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Committee Ara Tahī  
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## **Concessions Policy for Greater Wellington Regional Council's parks and forests**

### **1. Purpose**

To provide the Ara Tahī Committee with background information about the current review process of the 'Policy for Recreation and Tourism in Wellington Regional Council Parks and Forests' (the 'Concessions Policy') and to seek Ara Tahī's advice on the preferred mechanism/s for further engagement to ascertain iwi's views on the concessions policy. This review also covers the associated concession fee structure in Greater Wellington's (GW's) parks and forest areas.

### **2. Background**

A Concessions policy for Greater Wellington's parks and forests was developed in 1993 largely in response to a significant increase in demand for tourism related activities and the use of the region's parks and forests for commercial activities. In 1997, a charging policy was adopted to go hand-in-hand with the concession policy.

A concession grants legal rights to an individual or organisation (known as a concessionaire) to carry out themselves or offer for visitors, recreation and tourism uses (as defined within the scope of this Policy) in Wellington Regional Council parks and forests. (Concessions are required for all commercial use and some non-commercial use. Concessions are not required by casual visitors unless the management regime of an area requires it, e.g., trail bike permits in the Akatarawa Forest, permits for hunting in Kaitoke Regional Park and the Pakuratahi Forest).

A policy for concessions is necessary to provide general guidance on factors to be taken into account by Council when assessing applications and appropriate terms and conditions for concessions relating to Greater Wellington's parks and forests. It is also important that the public are clear as to when a concession is and is not required, and how much they are required to pay.

The Concessions policy is a non-statutory document and it is intended that the document remains an operational one for a maximum of five years, after which it is reviewed. Reviews for concessions fees and charges were intended to take place every two to four years to keep pace with any changes that occur in the range of uses available, what other agencies are charging for similar services or facilities, and the Council's cost recovery targets. However, they have not been reviewed since the policy was adopted in 2001.

The current Concessions policy (2001) (see Attachment 1) for Greater Wellington's parks and forest areas sets out the general policy direction relating to commercial and non-commercial recreation and tourism in those areas, and when and how much the Council will charge for using them and their respective facilities.

Under the existing policy, concessions are required for all commercial uses (e.g. guided tours within a park, festivals, filming, tourism activities, multisport events) and some non-commercial uses (for events/activities where an entry fee is charged, e.g. orienteering, mountain biking).

The policy is summarised in a brochure designed for use by park users including members of the public, recreation and tourism operators, recreation clubs, charities and all other users of GW's regional parks and forest areas.

### **3. Scoping and direction setting**

An initial scoping period commenced in late 2006, where parks policy staff initiated a number of meetings with park rangers to identify the main activities in the respective parks, establish an ideal charging regime, preferred points of contact for concession applications and issues that rangers were experiencing with the concessions process.

In tandem with reviewing the policy, officers are also reviewing the management systems that process and monitor concession activities in the parks and forests.

It is also proposed to review and update the existing concessions booklet/brochure to bring it in line with the updated concessions policy.

### **4. Review process and identification of issues**

Staff have consulted informally with current commercial and non-commercial concession holders and representatives from various outdoor recreational groups/clubs (e.g. tramping, mountain biking etc).

A Councillor workshop was also held on 26 July 2007 to discuss issues to do with the Concessions Policy. A number of issues have been raised in relation to the policy and fees charged through the informal consultation round.

Feedback from consultation with key stakeholders, concessionaires, the Councillor workshop and iwi will be used to form the draft Concessions Policy prior to a formal consultation process with the wider community.

Parks and forests policy requires that appropriate consultation is undertaken with tangata whenua when assessing proposed activities and uses. Regional parks and forests are managed in cooperation with tangata whenua.

Parks policy staff would like to explore other concession issues that may be relevant to iwi. Policy staff would like an indication from Ara Tahī as to the preferred mechanism/s for further engagement to ascertain iwi's views on concessions prior to any draft policy going out to the wider community.

Options for further consultation with iwi may include:

- a) A workshop
- b) Copies of current policy/fees structure sent to individual iwi
- c) Meet individually with relevant iwi across the Wellington region

## **5. The way forward**

It is anticipated that a revised Concessions Policy will be drafted and presented to the November Landcare Committee meeting. The draft policy will then be approved for formal public consultation. At this stage it is intended that a Special Consultative Procedure will be followed as outlined in section 83 of the Local Government Act. This process is essentially a formal community consultation process where the public have the opportunity to present written and oral submissions to a council committee. This process will commence following Council approval of the revised draft Concessions Policy.

## **6. Recommendations**

*That the Ara Tahī Committee:*

1. *Receives the report.*
  2. *Notes the content of the report and the work done to progress the production of a revised Concessions policy.*
  - 3a. *Recommends the appropriate mechanism/forum to consult further with iwi as part of the process;*
- OR**
- 3b. *Agrees that officer's proceed to prepare draft bylaws and provide iwi with feedback opportunities through the formal public consultation process under section 83 of the Local Government Act.*

**Attachment 1:** Policy for Recreation and Tourism in Wellington Regional Council Parks and Forests

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