

## **International Conservation and Tourism Visitor Levy (IVL) Advisory Group**

### **Minutes of meeting of 29 October, 2019**

#### **Attendees:**

Group Members: Catherine Taylor (Chair), Iain Cossar, Richard May, Gerry McSweeney, Kauahi Ngapora, Bruce Parkes (10.45am – 12.15pm), Paula Southgate, Verity Webber, Grant Webster, Penny Webster

Officials: Richard Dore (DoC), Logan Penniket (DoC), Duncan Small (MBIE), Karl Woodhead (MBIE)

#### **1. Welcome and confirmation of agenda**

As Bruce Parkes was unavailable to present the Conservation Investment process in the afternoon, the agenda was changed to match his availability in the morning.

#### **2. Confirmation of terms of reference**

The Group provided some minor feedback on the draft terms of reference.

The Group noted that the terms of reference said that the Group should give confidence that the IVL is being well managed. The Group noted that this implied that they would get into the day-to-day operational detail of the fund – they considered that their role is to form a view on the alignment of projects funded by the IVL with the Government's priorities. The Group acknowledged that they do not have decision-making authority – their role is to provide feedback on programme direction.

The Chair noted that draft minutes should be reviewed by the Chair before wider circulation to Group members.

**ACTION POINT:** MBIE to amend the terms of reference and send to Group members for confirmation.

#### **3. Overview of IVL investment plan**

MBIE and DoC officials provided an overview of the draft investment plan (the Plan) and the approach to developing it. MBIE officials outlined that an area that they wanted guidance on from the Group was on infrastructure, and specifically how to get useful engagement from local government. The Group agreed that local government should have a more visible position in the Plan. The Group discussed how to engage with local government on strategy. Building local capacity so that local government is more resilient to broader changes was also a matter that needed to be considered.

The Group noted that there were two different/disconnected approaches in the Investment Plan which was pitched at different levels with tourism being high level and strategic, while conservation was detailed and process oriented.

The Group felt that the use of the word sustainable and sustainability could be sharper – as it was used in different ways throughout the Plan.

**NOTE:** A subsequent review of the material provided to Cabinet that led to the establishment of the IVL put forward two expenditure options – a simple split between

Tourism and Conservation or a System Investment Approach. Advice received is that Cabinet chose the simple split option. The two different approaches could arise as a result of this decision.

ACTION POINT: Officials to amend the Plan based on Group feedback.

#### 4. Conservation investment

The Group provided feedback to the Department of Conservation on the conservation investment areas, expressing concern at the significant focus on biodiversity with little obvious linkage to international visitors.

NOTE: The general policy statement that preceded the Immigration (International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy) Amendment Bill stated:

*The recent growth in visitors has put pressure on visitor infrastructure (including on facilities and public conservation lands and waters managed by the Department of Conservation). This visitor infrastructure is necessary to support tourism in New Zealand. In some instances, the organisations providing the infrastructure and/or managing public lands and waters have limited mechanisms to directly charge visitors for the use of these assets, resulting in under-investment or cross-subsidy from other groups.....The Bill provides for one mechanism – a revenue stream generated directly from international visitors that can be used to contribute to the funding of conservation, infrastructure used for tourism and other initiatives relating to tourism.*

The Group considered that there should be better information to strengthen the links to align with the intent of the levy.

The Group also had concerns with funding being applied to what appeared to be business as usual activities such as the development of ongoing compliance campaigns..

The Group would like to see an explicit communications plan for the levy that sets out how the emphasis on biodiversity meets public and community expectations for funding from the International Visitor Levy.

ACTION POINT: Department of Conservation officials to consider the feedback and make amendments to the wording of the Conservation investment section of the Plan to make the linkages stronger.

#### 5. Tourism investment

There was further discussion on how best to involve local government in the development of the investment plan. The Group provided feedback to MBIE officials on suggested ways to engage with local government, including leveraging off the experience of two of the Group members with close links to local government.

ACTION POINT: MBIE officials to consider how to best use Group members to engage with local government.