

Kenepuru & Central Sounds



Kenepuru & Central Sounds Residents Association Inc.

Shelley Sidley
Department of Conservation

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1 February 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents' Association - Request for Feedback – Designating the Queen Charlotte Track as an official New Zealand Great Walk.

I write in my capacity as President of the Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents' Association Inc. (**Association**).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Association was established in 1991 and currently has approximately 280 household members who live full time or part time in the Kenepuru and Pelorus Sounds.
- 1.2 The Association's objects include, among others, to coordinate dealings with central and local government and represent members on matters of interest to them. These cover a diverse range of issues from seeking heritage status for local landmarks, fighting to get our over-stressed and decayed road network back to a reasonable level of safety and security, submitting on conservation and environment issues concerning the marine space of our beloved Sounds.
- 1.4 For a fuller appreciation of the work the Committee of the Association carries out on behalf of members visit our web site – www.kcsra.org.nz.
- 1.5 In this letter we are responding to the Department's request for feedback on the above proposal and refer to your three page memorandum dated 20 December 2018 which we received via the Association's representative on SAG.
- 1.6 After discussion, one or two of the Committee agreed to sound out some of the more affected and potentially more directly interested local members. As well the Committee

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had a useful internal discussion of the seeming pros and cons of the Department's proposal.

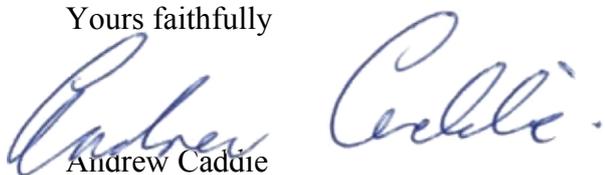
2. Comment

- 2.1 The Committee is well aware of the long standing desire of various governments to diversify away from our national reliance on primary production such as dairy, sheep and beef products, and forestry. Tourism has, we suggest, become such a source of diversification and indeed, so we understand, contributes mightily to our national economy. Accordingly, we appreciate the positive aspects the likes of this rebranding initiative offers to both the national and regional economies.
- 2.2 As locals, we are, of course, pleased at this national recognition as to what the Sounds represents. Not for nothing does the recently notified Marlborough Environment Plan refer to the Sounds as the "Jewel in the Crown" of the Marlborough Region. At the same time we are dealing with, in our own small way, the practical implications of increasing tourism in the Sounds and its demand for more and better resources. By way of example, after nearly five years of effort and submissions to the Marlborough Regional Council, we have just succeeded in having a public toilet facility installed at the popular and increasingly busy Torea Bay jetty area.
- 2.3 Nevertheless, the committee was quite surprised at the negative reaction of some we discussed the proposal with. The Committee felt that those who were arguing that the Sounds did not need more visitors were being a little unrealistic given the national push to grow the tourism segment of our economy. However, it is fair to say we were more sympathetic to the comments that this rebranding exercise would generate significant interest and visitors both to use the track and visit the Sounds generally.
- 1.3 We agree with sentiments that it was almost certain that this rebranding exercise and the attendant international publicity would increase the demand for and strain on already creaking local infrastructure. By this we refer to not only the obvious demands from having a whole lot more walkers (and riders) on the QC track but also the spill over to off-track facilities – roads, camp sites, public toilets, campervan dump facilities, car parks and so on. Just taking the first item – roads – the main access road into the Kenepuru is currently unsuitable for higher levels of traffic.
- 1.4 In this context your memorandum whilst admirably brief, gives no indication of the current track usage or the possible/likely growth projections and so on.

Conclusion

Accordingly, after further discussion of the pros and cons of this proposal, we are of the view that it is appropriate that the Association **take a neutral – but interested - stance** on the proposal. Given the comments above we would be grateful if you could continue to keep the Association in the loop and ensure any further information etc is supplied directly to us.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Caddie'.

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CC:

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