



ICOMOS NEW ZEALAND

TE MANA O NGA PUWHENUA O TE AO

International Council on Monuments and Sites

10 March 2022

Penny Nelson,
Director General of Conservation and Chief Executive,
Department of Conservation,
P.O. Box 10420,
Wellington 6140

Dear Penny,

I am writing to express our grave concern at the complete lack of progress in World Heritage matters in New Zealand, including updating New Zealand's Tentative List for which, as the State Party, DoC is responsible. The original tentative list was prepared in 2006 and, according to the World Heritage Operational Guidelines, "State parties are encouraged to re-examine and re-submit their Tentative List at least every ten years." This has not happened in New Zealand and is now six years overdue.

ICOMOS assisted UNESCO in writing the World Heritage Convention and was appointed an advisory body to the World Heritage Committee. Its role is to support the implementation of the cultural side of the Convention. Through its experts, and numerous international and national committees, of which ICOMOS NZ is one, ICOMOS has been involved in the implementation of the Convention for almost fifty years. ICOMOS experts, several of whom are New Zealanders including the writer, assess other countries' nominations for listing and, once listed, assess compliance with the Guidelines.

Over the last eight years ICOMOS NZ has been in regular contact with DoC World Heritage staff members, currently Danica Stent and Sarah Bagnall, concerning the lack of progress in updating New Zealand's tentative list, and offering assistance. They are very aware of our concerns.

In 2018, we met with then Conservation Minister, Eugenie Sage in 2018 who readily agreed that DoC had not performed in its World Heritage State Party responsibilities. As a result, in 2019, we assisted in the preparation of a plan for reviewing the tentative list with consultant Jane Gunn in 2019, whom DoC commissioned. ICOMOS NZ prepared its own thinking and suggestions for the tentative list which was shared with Danica, Sarah and Jane. Jane's plan has not been implemented.

This lack of action in not updating the tentative List nor actively progressing a nomination has resulted in New Zealand being one of few countries in the world where there are no individually

listed cultural heritage sites. In comparison, Australia has 14 cultural heritage sites in their total of 20 listed places.

We would appreciate a meeting with you at your earliest convenience so that we can assist you to remedy this situation and comply with the Convention commitments. Given the covid situation we would appreciate a virtual meeting.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Bowman', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ian Bowman
Immediate past President and Chair of ICOMOS NZ World Heritage Committee