

**Government Response to the Petition of Mayor Weston  
Kirton on behalf of Ruapehu District Council: Save the  
Chateau Tongariro Hotel**

**Presented to the House of  
Representatives In accordance with  
Standing Order 252**

# Government response to the Petition of Mayor Weston Kirton on behalf of Ruapehu District Council: Save the Chateau Tongariro Hotel

## Introduction

- 1 In October 2025, the Petition Committee referred the Petition of Mayor Weston Kirton on behalf of Ruapehu District Council “Save the Chateau Tongariro Hotel” and an accompanying written statement to the Government for a response.
- 2 The Government has carefully considered the petition and the accompanying written statement.

## Request from petitioner

- 3 The petitioner requests that the House of Representatives urge the Government to act quickly to save the Chateau Tongariro Hotel, restoring it to its former glory, serving as a vital centerpiece of cultural heritage, economic prosperity, and tourism excellence in the Ruapehu District and throughout New Zealand; and note that 597 people signed a similar petition.

- 4 The petitioner states that the reason for the petition is because:

“The future of the Chateau Tongariro Hotel hangs in the balance, with negotiations underway and decisions pending from government officials. There is a strong desire from the local community, as well as from people across New Zealand and around the world, to see this iconic building saved.

By imploring the Government to act with urgency to save the Chateau, we seek to preserve a treasured piece of our cultural heritage along with the economic prosperity and tourism excellence that it represents.”

- 5 The petitioner requests that the Government:
  - a) Commit to a transparent, time-bound process to qualify and select a suitable investor or developer with the appropriate vision, experience, and financial capacity.
  - b) Enable the necessary policy and lease settings - including long-term lease flexibility or a carveout from Tongariro National Park – to make investment viable.
  - c) Work directly with iwi and investors to co-design governance and partnership arrangements that reflect Treaty obligations and mana whenua aspirations.
  - d) Champion the project at Cabinet level as a model for public–private partnership that delivers economic growth, heritage protection, and regional development.
  - e) Act with urgency to secure a commitment ensuring the Chateau’s restoration can begin without further deterioration or loss of opportunity.

## **Government response**

- 6 The Chateau Tongariro is a heritage building of considerable presence in Whakapapa Village in Tongariro National Park (**the Park**). From 1929 to 2023, when it was operating as a hotel, the Chateau provided accommodation and related services to visitors to the Park.
- 7 The building requires considerable investment including strengthening and restoration to make it fit for use as a hotel once more. The Department of Conservation has been caretaking and securing the building at a significant annual cost since the lease ended in early 2023.
- 8 The Minister of Conservation has directed the Department of Conservation to engage with interested commercial parties and Iwi regarding the terms for restoration and operation of the Chateau as a hotel once again. We have committed to a transparent, time-bound process. The Department of Conservation is engaging with Iwi and investors.
- 9 The Minister intends to seek requests for proposals from parties to fund strengthening and restoration of the Chateau as a hotel in early 2026. The responses to the request for proposals will identify the commercial viability of restoring and operating the hotel. The Government is not proposing to carve the Chateau out of the National Park or to extend the terms or conditions for leases in either the National Parks Act 1980 or the Conservation Act 1987.
- 10 Responses will be evaluated and an invitation to submit a concession application will be extended to the successful respondent.
- 11 The Government has not taken any options off the table: demolition, decommissioning, or restoration via a private operator are all potential options.

## **Conclusion**

- 12 The Government acknowledges the interest of the Ruapehu District Council and the petition signatories in the restoration of the Chateau as a hotel.
- 13 The Government does not recommend that any changes are made in response to this petition. This is because the Government response outlined above means that the recommended changes are not necessary or are already provided for.