

Hon Meka Whaitiri

MP for Ikaroa-Rāwhiti

Minister of Customs

Minister for Veterans

Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare)

Associate Minister of Statistics



Don Cameron
Chair
Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission
PO Box 12-348
WELLINGTON 6144

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Tēnā koe Don

Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission Letter of Expectations for 2023/24

I am writing to confirm my expectations of Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission (the Commission) for the 2023/24 financial year.

I firstly want to acknowledge the work undertaken by the Commission to continue delivering its core functions to a high standard through the challenging circumstances of recent times. The impacts of the pandemic over the last three years have emphasised how strongly New Zealanders value accessing outdoor recreation for improving mental and physical wellbeing. Extreme weather events are also impacting outdoor access opportunities for long periods of time, especially when storms cause slips, wipe out tracks, or destroy key access infrastructure. The fundamental importance of the Commission's work to provide people with access to the whenua has never been more relevant.

I would like the Commission to continue to implement the recommendations of the review of the Walking Access Act 2008 that do not require legislative change. I would also like the Commission to prioritise the following.

Entity-specific expectations

1. Continue to create new outdoor access opportunities while considering the associated environmental cost. This should include progressing regional projects in Tairāwhiti, Franklin/North Waikato, and Pūhoi to Mangawhai as well as the partnership with Te Araroa, and any opportunities to improve cycling access.
2. Continue to develop for the public, a comprehensive set of digital maps of public access in Aotearoa.
3. Continue to progress the Commissions Māori partnership strategy, to develop new opportunities for access for Māori.
4. Continue to grow and support a nationwide network of community track-building groups.

General expectations

Ensuring the Board of the Commission continues to perform to high standard is essential. In addition to setting and driving a strategy that delivers on Government priorities, your Board is the primary monitor of entity performance. In carrying out these functions, I expect the Commission to have a constructive working relationship with the Ministry for Primary Industries as its monitoring department.

I expect the Commission to follow the advice provided in Te Kawa Mataaho's updated Letter of Enduring Expectations¹ for statutory Crown entities (October 2019). Key priorities include a unified, value-based Government for all New Zealanders, supporting future-focused Māori Crown relationships, and contributing to improving wellbeing.

Please continue to consider the enduring expectations and incorporate these into the Commission's planning, strategic direction, and accountability documents as appropriate. This includes the expectation to report on entity performance regularly and transparently against planning documents, and provide quality and timely information on risks and opportunities. An overarching expectation is for a 'no surprises' approach to informing me in a timely manner about matters of significance, as they relate to walking access matters.

Additional public sector expectations

Further details have been released on two matters since the publication of the enduring expectations, as outlined below.

Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan

I look forward to seeing the Commission's progress as you implement the Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan² to ensure your workplace is fair and equitable, especially for women, Māori, Pacific and ethnic employees.

Carbon Neutral Government Programme requirements

It is recognised that the current and future wellbeing of New Zealanders is reliant on a stable climate and living within ecological limits. As part of the state sector, I expect the Commission to lead by example by taking active steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, and reduce waste outputs. I expect that the Commission has been phasing in the requirements of the Carbon Neutral Government Programme³ from 2022/23 and I would like to be kept updated.

¹ The Enduring Letter of Expectations to Statutory Crown Entities (2019) is available on Te Kawa Mataaho | the Public Service Commission's website here: <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/enduring-letter-of-expectations-to-statutory-crown-entities-2019/>

² Kia Toipoto | The Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan 2021-2024 is available on Te Kawa Mataaho | the Public Service Commission's website here: <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/Crown-Entities-Action-Plan-Guidance.pdf>

³ Resources and links to help government organisations as part of the Carbon Neutral Government Programme are available on the Ministry for the Environment's website here: <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/key-initiatives/carbon-neutral-government-programme/measuring-and-reducing-your-emissions-through-the-cnqp/>

I look forward to seeing your progress on these important matters throughout the year.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meka Whaitiri', written in a cursive style.

Hon Meka Whaitiri

Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare)

Cc: Ric Cullinane, Chief Executive, Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission