

## **Submission on road stopping of the accessway between Cramond and Delmany Streets, Tokoroa to South Waikato District Council**

29 June 2026

Tēnā koutou

### **Introduction**

1. The Outdoor Access Commission, Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, is the Crown agent responsible for improving and protecting outdoor public access. We welcome the opportunity to submit on the road stopping proposal for the Accessway between Cramond and Dalmeny Streets, Tokoroa.
2. Our governing piece of legislation is the Walking Access Act 2008. The primary purpose of the Walking Access Act 2008 is 'to provide the New Zealand public with free, certain, enduring, and practical walking access to the outdoors'.
3. We administer a national strategy on outdoor access, including tracks and trails. We play a role in negotiating, establishing and improving outdoor access for New Zealanders. This includes increasing awareness of public access and ensuring it endures over time.
4. Our mandate includes all forms of public access, including by foot, bike, horse and vehicle – and for a variety of uses, including urban transport, hunting and fishing. We map outdoor access, provide information to the public, oversee a code of responsible conduct in the outdoors, help to resolve access issues and negotiate new access. The commission has a team in Wellington and a network of regional advisors. An independent board governs our work.
5. We do not formally object to the proposed road stopping of the formed legal road for pedestrian access, i.e. accessway between Cramond and Delmany Streets,

Tokoroa. However, the commission raises the following concerns regarding the implications of this decision.

### **Context and background**

6. We note the following contextual matters:
  - South Waikato District Council (SWDC) has reported little known use of this accessway between Cramond and Delmany Streets, and no specific connection to parks, reserves, schools or other priority destinations.
  - The accessway is not identified as a priority connection in the SWDC District Plan.
  - Our understanding is that the request to close this accessway was initiated by the adjacent landowner, rather than by SWDC or the New Zealand Police directly.
7. SWDC staff noted in discussions with the commission that the accessway is not wide enough to be formed into a road.
8. The accessway currently accommodates a footpath that provides local pedestrian connectivity. Pedestrian connectivity depends on a high level of granularity for accessways and footpaths: removing any accessway, however infrequently used it may appear, results in longer diversions for people on foot or using mobility devices.

### **Concerns regarding antisocial behaviour**

9. We acknowledge SWDC's concerns about antisocial behaviour in and around the accessway. However, we regard the proposed road stopping as a short-term solution with long-term negative consequences for the community's ability to use active transport modes and access recreational connections in this area.
10. With an ageing and increasingly disabled population, even a modest detour can discourage residents with mobility or perception limitations from leaving their homes, effectively becoming a barrier to community participation. We urge SWDC to consider alternative measures to address antisocial behaviour that do not require permanently removing pedestrian access.

### **Relevant policy framework**

11. We draw the council's attention to the range of strategic and policy imperatives to support ongoing pedestrian connectivity.

**12. Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan 2024–2054 (Section 3.3, p. 42):**

13. Climate change – transforming toward a low-carbon transport system;

- Resilience – ensuring community access; and

14. Accessibility / transport options – shaping urban form to grow mode shift and provide transport options.

**15. South Waikato Growth Plan – Our People I Our Place**

16. The South Waikato Growth Plan projects ongoing population growth in the district. Once pedestrian access is lost, it is extremely difficult and costly to reinstate. The National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) requires a 'well-functioning urban environment'. The growth plan also notes an ageing population that depends on walkable neighbourhoods, short loop walks, and accessible public routes.

17. The growth plan states the following objective:

*"Our urban areas are highly accessible where people can easily and safely access jobs, services, community facilities, education and quality open space."*

18. Key community priorities (p. 29) include specifically providing for active modes of transport through the development of walking and cycling tracks.

**19. South Waikato District Plan**

20. The following provisions of the South Waikato District Plan are relevant to this proposal:

- Chapter 7-3, Objective TRAN-04: To ensure an integrated, efficient, safe and sustainable transportation network is maintained and enhanced to support the social and economic wellbeing of people and communities, including provision for active transport and physical activity options.
- Policy TRAN-P1: Promote affordable, safe, integrated, sustainable and responsive transport networks within and through towns, with safe pedestrian and cycleway connections linking residential neighbourhoods with public reserves, schools and town centres.
- Policy TRAN-P9: Establish networks of parks and walkways along urban streams to provide linkage between neighbourhoods.

- Policy PA-P4 (10.4 Public Access): Establish and manage a network of well-maintained public reserves that serve neighbourhood, town and district-wide needs, including linked parks and walkways along urban streams.
- Section 13.1 (General Residential Zone): Residential areas in Tokoroa are to be maintained as “pleasant and green places for people to walk around, with good walkway connections.”

### **Concern regarding future disposal of pedestrian accessways**

21. We note that SWDC holds a significant number of historical accessways of this type. We strongly discourage SWDC from treating the disposal of such accessways as a routine practice. Active transport and pedestrian connectivity should be protected and enhanced, not incrementally diminished, as it is extremely difficult to reinstate pedestrian access once removed.
22. As has been discussed with staff, we respectfully request that SWDC continue to consult with the commission in advance.

### **Summary of requests**

The commission respectfully requests that SWDC:

23. Consider the long-term pedestrian connectivity consequences of this road stopping before proceeding;
24. Investigate alternative measures to address antisocial behaviour instead of permanently stopping the road;
  - Adopt a policy position that protects existing pedestrian accessways and does not treat their disposal as routine; and
25. Consult with the Outdoor Access Commission in advance on any future proposals to stop roads or close pedestrian accessways in the district.

We would not like an opportunity to speak to this submission. My contact details are [rachel.cook@herengaanuku.govt.nz](mailto:rachel.cook@herengaanuku.govt.nz), 021 416476.

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The Outdoor Access Commission