Damage to an Archaeological Site

WHAT HAPPENED?

The construction of a crane pad and access work's in the Bay of Plenty resulted in damage to a capped archaeological site (recorded as U14/3453) in the NZ Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme.

The site was originally exposed by PF Olsen during construction of a forestry skid pad (2014). The site was then protected with a cap and top soil layers to prevent further damage (2014). Refer figures 2, 3, and 4. The site is an area of iwi occupation, with midden, ovens (brunt patches soil), fire cracked rock and post holes.

The crane pad construction and access works, which occurred in June this year, were to facilitate conductor sampling of the HAI–TMI–A0031-32 span as part of the NL3 Conductor and Joint Management Sampling programme.

Figure 1: Northpower Crane Pad construction June 2018 (Northpower)

Figure 2: Partially exposed with topsoil removed. October 2014 (PF Olsen)

Figure 3: Capping of site undertaken in 2015 (PF Olsen)

Figure 4: Evidence of possible posthole, pits and fireplaces. Fire-cracked rock identified with arrow (PF Olsen).

Figure 5: Photo taken by Northpower showing earthworks and geotextile removal June 2018 (Northpower)

REQUIRED ACTION:

- No earthworks are to occur in the Bay of Plenty region until archaeological and heritage issues have been assessed by the Environment Policy and Planning Group (EPPG) – this directive relates to all lines earthworks and soil disturbance, whether associated with maintenance activities, or opex and capex projects.
- If you are unsure whether your works involve soil disturbance activities, or whether archaeological and heritage issues have been assessed, contact your EPPG representative in the first instance.

LEARNINGS

An external and internal investigation is underway. It is anticipated that a number of learnings will follow and training on archaeological issues and processes will take place for staff and service providers.

NB: A lack of knowledge of the existence of an archaeological site is not an excuse. An offence under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 can be committed without intent to destroy or damage a site.

For more information, please contact:

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