

# Meeting Memo

## Meeting with Dr Keith Turner, Board Chair, Milford Opportunities Project

To	Minister of Conservation	Date submitted	7 March 2023
GS tracking #	23-M-0009	DocCM	DOC-7283806
Security Level	In Confidence		

Meeting date/time	08 March 2023, 3.30pm
Meeting location	Office of the Minister of Tourism, 4.3 Beehive
Attachments	None

Key contacts			
Name	Organisation	Role	Cell phone
Keith Turner	Milford Opportunities Project	Chair	s9(2)(a)
Stephanie Rowe	DOC	Deputy Director General, Biodiversity, Heritage and Visitors	s9(2)(a)

### Context & purpose

- The Hon Peeni Henare, Hon Kiritapu Allan and you will meet with Dr Keith Turner, Chair of the Milford Opportunities Project (MOP) Board at 3.30pm on 8 March 2023 in Minister Henare's office. We understand that this will be a courtesy call prior to Dr Turner's resignation from the Board, which will take effect from 31 March 2023. We will brief you separately concerning a possible successor to him. Dr Turner is a passionate advocate for the MOP Masterplan. He is likely to encourage you to support implementation or rapid progression of recommendations in the Masterplan.
- Your meeting with Dr Turner coincides with a joint MOP Ministerial Group briefing sent to your office for approval last week (22-B-0805 refers). This includes background on the MOP and a draft letter from the Ministerial Group to Dr Turner thanking him for his service to the Board. It also addresses outstanding matters, namely:
  - Finalisation of the MOP Board Terms of Reference,
  - Progression of the MOP Unit's work programme, and
  - A request to the Minister of Finance to transfer uncommitted MOP funds from the 2022/23 financial year to the 2023/24 financial year.

## Strategic objectives

3. The purpose of the current stage of the project is to stringently test the feasibility of recommendations in the Masterplan. Your meeting with Dr Turner is an opportunity to:
    - State your support for the MOP
    - Reinforce key messages in the draft letter from the Ministerial Group to Dr Turner concerning the MOP Unit's forward work programme.
  4. Primary policy issues concern:
    - How access to Milford Sound can be better managed
    - The viability of charging international visitors a fee to enter Fiordland National Park
    - The potential impact of proposals in the Masterplan on holders of concessions in Milford Sound, and
    - Governance arrangements.
  5. The draft letter from the Ministerial Group notes that other workstreams, such as infrastructure development, commercial revenue modelling and consideration of closing the aerodrome and banning cruise ships should be deferred until after primary policy considerations as stated above have been addressed. Dr Turner has indicated to officials that he is comfortable with this proposed approach.
- 
7. At the time of writing, the MOP Board and Unit had drafted a project update cabinet paper for the Ministerial Group to present to the Environment, Energy and Climate Committee, tentatively on 6 April. Agencies are considering whether the draft cabinet paper requires further detail concerning specified deliverables and their timing. This may require the paper to be deferred to a later date.
  8. Minister Henere (as Minister of Tourism) met with the MOP Unit Director in Te Anau last week. Dr Turner may raise this with you. The MOP Unit Director advised us that Minister Henare said he was keen to help remove any barriers in the project in consultation with his ministerial colleagues. He also encouraged the Unit to aim for 'quick wins', consistent with the vision and purpose of the Masterplan (and work programme). This would help to gain momentum in the project.

## Proposed talking points


9. We propose that you draw upon the following points in your discussion with Dr Turner:
  - Thank you for your hard work and determination in taking the Milford Opportunities Project to this point. Your experience and expertise have been an invaluable asset to the project.
  - My colleagues the Hon Peeni Henare, Hon Kiritapu Allan and I will send a letter to you soon that reiterates our thanks for your service and deals with several outstanding matters. These include finalisation of the Board Terms of Reference and comment on the MOP Unit's work programme.
  - Regarding the latter, I consider that key policy issues must be fully addressed before much of the detailed feasibility work can progress. These concern access to Milford Sound, charging international visitors an access fee, concession arrangements and governance.

- I consider that it would be premature to consider other recommendations in the Masterplan such as proposed closure of the aerodrome, banning of cruise ships and development of infrastructure until first order policy issues have been addressed.
- The MOP Board and Unit have a challenging and complex work programme before them. I am confident they will develop objective and sound advice that can stand up to scrutiny. It would be very helpful for the Board and Unit to 'think outside the box' when identifying options for addressing critical issues such as managing congestion along the Milford Road Corridor.
- What do you consider to be the main challenges in moving the MOP forward?
- What is the appetite for change in Milford Sound based on your most recent engagement with Ngai Tahu, and local stakeholder and community interests?
- I have been told that Minister Henare recently had a productive visit to Te Anau. I look forward to discussing this with him and how the Ministerial Group, including Minister Allan, can help empower the Board and Unit in their work.
- I understand that the MOP Unit has been working closely with agencies in preparing an update on the project for the Ministerial Group to present to the Environment, Energy and Climate Committee. I and my colleagues look forward to reviewing this in due course.
- I understand I am about to receive advice around options for your replacement. Thank you for feeding into this.
- Thank you again for your hard work. I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

### Risks & implications

10. Implementation of several recommendations in the Masterplan would require amendments to existing legislation or new legislation. This will not be determined prior to the completion of feasibility testing of recommendations in the Masterplan by June 2024.

### Key attendees

Photo	Name	Organisation	Bio highlights
	Dr Keith Turner	Milford Opportunities Project Board Chair	<p>Keith Turner has over 39 years in executive experience in the power industry, and for the latter 25 years, has held senior executive positions.</p> <p>He has extensive experience in working with the major economic and environmental policy departments of government. Keith has been Chair of the previous stages of the Milford Opportunities Project since 2017.</p>

**MEMO ENDS**