

Hon Chris Penk

Minister for Building and Construction
Minister for Land Information
Minister for Veterans
Associate Minister of Defence
Associate Minister of Immigration



21 AUG 2024

Mario Schmidt
Napier
lighthouseman@orcon.net.nz

Ref: MIN 25-006

Dear Mario,

Thank you for your email and your interest in the former Napier Prison.

In your email you raised concerns about the future of the site, the management of the site and have asked me to review a decision made by Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) to decline the opportunity to build a lighthouse on the site.

I believe it would be helpful to provide some context and background to you before I answer those points.

LINZ is responsible for managing properties in the Treaty Settlement Landbank. Properties come into the landbank when a government department decides it no longer needs them and there is the possibility that they could be used as either cultural or commercial redress in a Treaty settlement. Sometimes private properties may also be purchased for the Landbank. There are nearly 900 properties in the Landbank currently, including former prisons, hospitals and schools, as well as houses.

LINZ manages and maintains these properties until Treaty settlement processes are complete. Usually, properties are transferred or sold to iwi as part of their settlement. If the entity representing the iwi decides they do not wish to receive the property as part of their settlement, LINZ then looks to sell the property on the open market.

More information on the landbank can be found here: [Treaty Settlements Landbank and the Māori Protection Mechanism | Crown property, Māori and iwi Guidance \(linz.govt.nz\)](#)

The former Napier Prison is being managed by LINZ in the Treaty Settlement Landbank. It has been set aside to be considered by Mana Ahuriri as part of their Treaty Settlement. While the negotiations for this are ongoing, LINZ has a responsibility to maintain and care for the site on behalf of the Crown.

I recognise the prison is unique and a culturally and historically significant site. The site is heritage-listed, and any works carried out must take this into consideration. I am confident LINZ is taking appropriate steps to conserve the prison, including assessing the heritage values and works required to make the buildings and retaining walls safe. More information including reports LINZ has commissioned can be found here: [Napier Prison | Toitū Te Whenua - Land Information New Zealand \(linz.govt.nz\)](#)

It would be inappropriate for LINZ to approve a major change to the property knowing it is to be transferred or sold to another owner in the future, who will have their own views on how to utilise the property - whether that be Mana Ahuriri, an individual or an organisation.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CP', with a small blue dot at the end.

Hon Chris Penk
Minister for Land Information