

**MINUTES**  
**NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION**  
**BOARD MEETING**

**17 August 2016**

**Boardroom, New Zealand Walking Access Commission, Wellington**

**Board Members:** J Forbes (Chair), P Brown, P Mudford, B Stephenson and B Stuart.

**In attendance:** E Pyle (Chief executive), R Cullinane (Operations manager) and D Knott (Corporate services manager)

**Opening Comments**

The meeting commenced at 2:00 pm.

The Chair welcomed board members and staff to the meeting and invited P Brown to open the meeting with a karakia.

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies

**Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**Confirm Agenda**

The board confirmed the Agenda for the meeting.

**2. Confirm Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held in Wellington on 17 May 2016 were circulated and read.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **confirmed** the minutes of the 17 May 2016 meeting as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

**Moved**      B Stephenson      **Seconded**      P Mudford      **Carried**

**Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

**3. Chief executive's report**

The board discussed the Chief executive's report for August 2016.

E Pyle reported that Sarah Cruickshank had joined the Commission as GIS Advisor, replacing Steven Lau who resigned from 12 August, and that Rod Smillie had joined the Commission as regional field advisor for the Whanganui-Taranaki area.

E Pyle advised the Board that the Commission will participate in the New Zealand Recreation Association Outdoor Conference to be held on 1 & 2 September, in Wellington and chair a one hour plenary workshop on access.

The Board noted the Chief executive's concern regarding the Commissioner of Crown Lands recent determination that, without consultation with the Commission, the status of a small parcel of land that adjoins the Mt Dasher Pastoral Lease, previously identified as an unformed legal road be changed to Crown Land under the *Land Act 1948*. E Pyle reported that he intends to discuss this matter further with Land Information New Zealand's Chief executive.

E Pyle also reported that the period since the May Board meeting had been active, with meetings to establish relationships and promote the Commission's services with a number of access-related organisations, including: Department of Conservation, New Zealand Sport and Recreation, Auckland Council, Ngai Tahu, Matakana Trails Trust, Fish and Game, Federated Mountain Clubs, Public Access New Zealand, Federated Farmers, Queen Elizabeth II National Trust, Ministry for Primary Industries, Land Information New Zealand, Surveyor-General, New Zealand Recreation Association, School of Architecture and Planning at Auckland University, Lincoln University, and Healthy Families New Zealand.

**Action:** The Board

a) **discussed** the Chief executive's report for August 2016.

#### 4. **Walking Access Mapping System (WAMS)**

The board discussed a report on the walking access mapping system upgrade project (WAMS3), and resultant write off of the earlier system (WAMS1 and WAMS2) costs.

E Pyle reported that WAMS3 is an entirely new system, infrastructure and webpage and any of the code, and consequential cost, cost associated with the earlier mapping system had not been incorporated in the upgrade. WAMS3 had been completed within budget and prior its 30 June 2016 go-live target date. As a consequence of the upgrade, annual cost savings to the value of approximately \$82,000 had been secured.

Geographic Business Solutions (GBS) had provided a preliminary report indicating that approximately 70% (with a carrying value at 27 June 2016 of \$345,000) of the existing mapping system code would not be incorporated into the WAMS3 upgrade. However, upon completion of the upgrade project, GBS subsequently advised the Commission that only approximately 1.8% of existing code was used in WAMS3. Given this minimal percentage of reused code management's recommendation was that the existing mapping system (with a carrying value of \$492,000 at 30 June 2016) was totally impaired when WAMS3 became operational.

R Cullinane advised the Board that GIS Analyst Ella Mrozcek had completed a fixed term contract in July, Mapping Advisor Steven Lau had resigned, effective from 12 August, and had been replaced by Sarah Cruickshank.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **noted** successful completion of the WAMS transformation project on time and under budget on 30 June 2016;
- b) **noted** the GIS staff changes in July and August 2016 and the subsequent hiatus in WAMS development as the new Mapping Advisor develops a good understanding of the system in the Commission's working environment;
- c) **confirmed** the total write off of the unamortised value of WAMS1 and WAMS2 at 30 June 2016 of \$492,000, and
- d) **confirmed** that WAMS3 development costs will be amortised over a three year period.

**Moved**

P Mudford

**Seconded**

B Stuart

**Carried**

**5. Strategy**

E Pyle presented three papers under this heading: A framework for the development of the Commission's National Strategy; Topics, focus areas and funding; and Revising the key documents - Statement of Intent and Statement of Performance Expectations.

*A framework for the development of the Commission's National Strategy*

E Pyle reported that the current National Strategy states that the Commission will review the strategy in 2015. With the retirement of M Neeson in February 2016, this review was deferred for the new Chief executive to complete. The National Strategy is an important document that will influence the development of the: Statement of Intent and Statement of Performance Expectations; the Commission's reporting framework; and the Review of the Walking Access Act. The plan is for the National Strategy to be completed mid-2017.

*Topics, focus areas and funding*

E Pyle reported that, based on his discussions with staff and key stakeholders, the following areas are important for the Commission to focus on over the next 5 years: freshwater and the provisions in the National Policy Statement, and with government water quality improvement initiatives; Overseas Investment Office activity such as improved monitoring and a closer working relationship with key stakeholders; location-based plans, e.g., Auckland peri-urban area, and getting access in place in advance of urban development; the Ruahines, which is described by Federated Mountain Clubs as the top priority access issue in New Zealand; case studies on freshwater access such as in the Maitai catchment; South Island High Country and creating new access to reduce pressure, and increasing access opportunities; stronger connections with Universities, through the Aspinall scholarship; an annual conference / event focused on access in partnership with another organisation; participating in 2-3 access-related workshops per year; establishment of a cross-government network on access; in addition to an increasing workload for business as usual, resolving disputes and managing cases.

In addition to determining the areas of focus, the performance measurement framework will be reviewed along with the resources required to undertake the recommended programme of work.

*Revising the key documents - Statement of Intent (SOI) and Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE)*

E Pyle advised the Board that the 2014-2018 Statement of Intent is required to be reviewed later this calendar year as its three year term concludes on 30 June 2017. The *Crown Entities Act 2004* makes provision for the Minister to grant an extension for 1 year for such a review. An extension may be justified because the Commission has recently appointed a new Chief executive, is developing a new National strategy, and is preparing for the pending review of the Walking Access Act.

E Pyle suggested that the Board considers recommending to the Minister that a holding position is taken on the review of the SOI such that it is revised following the completion of the new National strategy in mid-2017.

**Action:** The Board

*A framework for the development of the Commission's National Strategy*

- a) **agreed** to review the Strategy.
- b) **directed** management to provide the Board with a plan and timeline for review of the Strategy

**Moved** P Brown                      **Seconded** J Forbes                      **Carried**

*Topics, focus areas and funding*

- c) **approved** the topics and focus areas for a new Strategy as a starting point for discussion with stakeholders
- d) **agreed** to new performance indicators being prepared to measure progress against the new Strategy;
- e) **directed** management to prepare forecast financial statements, variables as advised by the board, to provide a level of comfort as to the appropriate level of cash reserves to be held by the Commission;

**Moved** P Mudford                      **Seconded** B Stuart                      **Carried**

*Revising the key documents - Statement of Intent and Statement of Performance Expectations*

- f) **agreed** to review the Statement of Intent after the National Strategy is revised, i.e. in 2017 for the 2018-19 year, and
- g) **noted** that the approval of the Minister is needed to extend the SOI by one year.

**Moved** J Forbes                      **Seconded** P Brown                      **Carried**

**6. Staff in the Wellington Office**

The board discussed a report on proposed staffing requirements for the Commission's Wellington office.

E Pyle advised the Board that he was proposing two additional permanent positions for the Wellington office. These changes are within the funding envelope contained in the

Statement of Performance Expectations for the 2016-2017 period, but will require reallocation of budgets between cost categories. Beyond this period, funding will require a re-work of the budget.

Communications support is currently provided under contract. Bringing this role in-house will require a reallocation of the budget from contractor to personnel expenses. This will be a permanent role and will be budgeted in personnel in 2017-2018 onwards.

E Pyle also proposed to create a role aimed to increase the Commission's exposure in Wellington to ensure that access is built into policy considerations of central and local government. There is no specific funding for this position in the 2016-2017 budget. However, the board has approved \$95,000 for marketing and third-party engagement and it is proposed to re-allocate this to the policy position. This will be a permanent role and will be budgeted in personnel in 2017-2018 onwards.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **agreed** that permanent Wellington based roles be created for communications and policy roles, and
- b) **agreed** to the re-allocation of funding earmarked for contractors and marketing and third party engagement for these two positions.

**Moved** P Brown                      **Seconded** B Stuart                      **Carried**

## 7. **Draft Annual Report 2015-2016**

The board received a report inviting the members to comment on and approve the general nature and direction of the text for the Commission's Annual Report for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016.

Board members noted that whilst revenue was slightly ahead of budget expenses were significantly less than budget resulting in a total comprehensive revenue and expense deficit for the year exceeding budget by \$0.065m (\$0.460m actual deficit \$0.395m budget deficit). The actual result was significantly a result of the unbudgeted loss on the disposal of mapping software of \$0.492m.

Management undertook to continue to review the text and performance indicators in preparation to finalising the annual report for approval at the September Board meeting.

E Pyle reported that the audit was not scheduled for completion until mid-October 2016 and that the Board may be required to provide formal sign off following to the September meeting. This will be managed electronically.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **approved** in principle the Commission's draft 2015-2016 Annual Report;
- b) **noted** that additional material will be added, and changes may be introduced following advice from the auditors, and that editing will continue, and
- c) **noted** that the Board will be asked to approve the final report in mid-October, 2016 by email, and that the Chair and one other board member will be required to sign the annual report, statement of responsibility and financial statements.

Moved P Brown                      **Seconded**                      P Mudford                      **Carried**

## 8. Overseas Investment Office activity

The board discussed a report proposing that the Commission explores recovering costs for its Overseas Investment Office (OIO) work, publishing OIO reports it has prepared, and developing a monitoring framework for its OIO recommendations.

E Pyle reported that the number and complexity of OIO applications, where the Commission was requested to comment on access, had increased significantly over the last 5 years. Responding to OIO applications was therefore increasingly time consuming and costly for the Commission. E Pyle also suggested that, as few people knew of the Commission's involvement in the OIO processes and the potential gains for access, the Commission's access recommendations should be made available on its website.

Board members requested that management continue to investigate options and bring recommendations to a subsequent Board meeting.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **noted** the significant resources required to manage OIO cases;
- b) **noted** that processes and procedures for monitoring the implementation of access recommendations will be scoped;
- c) **agreed** to further investigate cost recovery options for managing OIO cases and report back to the Board, and
- d) **agreed** to further investigate publishing Commission OIO access recommendations that have been accepted by the applicants on the corporate website, and report back to the Board.

Moved B Stephenson                      **Seconded**                      B Stuart                      **Carried**

## 9. Aspinall Scholarship and student research projects

The board discussed a report regarding research priorities.

E Pyle reported that as well as the \$5,000 budgeted for the Aspinall scholarship on an annual basis, the Board agreed that a donation related to the Lake Hawea Albert Road OIO application would be allocated to research. Lecturers at Auckland and Lincoln Universities have suggested that a summer studentship is a good means for securing a research project.

Possible topics for two summer student projects include the scoping, and proof of concept, for an access website and mechanisms that encourage land owners to grant access in a peri-urban environment. The Chief executive sought Board endorsement for these to be progressed.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **noted** that the Chief executive will seek summer studentships for two topics: scoping and testing an online access system, and exploring options to encourage landowners to grant access in a peri-urban environment, and
- b) **agreed** to the two studentships being funded from the Aspinall Scholarship, subject to suitable students being engaged.

**Moved** B Stephenson      **Seconded** P Brown      **Carried**

## 10. Health and Safety report

The board discussed a report regarding the Commission's health and safety policy, procedures and practices as they applied to employees and contractors and visitors.

The Board reviewed the Commission's Health and Safety Policy, Office Hazard and Accident Management Procedures and the Office Hazard Register, the Contractor Safety Management System, the Regional Field Advisor Hazard and Accident Management Procedures and the Regional Field Advisor Hazard Register. D Knott advised the Board that the Commission's health and safety documentation had been reviewed by Minter Ellison for compliance with the legislation.

E Pyle reported that the Commission is actively focusing on health and safety at the operational level. Health and safety is an agenda item for staff meetings – raised quarterly, and equipment for Wellington staff has been updated. Health and safety is also a standing agenda item for the regional field advisor meetings, and external organisations participate in Commission regional field advisor meetings to share experience and best practice. Recent regional field advisor meetings have also included conflict management sessions provided by external parties.

The Board expressed the view that health and safety must form part of the attitudinal and cultural approach of the Commission to employee, contractor and visitor well-being.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **discussed** the health and safety report;
- b) **confirmed** the operational health and safety documentation, and
- c) **noted** that the Commission has an active health and safety programme that includes sharing experience and best practice with similar organisations, and
- d) **requested** that management present a Commission health and safety policy to the September Board meeting for formal Board adoption.

**Moved** P Mudford      **Seconded** B Stephenson      **Carried**

## 11. Controlling Authority

The board discussed a report regarding Controlling Authorities.

E Pyle reported that, in accordance with the Walking Access Act 2008, a Controlling Authority must be appointed to administer a walkway. The Controlling Authority can be a department, local authority, public body or the Commissioner of Crown Lands. The Walking Access Act states that the Commission can become the Controlling Authority when there is no Controlling Authority. However, the Commission's Walkways policy (November 2012) states that "The Commission will not take on the role of being a controlling authority itself".

Recently, the Commission has been approached by the Te Araroa Trail Trust with a view to becoming a Controlling Authority. The Te Araroa Trail Trust is not a public body therefore under the Act it cannot be a Controlling Authority. An option is for the Commission assume the Controlling Authority role for the Te Araroa Trust easement, and for the Te Araroa Trail Trust to be responsible for the day-to-day management and maintenance of the track under a management agreement with the Commission.

The Board considered that this model could be used for other organisations that have sufficient structure and longevity to fulfil the day-to-day responsibilities of a Controlling Authority, such as a regional cycleway group, and where a Controlling Authority cannot be found from the usual public body suspects.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **requested** that management provide further information on this topic at the September Board meeting.

**Moved** P Mudford      **Seconded** B Stuart      **Carried**

## 12. Risk Management Report

The board discussed a report regarding risk management.

E Pyle reported that management has not identified any new risks since the last risk report. The achieving performance measures risk had increased as the backlog of cases increases, and the responding to and anticipating New Zealand's changing demand for access risk had increased due to increasing demand for access, for example, in the Auckland and South Island High Country areas. External environment risk remains similar. Management assessed risk decreases for reputation and relevancy as a consequence of the Commission engaging more with key stakeholders; legislative compliance with the completion of the Commission's policy manual and implementing new actions around health and safety; and relationships with Iwi as a consequence of a programme of meeting with Iwi and Runanga around New Zealand.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **discussed** the risk management report;
- b) **confirmed** the risks and the descriptions and mitigating actions, and
- c) **advised** that it would like to review the format for reporting risks at a future Board meeting.

**Moved** P Mudford      **Seconded** P Brown      **Carried**



### 13. Quarterly report: Fourth Quarter 2015-2016

The board discussed the Quarterly report to the Minister for the period 1 April to 30 June 2016.

E Pyle reported that the Commission received 115 enquiries and that a total of 309 cases were active at the end of the quarter. The number of active Overseas Investment Office cases is stable at 49, although 11 cases were received and eight were completed during the quarter. 14 access opportunities were created or retained with the Commission's involvement.

The mapping system transformation project was completed on time and under budget when the new system went live on 27 June 2016. As of 30 June 2016, the assets from the previous mapping system were decommissioned.

Board members noted that, for the quarter ended 30 June, there was a consolidated (general fund and enhanced access fund) deficit of \$429,000, against a budgeted deficit of \$76,000. Total income for the quarter was \$477,000 and expenses totalled \$906,000 including an unbudgeted loss on disposal of the old mapping system amounting to \$492,000. There were savings across a number of expense categories as a result of deferred awareness and communications programmes, support for the old mapping system not required due to the upgrade project and the timing of enhanced access fund payments being less than budget due to unclaimed grants. Personnel costs were also below budget due to \$40,000 of staff costs being capitalised as part of the mapping system upgrade.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **confirmed** the Commission's Quarterly Report for the quarter ending 30 June 2016.

**Moved** J Forbes                      **Seconded** B Stephenson                      **Carried**

### 14. Operations Quarterly Report: 1 April to 30 June 2016

The board discussed the Operations quarterly report for the period 1 April to 30 June 2016.

The Board noted that Rod Smillie started as the new regional field advisor for the Taranaki, Whanganui, and Manawatu regions on 1 July 2016. Rod is based in Palmerston North.

A regional field advisor workshop was held over 19, 20 and 21 April 2016. R Cullinane advised that regional field advisor reporting continues to note that landholders and land managers remain exercised over perceptions that health and safety legislation will impose significant liabilities and risks attached to allowing recreational access. A factsheet addressing the matter was completed in July 2016 following consultation with Federated Farmers, Rural Women, Fish & Game and Federated Mountain Clubs.

With the completion of the mapping system upgrade, a number of small tasks remained to be completed in July 2016, including: technical as-built documentation, uploading the source code to an online repository, finalising the logistics for Eagle Technology to supply a backup cache basemap, a project closure report from GBS, and a project review

**Action:** The Board

a) **noted** the operations quarterly report for the period 1 April to 30 June 2016.

**Moved** P Mudford      **Seconded** B Stephenson      **Carried**

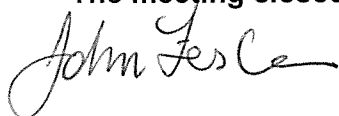
**15. Schedule of Significant correspondence**

**Action:** The Board noted the schedule of significant correspondence.

The Chair announced that long standing board member B Stephenson, who was also a member of the Walking Access Advisory Board, had sought not to renew his appointment for another term and would retire at the end of August 2016. J Forbes thanked Brian for his significant contribution to the Commission, for his vision and how it had shaped the Commission's development.

The Chair thanked board members and staff for their attendance and contributions, and invited B Stephenson to close the meeting with a karakia.

**The meeting closed at 3:15pm.**



J Forbes  
Chairperson