

Before the Independent Hearing Panel
Appointed by the Dunedin City Council

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**)

In the matter of an application by **Dunedin City Council** and the **Department of Conservation** for consent to construct and operate a carpark at Tunnel Beach, Dunedin

Dunedin City Council and Department of Conservation

Applicants

Statement of evidence of Scott MacLean

20 April 2022

Applicant's solicitor:

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Qualifications and experience

- 1 My name is **Scott MacLean**.
- 2 I am currently the Group Manager Parks and Recreation Services (PARS), employed by the Dunedin City Council (DCC).
- 3 I have over 20 years' experience working in the public and local government sector, with over 10 years of that in Senior Management roles. I have been involved in numerous environmental and recreational capital developments and community projects during this time. I hold a Certificate in Environmental Science (NZ) (1999).

Scope of evidence

- 4 I have been asked to prepare evidence in relation to the application for the construction and operation of a carpark at Tunnel Beach, Dunedin. This includes:
 - (a) Background to the issue;
 - (b) Improved carparking opportunities;
 - (c) Appropriate toileting facilities and waste management; and
 - (d) Freedom camping.

Executive summary

- 5 Tunnel Beach is a significant tourism destination for Dunedin City as well as a local recreation site.
- 6 The site is on the coast approximately eight minutes' drive from the Dunedin City centre. The walking track provides visitors and residents with access to a sought-after coastal landscape of high scenic value and historical significance.
- 7 In 2018, the Department of Conservation (DOC) approached DCC PARS advising that they were seeing large numbers of visitors to Tunnel Beach and that this was have a negative effect on the residents and that DOC were subsequently receiving high volumes of complaints (from neighbouring residents). PARS staff were receiving similarly high numbers of complaints.
- 8 The nature of complaints included visitor traffic, parking behaviour and associated safety concerns, inadequate toilet facilities for the number of visitors and freedom camping concerns.

- 9 The proposed carpark and toilet development seeks to address those concerns.
- 10 I confirm that DCC has withdrawn the coffee/food vendors part of the proposal to ensure this does not create any potential effects for residents.

Background

- 11 In 2018, after recording high numbers of visitors to the Tunnel Beach site and an increasing number of complaints from neighbouring residents, DOC approached DCC PARS to propose partnering to seek a solution that provided for better visitor management.
- 12 DCC PARS manages freedom camping across the city. Freedom camping is permitted at the Tunnel beach site, in accordance with the DCC's Camping Control Bylaw 2015.
- 13 Since 2017, DCC has recorded an increasing number of freedom camping complaints regarding the Tunnel Beach site.
- 14 DCC PARS agreed to partner with DOC to seek a solution that provided for better visitor management.
- 15 Project partnerships have evolved to include the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, who are contributing funding through the Tourism Infrastructure Fund, and mana whenua.
- 16 The Tunnel Beach site is of great significance to mana whenua. The project will include interpretation and local story telling, through a cultural narrative. A letter of support for the project from Te Runanga o Otakou is attached.
- 17 Issues that were identified through analysis of complaints received from neighbouring residents showed that residents were concerned at parking behaviour and problems arising from freedom camping and poor toileting behaviour leading to public health concerns.
- 18 Staff, working with the project partners, held a series of public meetings, to discuss the concerns with residents and interested parties.
- 19 It was agreed with residents that the best means of managing the problems arising from increasing visitor numbers to Tunnel Beach was to provide better vehicle access and parking opportunities; to provide more appropriate, permanent toileting facilities, provision of improved waste management facilities and to manage freedom camping through appropriate carpark management.

- 20 Options on how to best manage the observed problems were discussed at these meetings and refined through feedback from the residents. Final designs were presented back to residents at the last public meeting.
- 21 From a management perspective, it was agreed with DOC that the carpark and associated amenities would be vested with the DCC for ongoing management and maintenance.
- 22 Freedom camping will be effectively managed by way of a gated carpark entrance / exit. This will prevent overnight stays in the carpark.
- 23 Access to the carpark will be controlled by operating hours.
- 24 The carpark will be open and accessible between the hours of 8.00am – 9.00pm in Spring and Summer and 9.00am – 5.00pm during the Autumn and Winter months.
- 25 Outside of these times, the carpark will be locked, preventing freedom camping.
- 26 Toilets will be serviced twice per day during Spring and Summer and once per day during Autumn and Winter.
- 27 Rubbish and waste will be managed through the provision of rubbish bins.
- 28 It is proposed to service the rubbish bins three days per week during Spring and Summer and once per week during Winter.
- 29 Rubbish volumes will be monitored on an ongoing basis and numbers of rubbish bins and servicing frequencies are able to be adjusted to meet demand if required.

Conclusion

- 30 The proposed provision of increased and improved vehicle parking opportunities at Tunnel Beach responds to traffic management concerns raised by neighbouring residents.
- 31 The proposed provision of permanent toileting facilities at Tunnel Beach responds to visitor demand and concerns about poor toileting behaviour, raised by neighbouring residents.
- 32 The proposed provision of improved waste provision and management responds to concerns raised by neighbouring residents.
- 33 The proposed operating hours of the carpark responds to concerns raised by neighbouring residents about unmanaged freedom camping

- 34 Overall the carpark is intended to result in a much better managed visitor experience, and will better manage the traffic arriving at the walkway.

Scott Nicholas MacLean

20 April 2022