

Conservation Amendment Bill

Tourism Industry Aotearoa's
Submission to the Environment Committee

July 2026

Kia ora

Conservation Amendment Bill: Tourism Industry Aotearoa Submission

Tourism Industry Aotearoa welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Conservation Amendment Bill. This submission sets out TIA's position on the Bill and changes we recommend the Environment Committee considers and accepts.

TIA has been an advocate for, and supports, the reform of the conservation system in New Zealand. Done well, this will better enable visitor-related activities on New Zealand's conservation lands and waters, to the extent that this is consistent with conservation, for the betterment of both tourism and conservation.

Summary

Conservation and tourism are inextricably tied. Tourism on our conservation lands and waters creates economic activity, employment and visitor enjoyment. Conservation benefits from increased awareness of nature, support for conservation, tourism partners to work on conservation and increased resources for conservation.

The current legislation that the Department of Conservation (DOC) uses for managing tourism is obsolete and hinders positive tourism development and commonsense. TIA has pushed for modernisation of the conservation legislation to establish a fit-for-purpose framework for positive tourism activity.

1. TIA supports key aspects of the Bill, and has concerns with other aspects. The opportunity must be taken to modernise this legislation.
2. TIA makes substantive recommendations to change:

Functions of DOC. The proposed economic development function in clause 6 goes too far. The current clause that enables tourism is inadequate, but the shift to economic development '*...to the greatest extent practicable*' is not supported.

We propose wording '*...to enable use and development to the extent consistent with conservation.*'

We view the primacy of conservation as a fundamental aspect of the legislation that must not change. Tourism can operate effectively within this parameter, so long as the gains around streamlined processes are achieved.

Access levy. We support the ability being established to levy international visitors at certain sites. We see issues around how this will be implemented that need to be resolved, and we are concerned at the wording for how funds raised will be utilised.

We propose wording to require funds to be used '*...at the place where they are raised and without substituting existing funding from the Department.*'

3. Makes observations on the aspects of the Bill that will impact tourism, in particular the management planning system and the concession processes.

In this, the Bill sets the framework, but not the detail so what may result is not clear. For instance, the provision for pre-approved activities is welcomed, but assessing the implications raises many questions around impact on current concessionaires, how DOC will manage issues that arise and whether short-term pre-approved concessions will lead to a reduction in quality of the visitor experience and greater impact on the environment.

TIA requests that the Select Committee (Committee) consider each of the points raised in the body of this submission.

Attachment 1 sets out TIA's analysis of the key changes proposed in the Bill.

Tourism Industry Aotearoa

TIA is the peak body for the tourism industry in Aotearoa New Zealand. With around 1,200 member businesses, TIA represents a range of tourism-related activities including hospitality, accommodation, adventure activities, attractions, retail, airports and airlines, transport, as well as related-tourism services.

As an economic sector, we see tourism and conservation in our country to be inherently complementary. We want the tourism/DOC interface to work better. We want the commercial requirements of operators to be factored in.

We want tourism to invest in the protection, restoration and enhancement of Te Taiao. DOC can't do it alone, and tourism is a natural partner. This has been occurring organically already but would be greatly enhanced by a supportive legislative framework.

Reinforcing this position is the strategic document of the tourism industry, [*Tourism 2050 – A Blueprint for Impact, He Pae Tukutuku*](#).

Tourism 2050 has the Vision of 'Enriching Aotearoa New Zealand through a flourishing tourism ecosystem'. This Vision is centred on the positive role of tourism for the broad betterment of New Zealand and its people across a balanced framework – Economic, Community, Visitor and Environment.

Tourism 2050 has ten Actions that are the most important strategic workstreams to advance to enable the industry to achieve its Vision. Action 7 is 'Transform Tourism and Conservation'.

Tourism 2050 states:

'... tourism has a profound ability to contribute to the wellbeing and restoration of conservation lands and places, and getting operators well lined up with the Department of Conservation will result in important gains for nature and more streamlined processes for both operators and DOC itself.'

We see the Conservation Amendment Bill as a milestone process for advancing this Action.

The other important aspect of it is the industry's commitment to sustainability via the Tourism Sustainability Commitment. Over 2,000 tourism businesses are signed up to the TSC. The TSC is designed to support operators to advance 12 Commitments, one of which is conservation-related:

Restoring Nature - *Contribute to protecting and enhancing Aotearoa New Zealand's environment, including water, biodiversity, landscapes and clean air.*

In our Annual Declaration 2025, TSC members, confirmed:

- 98% agree that sustainability is important to their business
- 91% are taking some predator free action
- 56% have sustainability as part of their business metrics
- 48% see sustainability as a top business priority
- 48% have a written sustainability plan
- 22% have a sustainability budget.

Again, this illustrates the nature of tourism businesses and their commitment to sustainability and the environment.

New Zealand's Tourism Policy Statement

In June 2026, the Government released New Zealand's Tourism Policy Statement (TPS) that defines the tourism roles and responsibilities across central government, local government and industry. TIA called for a national tourism policy statement in its Tourism 2050 strategy, and we are very pleased to have the TPS in place. It sets out the tourism system settings and strategic direction, while Tourism 2050 sets out the industry strategy.

Of note is the description in the TPS of the role of DOC in tourism, paraphrased as:

New Zealand's natural environment – a third of which is under the stewardship of DOC – is a key foundation of our tourism proposition. DOC is a critical actor in the tourism system. A key part of DOC's role is administering tourism concessions on conservation lands: setting conditions that enable access and high-quality experiences while protecting natural and cultural values. DOC delivers these outcomes working in partnership with mana whenua/Treaty partners, local government, community groups, regional tourism organisations and concessionaires; aligning stewardship with access, investment and visitor experience.

We see the optimising of these DOC roles as an outcome from the reforms of the conservation legislation.

Aotearoa New Zealand Tourism Industry

Tourism is an important part of the New Zealand economy and society. In the year to March 2025, tourism activity supported 17% of our export economy, 7.7% of GDP and 11.4% of employment. (2)

Conservation lands and waters are central aspects of destination Aotearoa New Zealand. Our places, landscapes and activities create key motivations for visiting our country, and our conservation lands form a large part of this. For instance, in the year to March 2026, 72.5% of international visitors undertook a walk, hike, trek or tramp while in New Zealand. (3)

In terms of motivations to visit Aotearoa New Zealand, landscapes and scenery is the highest factor at 47.6%, well ahead of visiting family and friends at 33.6%. 20.9% of international visitors visited Fiordland National Park and 20.2% visited Aoraki Mt Cook. In enabling this visitation, DOC and concessionaires have central roles to play. This is our DOC concession community. DOC cites that there are around 2,000 active tourism concessions and that conservation-related tourism is worth around \$5.3 billion a year. (4)

The multi-faceted role of concessionaires is important. They enable access to places, they inform and share the special nature of our places with visitors, they are responsible for health and safety, and they typically act to help protect and enhance the environments they operate in.

In this, the role of the concessionaire is complementary to DOC itself in enabling visitation and protecting and conserving our special places and biodiversity.

To support and enable domestic and international visitors to enjoy our conservation lands, there is an extensive network of commercial businesses that provide products, services and experiences based on their ability to operate on our conservation lands.

TIA Feedback

In terms of process to develop its submission, TIA convened a member reference group to consider the various changes in the Bill, engaged with key TIA members, commissioned legal advice on the Bill and surveyed our members on the key areas of feedback. We then gained approval from the TIA Tourism Council, which comprises 17 senior representatives from the sectors that make up the tourism industry.

The member survey received 101 responses, 46% from businesses requiring a concession to operate, and 54% from across the industry.

The following sets out TIA's feedback on the Bill and the key aspects that relate to tourism.

(2) Stats NZ, *Tourism Satellite Account, Year ended March 2025*

(3) MBIE, *International Visitor Survey, March 2026*

(4) DOC, *Public Lecture at Lincoln University, June 2026*

1. Purpose

TIA is concerned that the proposed economic development function in clause 6 goes too far.

The current functions of DOC in the 1987 Act expressly reference tourism “...and to allow their use for tourism.” We have long considered that this has provided an inadequate level of mandate for DOC’s tourism-related activities.

However, the proposal in the Bill to ‘...enable this use and development to the greatest extent practicable...’ is excessive. It would create a dangerous position where development would be a stronger purpose than conservation itself. Testing for the words ‘to the greatest extent practicable’ in courts could generate unintended decisions and outcomes.

TIA’s Member Survey showed that 88% of respondents agree that the Conservation Act should include a purpose clause confirming that conservation remains the overriding purpose of the Act, while enabling economic development.

Recommendation 1:

Delete current wording, as follows:

Section 6(ea) to recognise the economic opportunities that arise from the use and development of land and other natural resources and historic resources managed by the Department, and to enable this use and development to the greatest extent practicable...

Replace with a tourism function statement to sit alongside the one for recreation, as follows:

Section 6(ea) to recognise the economic opportunities that arise from the use and development of land and tourism and other natural resources and historic resources managed by the Department, and to enable this use and development to the extent consistent with conservation....

This change would reflect the industry’s ethos around ‘balanced growth’ by making it clear that recognising, managing and enabling economic opportunities from tourism is a core function of the Department, within conservation limits.

This amendment to insert to the ‘extent consistent with conservation’ must be made to all parts of the Bill that refers to the purpose statement with the ‘...to the maximum extent practicable’ wording.

2. Concession Processes

TIA strongly supports the intent of the reforms of the concession system as set out in the Bill. These reflect the changes the industry has been calling for.

TIA comments in this section relate to the working details of the new regime, with much of the practical details not set out in the Bill. For this reason, it is of utmost importance that the Committee focus on this aspect. TIA will provide feedback from our perspective, and we urge the Committee to fully consider the submissions of the many tourism businesses who detail what the implications of the wording of the Bill will be.

We also note that the draft National Conservation Policy Statement (NCPS) sets out more detail on the concession processes and which also raises some more concerns, such as around concession allocation processes (refer below).

Overall, TIA supports the changes to the concession granting processes, including the contents of an application, the statutory timeframes and exempt activities. This was supported by TIA's Member Survey which found that 93% of respondents supported the reform programme and its aim of improving efficiency while maintaining business certainty, recognising existing investment, and providing fair transitional arrangements.

Two key areas of concern:

2.1 Allocation process

This provides the power to the Minister to allocate concessions by an allocation process such as by means of a tender. TIA supports the power being available to the Minister, but it is uncertain whether the wording in the Bill gives sufficient clarity as to how the process will work. The draft NCPS is silent on this.

TIA is aware Cabinet has considered limits to the circumstances in which existing concessions can be competitively allocated, but it is not clear how this has been incorporated in the Bill, aside from that the power has been provided generally to preclude through regulation certain concessions or classes of concession from being subject to an allocation process, or if there is another policy process to advance.

This is a major area of concern for many existing concessionaires, especially those who have been operating a long time, have built the value of the concession through their own success, have developed a marketable brand based on the concession, have developed intellectual property and have invested on the public conservation land (PCL) itself.

The ability to call for a tender process and the timing of it are critical factors, particularly where private capital investment is needed to develop visitor facilities on the PCL. Uncertainty will inhibit this investment.

TIA's Member Survey showed that 93% of respondents agree that the Bill lacks clarity around when competitive allocation processes will be used, which concessions may be exempt, how applications will be assessed, and what protections will apply to incumbent operators.

Recommendation 2:

The Committee should clarify the wording of Subpart 3 to explain how allocation processes will operate and provide existing concessionaires with the certainty and security of tenure needed to develop and invest in their businesses.

2.2 Pre-approved Concessions

TIA supports the use of pre-approved activities where it is appropriate to do so, with reservations on how this will work. For instance, many of the pre-approved activities involve places where existing concessionaires are operating and where there may be limited capacity.

We submit that:

- The 12-month duration of pre-approved concessions will not give operators enough certainty to invest in the staff, equipment, safety systems and product development needed to deliver high quality visitor experiences.
- Existing concessionaire operations will be impacted with a potential influx of new operators.
- DOC will need to detail how it will manage the pre-approved activities, including carrying capacity, cumulative impact, and how and when can they impose tighter management systems.
- The limited duration of the pre-approved concessions (12 months) will limit uptake by established operators who require longer term arrangements and will likely apply for concessions to permit their more complex operations.

Taken together, there is a serious risk that pre-approved operators may end up being short-term and low-capital operators who may compromise the quality of a place or experience, and through this disadvantage operators who have invested more heavily at that place.

As with other comments we make, it is the detail that counts and this is not always obvious in the Bill or its supporting information. Notably, it was only through seeing the draft NCPS that the intended approach for the pre-approved concessions became clear.

Recommendation 3:

The Committee to develop Subpart 4 covering pre-approved concessions to include specificity on how the pre-approved concession system will work, and that feedback will be invited from the tourism industry on the details as they are drafted.

3. Powers and responsibilities under the Bill

TIA recognises the tension between vesting key decision-making powers with one party to enable the more streamlined processes across the conservation management framework.

The nature of the decision-making powers across the conservation system are key to ensuring balance across the functions that DOC delivers, including those of the Minister of Conservation, the Conservation Authority and the Conservation Boards and DOC.

TIA is looking for guardrails to ensure stability across the system for both conservation and tourism. This stability is central to the ability of tourism operators to invest in the places in which they operate. We see a risk with the Minister of Conservation being the decisionmaker for all key decisions around the conservation management planning framework and many concession decisions. Many of these powers currently lie with the Conservation Authority and Boards, and DOC itself.

This raised questions for TIA around the responsibilities of the Conservation Authority and the Conservation Boards that will now be centred in advisory and reporting roles. There is a concern whether the changed roles under the Bill will be sufficient to ensure continued relevance over the long term.

TIA's Member Survey showed that 91% of respondents support the Conservation Authority and Conservation Boards continuing to have a formal recommendation role in key planning and implementation decisions, helping to strengthen transparency, credibility and public confidence while preserving the benefits of a streamlined approval process.

Overall, we see merit in the centralisation of decision-making to streamline the process, but we are looking for guardrails to ensure long term stewardship of the PCL and appropriate scrutiny for key decisions.

Recommendation 4:

The Committee to specifically consider the nature of decision-making powers across the concession-related aspects of the conservation system to ensure streamlined decision making, with strong guardrails in place, such as ensuring recommendation and accountability roles for the Conservation Authority and Conservation Boards.

4. National Conservation Policy Statement

TIA supports the streamlining of the management planning framework as set out with the NCPS and the Area Plans, as well as the establishment of Visitor Amenity Areas. For all these layers in the management planning framework, it is important that the legislation specifically provides for tourism as a mandated function.

TIA's Member Survey showed that 92% of respondents agree that tourism and recreation should be explicitly recognised within the NCPS framework and it should promote a balanced approach between conservation and use.

We welcome that the proposed NCPS and Area Plans will be more flexible than the current General Policy, National Park Plan and Conservation Management Plan instrument that they replace. We anticipate that the NCPS and Area Plans will provide sound principles with transparency on how they will work in practice.

For instance, if the Bill's establishment of the NCPS or Area Plans do not adequately include the tourism aspects, they in turn will not have the correct mandate for the subsequent work to create the key NCPS and Area Plans documents.

With the NCPS, we have assessed the consultation draft and welcome the tourism-related aspects of it. On the other hand, the draft NCPS does expose how the legislation may be applied. For instance, the NCPS contains more detail on the pre-approved concession aspect that is not readily apparent in the Bill. This means all management planning documents will need wide consultation, and we welcome that being signalled as the intention for the Area Plans, as well as when Visitor Amenities areas are being determined.

Recommendation 5:

The Committee to ensure that tourism (and recreation) is specified in the Bill as a sectoral component of the NCPS. As part of this, amend Schedule 2 to specify that tourism parties, such as TIA, are specified as consultation partners in Schedule 2, Sections 3, 4 and 10.

5. Area Plans

TIA recognises the essential role the Area Plans will play in the conservation management framework as the key means to give effect to the NCPS.

TIA supports fewer and more integrated planning documents, with provision to be more easily updated so they can move with the times.

While Area Plans will cover discrete geographic areas, tourism activity often operates across regions, meaning that Area Plans will need to relate to each other to ensure requirements across them are consistent.

As with the NCPS above, tourism needs to be clearly specified in the Bill as a sectoral component of the Area Plans. TIA's Member Survey showed that 90% of respondents agree that tourism and recreation should be explicitly recognised in the Area Plans and that tourism stakeholders should be consulted in the development process for each Area Plan.

With Area Plans being such important documents, there will need to be a rapid programme established in order to have them developed and implemented. Along with the tourism industry's interest in being consulted throughout the process, we recognise that DOC resourcing will need to be considered to put these plans in place.

Recommendation 6:

The Committee to ensure that tourism (and recreation) is specified in the Bill as a sectoral component of the Area Plans. As part of this, amend Schedule 3 to specify that tourism parties, such as TIA, are specified as consultation partners in Schedule 2, Sections 7 and 8.

6. Visitor Amenities Areas

TIA supports the concept of Visitor Amenities Areas as a mechanism to focus tourism and recreation activity and to enable the provision of facilities, activities and services to facilitate high quality tourism and to enable appropriate industry investment.

TIA's Member Survey showed that 90% of respondents support the concept and opportunities of Visitor Amenities Areas to enhance visitor experiences, improve infrastructure, and support investment, within appropriate safeguards and conservation values.

While the timing of potential Visitor Amenities Areas is not clear, we anticipate that they will allow quality visitation at special places that will generate wide benefits, for visitors, operators and conservation. Set up well, TIA is confident that tourism operators will be receptive to these opportunities once these Visitor Amenities Areas start to form.

The industry will welcome the ability to contribute to the development of Visitor Amenities Areas, including the associated proposal documents, and to invest where they see the opportunity.

TIA is interested in further detail on the size and scale of the envisaged development, how many there will be and where, and what checks and balances will be in place to ensure appropriate development.

Recommendation 7:

The Committee to ensure the process to develop Visitor Amenities Areas is an open process with tourism industry engagement and input.

7. Upholding the Treaty of Waitangi

TIA supports the intent of the Bill to provide additional clarity and certainty on the current Section 4 of the Conservation Act by identifying the steps, processes and other activities the Crown undertake before making land management decisions.

TIA's Member Survey showed that 97% of respondents support greater certainty around the application of Treaty obligations within the Conservation Act, recognising that many tourism operators have experienced uncertainty under the current arrangements and that, in principle, they support the Crown upholding its Treaty obligations.

TIA supports the Crown upholding its Treaty obligations and this must be integral to the Bill, its enactment and its implementation over time.

Recommendation 8:

The Committee to ensure the Bill upholds the Treaty obligations of the Crown, with this to be integral to the Bill.

8. International Visitor Access Levy

TIA supports the provision of the ability to DOC to charge international visitors for access to some conservation land, noting that regulations will be established to put in place the levies.

TIA's Member Survey showed that 96% of respondents support international visitor access charging to generate additional investment in conservation and visitor experiences, with clarity needed on operation of the charge, definition of an international visitor and that the funds raised will supplement, not replace, existing Crown funding for DOC.

Not all of TIA's members hold this view and we direct the Committee to the submission of the Tourism Export Council on behalf of their members.

Gaining revenue streams from visitors will allow DOC to invest in the destination to improve the experience over time.

In establishing this levy, there are many factors to consider. For instance, is it a payment point when entering a place, is it built into the package provided by tourism operators and how will international visitors be identified?

Integrating this access charge into the complex tourism distribution system will need careful design and industry input. Tourism itineraries can be quoted and sold years out, making additional costs difficult to include retrospectively. A notice period of at least 18 months is required to implement this transition smoothly.

TIA strongly believes that funds raised must be invested in place where the funds are raised to support the improvement of that place for visitors (both facilities and conservation). Critically, this must fund additional activities and not just replace reduced DOC funding.

TIA is concerned about cumulative charges for visitors where they may pay multiple access and parking charges. For instance, an individual visitor to our country could face several charging points:

- \$100 International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy
- Carparking at certain sites
- Inbound tour operator concession fee (passed on to the visitor)
- Transport operator concession fee (passed on to the visitor)
- Activity provider concession fee (passed on to the visitor)
- Plus, the proposed access fee.

With the access fee adding to these charges, the industry holds a legitimate concern that the cumulative costs risk reaching a tipping point that outprices the value proposition for international visitors. If this happens, the wider consequence for tourism and national economy is likely to be greater than the funds raised. Solid pricing and demand elasticity work for each site where charging will be introduced is needed.

The definition of an international visitor as a person who is not a NZ citizen or ordinarily resident in New Zealand may not be sufficient. For instance, international volunteers carrying out conservation on the PCL or employees of tourism companies. These international visitors must be exempt.

TIA supports the Bill's requirement for DOC to consult concession-holders before regulations for levies are made.

If operators are required to be the point of collection for the access levy, the cost of doing this will need to be included in the design of the levy system.

Recommendation 9:

To amend the section relating to the purpose of the levy as set out below.

S48D(2) The purpose of the levies is to fund,

(a) additional activities that maintain and enhance visitor experiences on land managed and administered by the Department at the place where the funds were raised and without substituting existing funding from the Department; and

(b) collecting the levies.

This will serve to ensure the investment of funds raised in the appropriate places and that they will not substitute existing funding and thereby will not lead to increased investment.

Recommendation 10:

The Committee to provide specific consideration to:

Definition of an international visitor to be subject to the levy, specifically ensuring that international visitors working in the tourism industry or doing volunteer conservation work are excluded.

How the levy will be collected given the way the tourism distribution system works.

The collection method and any compensation to be provided to businesses who have a role in collecting the levy.

Next Steps

We request the opportunity to make an oral submission to the Environment Committee. We are happy to provide any further information.

Please contact Bruce Bassett on 021 609 674 or bruce.bassett@tia.org.nz.

Ngā mihi,



Rebecca Ingram
Chief Executive

Attachment 1: TIA Analysis of Conservation Amendment Bill

Area	Comment	Recommendation
<p>1: Functions of DOC</p>	<p>TIA agrees with changing the functions of DOC to be more enabling of economic development, such as through enabling commercial tourism.</p> <p>The current wording of the Act is for DOC to ‘...allow their use for tourism.’ This does not support an active role in enabling appropriate tourism activities.</p> <p>However, the proposed wording ‘...to enable this use and development to the greatest extent practicable...’ is excessive as it does not clearly establish the hierarchy that places conservation first with other functions to be permitted to the extent consistent with conservation.</p> <p>This wording violates the values held by the tourism industry and we recommend significant modification of the Bill as set out in the next column.</p> <p>TIA supports a mid-point for tourism as a function for DOC, based on aligning with the recreation purpose in the Bill.</p> <p>TIA is motivated to grow tourism in a balanced manner within reasonable limits, whether economic, community or environmental.</p> <p>We are acutely aware that tourism will flourish only if we care for our place. Tourism growth and conservation are inextricably tied and must advance together.</p>	<p>Delete the second part of Section 6(ea) comprising:</p> <p><i>‘...and to enable this use and development to the greatest extent practicable under the principal Act.’</i></p> <p>Replace the deleted words with:</p> <p><i>(ea) to recognise the economic opportunities that arise from the use and development of land and tourism and other natural resources and historic resources managed by the Department, and to enable this use and development to the extent consistent with conservation....’</i></p> <p>In order to ensure the Functions clauses in Section 6 make specific reference to tourism, amend 6(ae) to be tourism-specific, as set out above.</p> <p>Or, in the clause above, the word ‘enable’ could be replaced with the word ‘foster’ which is a more active role of DOC as it relates to tourism.</p> <p>This change should apply to all parts of the Bill that use the ‘maximum extent possible’ wording.</p>

Area	Comment	Recommendation
<p>2: Concession Processes</p>	<p>TIA supports the intent of the reforms to modernise the concession system as set out in the Bill.</p> <p>This is a once-a-generation opportunity to make positive changes that TIA and tourism more broadly have been calling for. The comments raised in this section relate to the details of the Bill and its text with a view to gaining greater clarity in the final legislation.</p> <p>As set out in other sections, we have set out what we see as an appropriate function for DOC that must be reflected in this section.</p> <p>Statutory processing timeframes We support set timeframes being set for the concession application process.</p> <p>Activity fees No indications around the level of fees are set out, nor how these will be set.</p> <p>Standardised conditions Welcomed in principle but it is less clear how and when individualized conditions will be applied.</p> <p>TIA supports concessionaires' views made on the Bill given that they are best placed to respond in detail to the practicalities of the new concession system.</p>	<p>Committee to support the steps to modernise the concession system, subject to information provided to the Committee from concessionaires who understand the implication of the Bill on their operations.</p>
<p>2.1 & 2.2 Concession allocation processes</p>	<p>Allocation by competitive process (14ZF) TIA supports the right to run allocation processes for some concessions but seek protection or rights to those who have developed and invested in the concessions they operate.</p> <p>Clarity of the rules of engagement are central to investment decisions and how and when concessions may be subject to a tender process will be a factor that potential investors will consider.</p> <p>For some operators, the intellectual property they have established in their operation is a key business asset that, in effect, creates the value of the concession and which another operator could get for free by virtue of the amendments.</p> <p>The wording in the Bill enables competitive allocation but lacks clarity on the process. Further</p>	<p>Committee to note that for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation by competitive tender, the Bill to be clearer about the allocation processes, when competitive tenders will be used and the factors to consider. While there are protections in the wording used, anticipating the actual outcomes is unclear. <p>Industry and concessionaires to be directly engaged by DOC in the development of the regulations that will support the allocation process.</p>

Area	Comment	Recommendation
	<p>work is needed to establish regulations to identify concessions or classes of concessions that will not be subject to an allocation process. Industry must be engaged in the process to establish these regulations.</p> <p>Pre-approved concessions (14ZI) While agreeing with reducing the process burden, there are elements of the pre-approved approach that are not resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the pre-approved process will work for operators involved, given short maximum terms, complexities in interfacing with other concessions an operator may need if providing overlapping activities, and the need for business security. • How DOC will manage the pre-approved activities, including carry capacity, cumulative impact, and how and when they can impose tighter management systems. • The limited duration of the pre-approved concessions will limit uptake by established operators who require longer term arrangements and will likely apply for concessions to permit their more complex operations. The implications in the short term, is that low capital operators may be the ones to gain the pre-approved concessions. • How the pre-approved operators will impact existing concessionaires who may have built up demand and invested in the activities given security of tenure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-approved concessions, the wording in the Bill sets the framework but not the details. For instance, the draft NCPS sets out the activities that can be pre-approved, but this introduces many questions for operators – are they the right activities, how do existing concessionaires compete with pre-approved operators, will short term concessions enable needed investments? Will there be unintended consequences such as overuse of facilities and/or reduced quality of visitor experiences?
<p>3 Powers and Responsibilities</p>	<p>TIA has some reservations around the vesting of powers under the Bill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The powers of the Minister of Conservation are increased in approving the various planning instruments and in relation to the granting and amendment of concessions. This is a significant change. We can see the merits of this change to streamline the process but are looking for guardrails to ensure long term stewardship of the PCL. • The shift to Minister of Conservation decision-making exposes governance of the conservation system to swings across the electoral cycle, whereas the tourism interest is for stable long-term settings that provide tenure for concessionaires and results in certainty for longer term operational and investment decision making. 	<p>Committee to specifically consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of the decision-making powers across the conservation system to ensure balance across the functions that DOC delivers, including the Minister, the Conservation Authority and the Conservation Boards, and DOC. TIA is looking for some guardrails to ensure stability across the system for both conservation and tourism. This stability is central to the ability of tourism operators to invest in the place in which they operate.

Area	Comment	Recommendation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With this shift, there is an associated loss to powers and responsibilities for the Conservations Authority and Boards. Will the remaining roles be sufficient over the longer term to sustain these bodies, and what these are should be better specified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ongoing functions of the Conservation Authority and Conservation Boards to ensure continued relevance. Vesting the Conservation Authority and Boards with a recommendation function for plans prepared, that are then approved by the Minister.
<p>4 National Conservation Policy Statement</p>	<p>TIA supports the NCPS as the peak planning document for DOC.</p> <p>The draft NCPS is out for consultation at present and it contains details not contained in the Bill. TIA will comment on the NCPS to ensure the Bill is mapped over the NCPS in ways that will support smooth implementation for the tourism industry and tourism operators.</p> <p>The Bill provides for the NCPS but not for the exact content of it. TIA believes it must set out the settings under which the Area Plans and Amenity Areas will be established.</p> <p>Tourism, and how it is managed and enabled by DOC will form a major part of the NCPS. As such, specific reference in the Bill is needed on tourism and requires that tourism interests, such as TIA, are specified in the process for making or amending the NCPS as set out in Schedule 2.</p> <p>With the Purpose section changed as recommended above, the structure of the NCPS should be to give effect to each of the purposes, with tourism in the changed Section 6(ae).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that tourism (and recreation) is specified in the Bill as a sectoral component of the NCPS. Amend Schedule 2 to specify that tourism interests, such as TIA, are specified as consultation parties in Schedule 2, Sections 3, 4, 10. Amend Section 13D(2) (b) to align the purpose of the NCPS with the Purpose section above that removes the words <i>'to the greatest extent practicable.'</i>
<p>5 Area Plans</p>	<p>TIA supports Area Plans as the key means to give effect to the NCPS.</p> <p>TIA supports fewer planning documents, with the provision to be more easily updated so they can move with the times.</p> <p>TIA notes that much tourism activity will operate across multiple Area Plans, rather than being discretely located within a single Area Plan. This means that Areas Plans will need to relate to each other to accommodate this activity and to make sure the requirements are consistent.</p>	<p>Ensure that tourism (and recreation) is specified in the Bill as a sectoral component of the Area Plans.</p> <p>Amend Schedule 3 to specify that tourism interests, such as TIA, are specified as consultation parties in Schedule 3, Sections 7, 8.</p>

Area	Comment	Recommendation
	<p>We do not know how many Area Plans there will be and therefore how geographically large their areas covered will be.</p> <p>TIA notes that tourism and recreation are not activities specifically mentioned in the Area Plans and should be. This aspect should cascade from the NCPS.</p> <p>Again, TIA considers that this places undue emphasis on the use of 'to the maximum extent practicable', rather than balanced use.</p> <p>TIA notes that the process to create the Areas Plans will be significant, particularly if multiple plans will need to be developed quickly. Resourcing for DOC will need to be considered.</p>	<p>Amend Section 13H(2)(b) to align the purpose of the NCPS with the proposed amendments to DOC's function above that removes the words 'to the greatest extent practicable.'</p> <p>Committee to give consideration to the resources required to establish the Areas Plans in a timely manner.</p>
<p>6 Visitor Amenities Areas</p>	<p>TIA supports the concept of Visitor Amenities Areas that will enable forward looking spatial planning, remove constraints on development and enable longer term investment.</p> <p>They will allow appropriate development of notable places to enable visitation and to allow enjoyment by visitors.</p> <p>TIA is confident that tourism operators will be receptive to opportunities once these Visitor Amenities Areas start to form.</p> <p>TIA welcomes a consultation process for establishing a Visitor Amenities Area.</p> <p>TIA considers that visitor amenity areas must be consistent with the purpose of DOC as recommended in this submission.</p> <p>TIA is interested in the size and scale of envisaged development, how many there will be and where, and what checks and balances are in place to ensure appropriate development.</p> <p>One means to broaden the input into the Visitor Amenities Area decision-making process is to invite input from the Conservational Authority.</p>	<p>Include a provision in the Bill specifying the role of the Conservation Authority in the processes for establishing and monitoring Visitor Amenities Areas.</p>

Area	Comment	Recommendation
<p>7 Upholding Treaty Settlements</p>	<p>The exact ways that Treaty of Waitangi obligations and commitments will be upheld in practice are not fully clear, and TIA is not an expert in this space.</p> <p>In principle, TIA supports the Crown upholding its Treaty obligations and that this must be integral to the Bill, and its implementation over time.</p>	<p>Committee to ensure the Bill upholds the Treaty obligations of the Crown, with this to be integral to the Bill, its enactment and its implementation over time.</p>
<p>8 International Visitor Access Levy</p>	<p>IA supports DOC having the ability to levy, but we are aware there are many considerations in play that will make it tricky to implement. For instance, is it a physical charge when entering a place; is it built into the package provided by tourism operators; what processes are envisaged to identify international visitors.</p> <p>Integrating this access charge into the complex tourism distribution system will be a tricky exercise needing care and lots of industry input. Tourism itineraries can be quoted and sold years out, making additional costs difficult to retrospectively include. A long notice period is required to implement this change smoothly.</p> <p>TIA is strongly of the view that funds raised must be invested in the place where the funds are raised to support the improvement of that place for visitors (both facilities and conservation). Critically, this must fund additional activities and not just replace reduced DOC funding.</p> <p>TIA is concerned about cumulative charges for visitors where they may pay multiple access charges and parking charges, in addition to the \$100 International Visitor Levy they have already paid.</p> <p>The definition of an international visitor as a person who is not a NZ citizen or ordinarily resident in NZ may not be sufficient. For instance, volunteers carry out conservation on the PCL and employees of tourism companies should not be captured.</p> <p>TIA supports the Bill’s requirement to consult concession-holders before regulations for levies are made.</p> <p>If operators are required to be the point of collection for the access levy, the cost of doing this will need to be included in the design of the levy system. For example, in the case of the Stewart Island visitor levy, RealNZ collects much of this and incurs a cost for doing so.</p>	<p>Amend the section relating to the purpose of the levy, as follows:</p> <p>S48D(2) The purpose of the levies is to fund,</p> <p>(a) additional activities to maintain and enhance visitor experiences on land managed and administered by the Department at the place where the funds were raised and without substituting existing funding from the Department; and</p> <p>(b) collecting the levies.</p> <p>While agreeing to the establishment of powers for DOC to levy international visitors, more work is needed on how it will be collected, with multiple complications affecting any of the options available.</p> <p>Further consideration is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of international visitor. • How people will pay the levy with cognizance of the way the tourism distribution system works. • The collection method and how any compensation will be provided to businesses who have a role in collecting the levy.