



Cabinet Policy Committee

POL Min (03) 19/7

Copy No:

Minute of Decision

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Government Objectives for the South Island High Country

On 6 August 2003 the Cabinet Policy Committee:

Background

- 1 **noted** that in March 2003 Cabinet invited the Minister for Land Information, Minister of Agriculture and for Rural Affairs, and Minister of Conservation to report on the Government's objectives for the high country and how they relate to the Land Tenure Review Programme [EDC Min (03) 5/3];
- 2 **noted** that the Government's current objectives for tenure review derive from three sources, namely Cabinet decisions in 1994 [CAB (94) M 46/23-25], the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 (CPLA), and a 2001 Cabinet decision relating to public access [FIN Min (01) 19/12];
- 3 **noted** that the CPLA determines current practice for tenure review;
- 4 **noted** that there was extensive public input into the CPLA from interested parties (especially high country lessees and environmental stakeholders), and that the CPLA was the outcome of lengthy analysis, debate and negotiation;

Objectives and tenure review timetable

- 5 **agreed** that any change to the CPLA objectives or the timeframe for tenure review should take into account the good faith expectation of stakeholder groups that tenure review would run until 2008;
- 6 **noted** that to ensure that Crown owned land in the high country (reviewable land) is managed in accordance with current Government policy, a new set of objectives is proposed (paragraph 9 below);

Potential costs and benefits

- 7 **noted** that adding more land than originally contemplated to the public conservation estate may imply additional costs, including in some cases direct fiscal cost and in others loss of production value, as well as additional economic and employment benefits from increased recreation and tourism opportunities;

New set of objectives

8 **noted** that the objectives set out in 9.1.1 – 9.1.6 below are derived from the CPLA, and that the objectives set out in 9.1.7 – 9.1.10 are new complementary objectives;

9 **agreed** that the Government's objectives for the high country are to:

Objectives derived from the CPLA

- 9.1 promote the management of the Crown's high country land in a way that is ecologically sustainable;
- 9.2 enable reviewable land that is capable of economic use to be freed of current management constraints;
- 9.3 protect significant inherent values of reviewable land by the creation of protective measures; or preferably by restoration of the land concerned to full Crown ownership and control;
- 9.4 secure public access to and enjoyment of high country land;
- 9.5 take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi;
- 9.6 take into account any particular purpose for which the Crown uses, or intends to use, the land;

New complementary objectives

- 9.7 ensure that conservation outcomes for the high country are consistent with the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy;
 - 9.8 progressively establish a network of high country parks and reserves;
 - 9.9 foster sustainability of communities, infrastructure and economic growth and the contribution of the high country to the economy of New Zealand;
 - 9.10 obtain a fair financial return to the Crown on its high country land assets;
- 10 **agreed** that the set of objectives referred to in paragraph 9 above replace the objectives agreed by Cabinet in 1994;
- 11 11.1 **directed** officials to report against the set of objectives referred to in paragraph 9 above as part of each year's October baseline update process;
- 11.2 **agreed** that the reporting requirement in paragraph 11.1 replace the previous reporting requirement [CAB (95) M 32/8 Dvi, (paragraphs w(iii) – w(v))];

Implementation principles

- 12 **directed** officials to report on how best to achieve the objectives set out in paragraph 9 above by addressing the following principles:
- 12.1 achieve the Government's objectives for the high country in the most effective and efficient way. This will involve officials considering (amongst other things):

- 12.1.1 the range of possible tools for implementing the objectives;
- 12.1.2 the impact that rising prices for high country land has on the ability of the Government to achieve the objectives, and whether the Government should pursue ways of dealing with rising prices;
- 12.2 ensure that implementation tools (e.g. tenure review) are being used effectively and efficiently. This will involve officials (amongst other things):
 - 12.2.1 reviewing operating procedures and practices to ensure that departmental activities are aligned with the objectives;
 - 12.2.2 evaluating the decision-making responsibilities required to achieve the objectives and report on whether they could be improved;
- 12.3 take a whole of Government approach to achieving the objectives. This will involve officials (amongst other things) evaluating:
 - 12.3.1 how the high country objectives relate to and impact on one another;
 - 12.3.2 how the high country objectives affect other Government objectives;
 - 12.3.3 how other legislation and policy affect the achievement of the high country objectives;
- 12.4 consult interested parties appropriately. This will involve officials reviewing the consultation process with a view to improving it;

Work programme

- 13 **approved** the work programme set out in Appendix 1 attached to this minute;
- 14 **invited** the Minister of Agriculture and for Rural Affairs, the Minister for Land Information, and the Minister of Conservation to report to POL by 1 December 2003 on the objectives as set out in the work programme;
- 15 **noted** that officials intend to report to POL on options for the future of Molesworth Station by 15 September 2003;

Financial implications

- 16 **noted** that any financial implications arising from Cabinet's decisions about implementing objectives for the high country and tenure review beyond 2003/04 will be considered in the 2004/05 budget round.

Sue Sharp
Secretary

Reference: POL (03) 201

Copies to: (see over)

Present:

Rt Hon Helen Clark (Chair)
Hon Dr Michael Cullen
Hon Jim Anderton
Hon Steve Maharey
Hon Phil Goff
Hon Jim Sutton
Hon Trevor Mallard
Hon Pete Hodgson
Hon Margaret Wilson
Hon Parekura Horomia
Hon Lianne Dalziel
Hon Paul Swain
Hon Marian Hobbs
Hon John Tamihere
Hon Chris Carter

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Copies to:

Cabinet Policy Committee
Chief Executive, DPMC
Mary Anne Thompson, DPMC
Secretary to the Treasury
Chief Executive, Ministry of Economic Development
Director-General, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Agriculture)
Director-General, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Rural Affairs)
State Services Commissioner
Director, Office of Treaty Settlements
Chief Executive, Te Puni Kokiri
Minister of Tourism
General Manager, Ministry of Tourism
Minister for the Environment
Secretary for the Environment
Minister for Land Information
Chief Executive, Land Information New Zealand (LINZ)
Minister of Conservation
Director-General of Conservation
Chief Parliamentary Counsel
Legislation Coordinator