS. DOC has not initiated public meetings or workshops in the Wellington region (aside from meeting with one specific community group), nor has it utilised media such as local newspapers to give the general public the opportunity to submit on the CMS.
- 21. The CMS will have a substantial impact on people living in the CMS region. Providing viewing opportunities at DOC offices and a copy of the draft online does not constitute proper consultation for a plan that will have significant impact on the general public, and will be in operation for the next decade.

## **Next Steps**

- 22. TIA wishes to participate further in any follow-up process, including any formal meetings and hearings, to ensure that the potential impacts on tourism are adequately represented.
- 23. TIA seeks any additional, consequential, or alternative relief as set out in the table below in order to achieve the objectives and reasons provided by TIA.

TIA - specific submissions on draft CMS provisions

CMS	CMS Section	Submission	Decision Sought
Section		- support or oppose and reasons	
Recreation	and Access Policies and Milestones		
4.3	Recreation background on pages 33-34 - Recognises public access issues to reserves scattered throughout the CMS surrounded by private land, and private land that adjoins some Forest Parks. DOC intends to work with PSGEs and tangata whenua, Land Information New Zealand, New Zealand Walking Access Commission, local authorities, other agencies, and landowners to resolve these access issues.	TIA supports the identification of conservation access issues to assist with increasing visitor interaction with these destinations.  Visitors tend not to distinguish between different landowners; they are simply looking for a great experience.	Amend Recreation background section to include TIA as a key agency for DOC to work alongside.  "DOC intends to work with PSGEs and tangata whenua, Land Information New Zealand, New Zealand Walking Access Commission, Tourism Industry Aotearoa, local authorities, other agencies, and landowners to resolve these access issues".
4.3.2.1	4.3.2.1 Identify and provide outdoor recreation opportunities where: a) they are consistent with: i) the protection of natural, historic, and cultural values; and ii) the purposes for which the lands and waters concerned are held; and c) demand is evident and expected to be maintained.	TIA supports the recognition of the importance of providing for recreation opportunities; however this positive recognition should not be contingent upon demand for a resource being evident and expected to be maintained. There may be many instances in which it is appropriate to recognise and provide for new or alternative recreation opportunities where demand has not yet been proven or established.	
4.3.2.4	Work with the New Zealand Walking Access Commission to achieve priorities (as identified in Part Two) for improved access to public conservation lands and waters for recreation, and to enhance public access to the coastal margin, lakes and rivers.	TIA supports the identification of conservation access issues to assist with increasing visitor interaction with these destinations. Given that DOC's associated milestones are about increasing visitor numbers (i.e. a form of tourism), TIA considers it is important to have	

CMS	CMS Section	Submission	Decision Sought
Section		- support or oppose and reasons	
		a tourism industry representative expressly recognised as a key partner.	
4.3.3.3	Identified public conservation lands and waters requiring access improvement by end of year three.	TIA supports the identification of required access improvements on conservation areas. Improved access will improve tourism operation throughout the Wellington CMS region, and work towards DOC and TIA coordinated goals.	Retain Milestone
4.3.3.10	Initiated processes to improve access to public conservation lands and waters, in conjunction with the New Zealand Walking Access Commission, PSGEs and tangata whenua and conservation partners by year five.	TIA supports improved access to public conservation areas.	Amend Milestone to include TIA as a key agency for DOC to work alongside. TIA also seeks clarification as to who other potential 'conservation partners' are.
4.3.3.17	By the end of year ten, access will be improved to public conservation lands and waters.	TIA supports improved access to public conservation areas.	Retain Milestone – suggest increased clarification as to what level 'improvement' is desired to be achieved.
4.3.3.4; 4.3.3.11; and 4.3.18	PSGEs, tangata whenua, user groups, and others help to maintain all the huts in the Wellington CMS region (by end of ten year period).	TIA supports hut maintenance throughout the Wellington CMS region, however questions the accuracy and identification of these milestones. There is no supporting objective for these milestones, and therefore it is unclear what end is desired to be achieved, and why.  It is unclear whether having all user groups 'help' to maintain all huts in the future is meant to intend that those user groups are the only	Retain milestone but clarify its application and associated objective. TIA would like recognition of tourism as a user group that should have the ability to inform hut maintenance priorities.

CMS	CMS Section	Submission	Decision Sought
Section		- support or oppose and reasons	-
		parties responsible for such maintenance, or the sole parties responsible.	
4.3.3.20	Provided a full range of recreational opportunities to all visitors to public conservation lands and waters in the Wellington CMS region.	1	
Engageme	ent Policies and Milestones		
4.4.2.3	Work with concessionaires and other businesses to enhance the conservation experience of their customers and others.	TIA supports recognising concessionaires as having a role in conservation and engagement.	Ensure this policy applies to both existing concessionaires and those applying for concessions.
4.4.2.4	Work with regional tourism organisations, other promotional groups, and businesses to create and develop opportunities to promote conservation initiatives, products, and services.	TIA supports recognition of tourism and conservation / engagement being complementary.	Add in TIA as an organisation to connect with in order to achieve this policy.
General R	egional policies		
5.1.6	Encourage people and businesses undertaking activities on public conservation lands and waters to comply with activity-specific minimum impact codes (care codes) as notified from time to time on the Department's website.	1	
			TIA support retaining flexibility in implementation of codes of practice by retaining this material external to the

CMS	CMS Section	Submission	Decision Sought
Section		- support or oppose and reasons	
			CMS, and not subject to the CMS review cycle.
5.2	Aircraft policies	TIA considers that where prescriptive limits are set out in the CMS, these must be based upon sound and tested evidence to justify the need for such a limit.  Limits should be contained in appendices to the CMS, or other extraneous material, with a clear directive that limits are subject to change depending on the most relevant and current information available. It must be clear that limits can change outside of the set CMS review period.	subject to change at any time subject to current information.
		If retained in the CMS, TIA requests the evidence upon which the limits are based, and adequate opportunity to consult with their members on this evidence.	
		If any information is provided at a later date, TIA reserves the right to comment further. If the Department have no further information, TIA has concerns about the lack of evidential basis on which these limits have been established.	
5.3	Commercial filming and photography, and sporting and other competitive events	TIA recognises these activities are of particular importance to be recognised in terms of concession and authorisation requirements,	types of recreation / visitor

CMS	CMS Section	Submission	Decision Sought
Section		- support or oppose and reasons	
		however there are other more general activities requiring concessions.	concessions.
		TIA request clarification as to whether this also includes the use of drones for marketing activities- refer above general submission on 'Future proofing' required with consideration of developing technology.	Clarification required to establish what this policy includes e.g. the use of drones.
5.10.1	Should not authorise new private accommodation and related facilities, including encampments, on public conservation lands and waters.		TIA requests that policy 5.10.1 be deleted, or otherwise re-drafted to provide flexibility for considering when such new facilities might be appropriate and under what circumstances.
		TIA considers policy 5.10.1 prescribes a hard bottom line which is potentially inconsistent with the remaining policies of public access and does not allow any flexibility to consider when such applications might be appropriate.	
5.12.1	May authorise the erection or retention of structures, utilities and facilities or the adaptive re-use of existing structures, utilities and facilities on public conservation lands and waters where the activity promotes or enhances the retention of a historic structure, utility or facility.	TIA supports retention and re-use of historic structures and facilities.	Add in recognition of public enjoyment, maintaining access options, and recreation opportunities which result from re-use and retention of such facilities.
5.2.9	Advocate to aviation controllers and aircraft operators to manage flight paths to avoid adverse effects on public		Amend policy 5.2.9 to: "Advocate to aviation controllers and aircraft

CMS Section	CMS Section	Submission - support or oppose and reasons	Decision Sought
	conservation lands and water.	effects on public conservation lands and water". TIA recommends an amendment to this wording to recognise flight paths should be managed to avoid adverse effects on other users of public land.	operators to manage flight paths to avoid adverse effects on other users of public conservation lands and water."
5.15 Auth	orisation tables		
Table 5.15.1 Aircraft	Table 5.15.1 provides fixed limits on aircraft landings in prescribed conservation units.	TIA considers that where prescriptive limits are set out in the CMS, these must be based upon sound and tested evidence to justify the need for such a limit.	convert into an appendix, or other
		Limits should be contained in appendices to the CMS, or other extraneous material, with a clear directive that limits are subject to change depending on the most relevant and current	Provide clear directive that limits are subject to change at any time subject to current information.
		information available. It must be clear limits can change outside of the set CMS review period.	Department to provide the evidence upon which the limits have been established.
		If retained in the CMS, TIA requests the evidence upon which the limits are based, and adequate opportunity to consult with their members on this evidence.	
		If any information is provided at a later date, TIA reserves the right to comment further. If the Department have no further information, TIA has concerns about the lack of evidential basis on which these limits have been established.	

CMS Section	CMS Section	Submission - support or oppose and reasons	Decision Sought
Table	Table 5.15.3 provides fixed limits on motor vehicle,	TIA considers that where prescriptive limits are	Remove table from CMS body and
5.15.3	electric-power assisted pedal cycle and mountain bike	set out in the CMS, these must be based upon	convert into an appendix, or other
Access	access in prescribed places throughout the CMS region.	sound and tested evidence to justify the need for such a limit.	extraneous material.
			Provide clear directive that limits are
		Limits should be contained in appendices to the CMS, or other extraneous material, with a clear	subject to change at any time subject to current information.
		directive that limits are subject to change	
		depending on the most relevant and current information available. It must be clear limits can change outside of the set CMS review period.	Department to provide the evidence upon which the limits have been
			Where no or insufficient evidential
		If retained in the CMS, TIA requests the evidence upon which the limits are based, and adequate opportunity to consult with their members on this evidence.	basis exists, limit to be removed.
		If any information is provided at a later date	
		TIA reserve the right to comment further. If the	
		Department have no further information, TIA	
		has concerns about the lack of evidential basis	
		on which these limits have been established.	
Table	Table 5.15.3 provides fixed limits on motor vehicle,	TIA is concerned about the restrictive approach	Suggest that a clause or provision is
5.15.3	electric-power assisted pedal cycle and mountain bike	taken here, and throughout the CMS, with lack	
Access	access in prescribed places throughout the CMS region.	of consideration to future innovation and technology.	to consider future technology.
		For example, ten years previously there would have been no consideration for electric-power	

CMS	CMS Section	Submission	Decision Sought
Section		- support or oppose and reasons	
		assisted pedal cycle. The CMS needs to provide	
		the flexibility to cover future innovations and	
		technology that may exist in ten years' time,	
		and have an impact on conservation areas.	
Part Two -	Places		
Monitoring	and Enforcement		
13.1 and	Report, at least annually, to the Wellington Conservation	TIA supports having prescribed annual	Amend these policies to clarify these
13.2	Board on progress in achieving the milestones in this CMS,	reporting requirements which require	will be made publicly available. Ensure
	as a means of monitoring its implementation.	assessment against CMS objectives, policies	policies require that such reports
		and milestones. TIA considers that these	clearly identify where milestones are
		policies would benefit from a check and balance	not being achieved, and include
	Papart at least annually to the Wellington Concernation	system which requires public accessibility to	reasons for why these are not being
	Report, at least annually, to the Wellington Conservation	reports, and feedback from the Board on	achieved, and what actions are to be
	Board on changes, additions, and updates to content, information and supporting links on the Wellington CMS	progress against the CMS to ensure	implemented to remedy this.
	website.	accountability.	
	website.		
Annondiy 1	0 Icon and Gateway destinations		
Appendix 1	o icon and dateway destinations		
Appendix	Recreation opportunities on public conservation lands and	TIA supports the use of nationally consistent	Remove classifications; or
10	waters have been categorised into four different	principles and terminology across all DOC	
	destination types (Icon, Gateway, Local Treasure and	policy and planning documentation, so long as	If classifications are retained, provide
	Backcountry) to reflect known and potential demand, and	consistency provides for a simple and	clear definitions within the CMS itself
	to capture people's outdoor leisure preferences. This is	pragmatic approach.	(not just the glossary) so users are
	part of an approach known as Destination Management.		provided with a clear understanding of
		The four classifications provided (Icon,	what each classification means, and
		Gateway, Local Treasure and Backcountry) are	what objectives and policies relates to
		unclear in their application based upon the	each.

CMS	CMS Section	Submission	Decision Sought
Section		- support or oppose and reasons	
		provided definition, and it is unclear how these	
		relate to other place definitions, such as	Define the principles for these
		'backcountry' and 'frontcountry'.	categorisations within the CMS.
Appendix 13	<u> </u> 3		
Appendix	Preferred maximum party size	TIA requests evidence on which the limits of	Provide evidential basis for limits.
13		party sizes are based. If there is no evidential	
		basis for the limit, a limit should not be	Remove limits that have little or no
		imposed. Where there is sufficient evidential basis, this should be clarified within the CMS.	evidential basis.
			Retain limit where there is evidential
		There should be a clear directive that limits can	basis.
		change at any time based on relevant and	
		current information, not just during the CMS	Provide clear directive that limits can
		review period.	change at any time based on current and relevant information.
Appendix	Aircraft management	TIA opposes the wording "Aircraft access for	Amend wording" Aircraft access for
13		visitor use purpose should not be approved	
		other than in accordance with". This	approved when they are in accordance
		presupposes a negative decision.	with"
DOC Stretch	n Goals and Priorities		
Stretch	Stretch goals and priorities identify DOC's 50 year vision	TIA supports the overarching DOC stretch goal	Suggest that the 50 waterways DOC
Goals and	for conservation in New Zealand.	for the restoration of 50 freshwater ecosystems	seeks to restore are specifically
Priorities		from 'mountains to the sea'. However, TIA is	identified.
		unable to comment about whether the	
Page 9		Wellington CMS approach is sufficient in the	
	<b>Freshwater:</b> 50 freshwater ecosystems are restored from 'mountains to the sea'.	national context, as the 50 waterways are not identified in the CMS.	

CMS	CMS Section	Submission	Decision Sought
Section		- support or oppose and reasons	
		TIA seeks assurance that the CMS supports Te	
		Mana o te Wai values and the improvement of	
		the <b>overall</b> quality of waterways in the CMS	
		region that are important to recreational users.	
	Recreational access/land use	DOC needs to check that their models for recreational access/land use and supporting categorisations are correct. DOC needs to be clear on what constitutes the New Zealand public (age mix, urbanisation, recreational habits etc) and international visitors.  Do New Zealand public and international visitors recreate the same way? In an increasingly urban and ageing population, and with increasing international visitor numbers, is DOCs current model still useful?	ensure their model is correct and current.

End.