

6 March 2024

Stephen Prendergast

fyi-request-25933-93f7a546@requests.fyi.org.nz

fyi-request-25641-5189c1b0@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Stephen

Thank you for your requests to the Department of Conservation, in which you asked for:

7 February 2024 (OIAD-3781):

Please provide key emails / documents from 1 August 2023 between DOC and MBIE or Calibre or other parties on the possible transfer or assignment, or sub licence, of the current (RAL) Whakapapa ski field concession(s).

29 February 2024 (OIAD-3841):

Please supply communications from 20 June 2023 between DOC and The Minister(s), or MBIE, or RAL / Calibre, or PTL on the possibility of sub licencing the operation of Turoa ski field. Also include any internal discussions by DOC on what period the sub licence would cover and what conditions might be considered or imposed.

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

As you know, the Department has processed several OIA requests from you concerning Ruapehu Alpine Lifts (RAL) and related matters (16 since July 2023). When we receive OIA requests, we review what information can be provided. If it appears that the requests may capture a significant volume of information, or we are unclear what specific information you are seeking, we generally consult with you to confirm these points.

Each of the two requests noted above would require the Department to search through a significant volume of emails and documents discussing RAL, Mt Ruapehu, concessions and licenses to identify information potentially in scope. In this case, we have not been able to identify a proposed refinement for your request which would mitigate the issues in providing you with a substantive response.

As you are aware, RAL's ski field concessions are in the form of licences. This means that when we undertake document searches for the above OIA requests, documents about the concession type are also captured. Any other proposed refinement limits information to documents already in the process of being released to you under your other OIA requests, or to information that you have already received.

For your reference, the Department has provided relevant advice about Whakapapa and Tūroa ski fields to the Minister of Conservation. These documents do not relate primarily to the issue of sub-licensing, and do not include communications, so we did not consider it sufficient to offer as a refinement option for these requests. These documents are also already being provided to you (OIAD-3715). Similarly, you have already received all correspondence between agencies concerning concessions and Mt Ruapehu (OIAD-3585).

In these circumstances, we have considered section 18B of the OIA but concluded that use of this provision would not assist in this case. Due to the issues noted above, we are refusing these two requests under section 18(f) of the OIA, as responding would require substantial collation and research.

We will continue to work with you in responding to your current OIA requests, and any further requests that you may make. In making future requests, we suggest you continue to avoid seeking all documents or correspondence, or email correspondence across a wide or unlimited range of parties, as this may present similar issues.

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.

If you would like to discuss this response with us, please contact governmentservices@doc.govt.nz

Nāku noa, nā



Stacey Wrenn
Senior Manager, Regulatory Services
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai