



Ministerial Ref: OIA 15-E-136

21 May 2015

fyi-request-2717-7a3f2169@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear James,

I refer to your official information request on 11 May 2015. The request has two parts:

Information about the amount of money the Department contributed to the “Wood from the Trees” sculpture which was constructed in central Christchurch.

What was the rationale for funding this project as opposed to more traditional conservation projects?

Part one—DOC contribution to the “Wood from the Trees” sculpture

The department contributed \$10,000 to the construction and installation of the “Wood from the Trees” sculpture. The \$130,000 project was led by a local Christchurch business which sourced funding contributions from DOC, businesses and the public via crowd-funding.

Part two—rationale

With regard to your second question, I am happy to provide a summary of the rationale behind the department’s support for the “Wood from the Trees” sculpture.

The “Wood from the Trees” sculpture is one of a number of the department’s urban projects aimed at bringing the value of conservation into the city environment as part of the Christchurch rebuild. These projects are part of a larger strategic approach to engage and connect urban New Zealanders with nature and conservation. In Christchurch, these projects include Nature Play, the Mahinga Kai Exemplar, Urban Living Wall (Green Wall) and Wood from the Trees.

Each project is focussed on a different urban audience and uses a different approach to inspire and connect urban New Zealanders with nature and conservation, including a call to action. “Wood from the Trees” is a static sculpture that raised the profile of conservation in the city through DOC signage, promotion and crowd-funding.

Each of the urban Christchurch projects have been completed in partnership with others i.e. businesses, Ngāi Tahu, local authorities, Trusts, schools, community groups or individuals. This collaborative aspect is a critical part of the department’s strategic approach to get more New Zealanders thinking, valuing and contributing to conservation in their everyday lives—at home, at work and on and off public conservation land.

Under-pinning the department's urban approach is considerable research regarding the changes urbanisation has brought to people and societies. Two of the most researched aspects include a growing detachment from nature and connection to the natural environment. This in turn influences how people value nature and conservation. New Zealand and New Zealanders are not immune from these international trends, with 86% of New Zealanders now living in an urban environment. This research and the department's desire to grow conservation led to DOC locally focussing some of its work on the urban environment.

The department understands that to grow the value of conservation in society we need to connect New Zealanders with nature and conservation experiences where they live and work—these in turn provide stepping stones to the vast opportunities to enjoy and contribute to conservation on public conservation land.

All the urban projects including Wood for the Trees are being evaluated by Lincoln University to determine their effectiveness and guide future project direction in this area.

Thank you for your interest.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, loopy oval shape with a small loop at the top right.

Greg Lind
Acting Director, Conservation Partnerships / *Kaihautū-Kāhui Manutātaki*
South and Eastern South Island Region