

9 August 2023

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 06 June 2023, in which you asked for:

1. *Copies of any reports, documents, minutes, briefing notes, meeting recordings, memoranda, correspondence, legal advice, aide memoires, texts, Microsoft Teams conversations, or emails, both internal and external discussing the future of Chateau Tongariro.*
2. *Copies of any reports, documents, minutes, briefing notes, meeting recordings, memoranda, correspondence, legal advice, aide memoires, texts, Microsoft Teams conversations, or emails, both internal and external about any potential future owners, leaseholders and/or operators of Chateau Tongariro.*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

On 13 June 2023, we contacted you to discuss the size and nature of your request. We confirmed your request was for

1. *any discussion of the building's future, and;*
2. *any discussion of named parties (actual entities as opposed to a hypothetical hotelier) who may have an interest in using it.*

We requested you refine your request to seek any documents from 9 February 2023, the date the previous leaseholder gave notice of their intention to close. On 27 June 2023, you agreed to the proposed OIA refinement.

DOC assumed management of the Chateau Tongariro on March 9, 2023 but there are still a number of residual matters to be concluded with the former lessee, as could be expected with a 30 year lease of this nature.

Once the transition is complete the Department will turn its focus to considering the various options for the Chateau Tongariro Hotel into the future.

In the meantime, DOC is conducting ongoing routine maintenance to ensure the building remains in its current condition, and work is ongoing to establish whether the building poses any structural or seismic risk to staff and others.

We can confirm we have received inquiries of interest in the Chateau, which were expected, and we welcome the interest in this historic place. We have acknowledged these and will address them more fully when we are in a position to do so.

Once we have determined what the long-term future for the property could be, we will be in a better position to respond to any suggestions or proposals for its use.

We have identified 6 documents within the scope of your request. These are listed for your reference in **Table 1** at the end of this letter.

Item 2 includes emails discussing the building's future. To avoid duplication of emails, we have provided email chains (which include previous emails) in chronological order where possible.

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed below, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act, as applicable:

- personal contact details of officials, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people,
- commercially sensitive information, under section 9(2)(b)(ii) – to protect the commercial position of the person who supplied the information, or who is the subject of the information,
- certain information, under section 9(2)(g)(i) to project the free and frank expression of opinions,
- advice subject to legal privilege, under section 9(2)(h) - to maintain legal professional privilege,
- advice to enable negotiations without disadvantage or prejudice under section 9(2)(j)

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on the Department's website.



Nāku noa, nā

Karl Beckert  
Director, Operations Support  
Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Document description</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1	1 February 2023 – 1 May 2023	Chateau Tongariro Hotel – Interest Register	Released in part
2	2 February 2023 - 26 June 2023	Emails discussing the future of the Chateau	Released in part
3	8 February 2023 - 13 June 2023	Chateau Tongariro closure - Weekly Status Report	Released in part
4	2 February 2023	Briefing 23-B-0024	Released in part
5	20 February 2023	Report to DDG NORS about immediate closure issues	Withheld in full
6	28 March 2023	Briefing 23-B-0111: Update on the Chateau Tongariro	Released in part