

**MINUTES**  
**NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION MEETING**  
**11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> August 2015**  
**Revera House, Wellington**

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

**In attendance:** M Neeson (Chief executive) and R Cullinane (Operations manager)

**Opening Comments**

The meeting commenced at 3.00pm on 11 August 2015.

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

**1. Apologies**

M Bayfield advised that she would not be present for the board meeting following its adjournment at 5:00pm, and offered her apology thereafter.

**Conflicts of Interest**

There were no conflicts of Interests.

**Declaration of Interests**

M Neeson advised that he had been appointed as a trustee on the Porirua Harbour and Catchment Community Trust. The chairman advised that he had discussed this appointment with Mr Neeson prior to his taking up the role as a trustee.

**Confirm Agenda**

The board confirmed the Agenda for the meeting.

**2. Confirm Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held in Palmerston North on 20 May 2015 were circulated and read. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting of 20 May 2015 as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

**Moved** M Bayfield      **Seconded** B Stephenson      **Carried**

**3. Risk management report**

The board discussed a report on risk management and reviewed the risk management register.

M Neeson reported that, at its May 2015 meeting, the board felt that the risk report tended to be introspective and should be more high level, externally-oriented and focus on risks which may impact on the board's governance function, for example,

performance achievement, organisation reputation, and the influence and impact of external developments.

M Neeson advised that, in light of that discussion, the following actions had been taken:

- i. The number of key organisational risks had been reduced to three as reported to the meeting, and
- ii. Time had been set aside for the board to hold a “risk workshop”.

The board added three topics to the risk register that it felt might pose strategic risks for the Commission: the political environment including the 2017 general election; tourists, new immigrants and their understanding of New Zealand’s access culture and heritage; and relationships with iwi.

The board noted that Risk 1 (Achieving performance measures) remains the highest risk and there was an increase in the risk level reflecting the high number of open cases, high workloads and changes in staff and regional field advisors. These have the potential to create additional pressures resulting in staff loss, reduced motivation, performance and achievement.

The board also noted that the risk exposures were not static, and would change over time.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **discussed** the risk report for August 2015;
- b) **noted** the change in Risk 1 (Achieving performance measures), and
- c) **agreed** to include three new risks to the risk register.

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

#### 4. Draft Annual report 2014-2015

The board discussed and approved, in principle, the general nature and direction of the text for the Commission’s Annual Report for the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. It agreed that a summary of achievements over the past 6 years should be incorporated.

M Neeson advised that the audit would occur in the week commencing 28 September. Updated draft financial statements will be sent to the auditors and the Board prior to the commencement of the audit and final statements (as agreed with the auditors) will be presented (electronically) to the board for approval in mid-October 2015.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **approved** in principle the Commission’s draft 2014-2015 Annual Report;
- b) **agreed** to include an updated summary of achievements;
- c) **noted** that additional material will be added, changes may be introduced following advice from the auditors, and that editing will continue, and
- d) **noted** that the Board will be asked to approve the final report in mid-October, 2015 by email.

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

**5. Entertainment Policy**

The board discussed a report on a review of the Commission's Entertainment policy.

M Neeson advised that as part of the rolling programme review of financial policies it was timely to review the current Entertainment Policy (last reviewed in February 2010). He noted that entertainment is an area covered by the annual audit, as it is classified as *sensitive expenditure*.

He advised that the existing Commission policy allows for the provision of alcohol, although the Commission has adopted a 'no alcohol' approach. The new policy also allows for the provision of alcohol on Commission business but reinforces the circumstances and delegated authority controlling its purchase. State Services Commission (SSC) guidance permits the provision of alcohol in certain situations.

M Neeson also advised that the proposed policy reflects SSC guidance with respect to probity and financial prudence that are expected of a public entity.

**Action:** The Board

a) **approved** the revised Entertainment Policy.

**Moved**      B Stephenson      **Seconded**      M Bayfield      **Carried**

**6. Tenure review**

The board discussed a report on Tenure review.

M Neeson advised that one of the opportunities that the Commission has is to seek new public access over private land through the tenure review process of Crown pastoral leases. The Commission puts significant time into making submissions to preliminary proposals made by, or on behalf of, the Commissioner of Crown Lands (CCL). He felt it desirable to consider the effectiveness of this resource use and commissioned Mr G Holgate of WardHolgate to analyse the submissions made by the Commission on tenure review proposals, and on their effectiveness, in terms of the review outcomes.

Mr Holgate's analysis noted that the Commission has made 29 submissions on tenure review preliminary proposals in a structured manner since March 2011. Of those, 20 proposals have been analysed and publicly released by Land Information New Zealand (LINZ). An average of 41 percent of the points that Commission has made on each proposal have been "Allowed/Accepted" for consideration when formulating designations for a Substantive Proposal. Points relating to unformed legal roads (ULRs) or marginal strips have generally been "Disallowed" on the basis that they are not matters able to be considered under the Crown Pastoral Lands Act, 1998 and/or are not the CCL's responsibility.

There are two main reasons why the Commission's points are disallowed. First, the Commission currently becomes involved at the very late stage of public submission when any access provisions have been largely agreed by the lessor and the CCL. In this context a 41% 'hit rate' is doing quite well.

Second, the Commission endeavoured to have pastoral lease boundaries with ULRs clearly marked on plans and to have marginal strip use considered as part of the tenure review process. The CCL / LINZ view appears to be that ULRs are not part of

the reviewable land and they can, therefore, not be considered in the tenure review process.

M Neeson considered that the limited impact of the Commission's submissions on tenure review outcomes may seem disproportionate to the resource that has gone into making the submissions but, as the tenure review process is one of the few opportunities that the Commission has in seeking new permanent public access over rural land with walking access value, the Commission will continue to make submissions.

He advised that in a very welcomed initiative, the Department of Conservation (DoC) has invited the Commission to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding on tenure review. DoC wants to work more closely with organisations early in the tenure review process to capture ideas and proposals. He has accepted the offer and the document is nearly ready for signing.

The board considered the review to be a very useful exercise and asked that a further review be undertaken in another three years.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **noted** the review on the Commission's involvement in the tenure review process;
- b) **requested** a further analysis in another three years;
- c) **noted** that the chief executive will soon complete a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Conservation enabling the Commission to participate in the tenure review process at an early stage, and
- d) **noted** that the Commission will pursue the depiction of marginal strips in the tenure maps with Land Information New Zealand and the Department of Conservation.

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

## 7. **Communications Strategy 2015-18**

The board received a presentation on the proposed communications objectives and strategy for the next three years with a particular emphasis on 2015-2016. M Neeson advised that the Commission's communications effort has to be directed primarily to achieving three baseline performance measures: people agree New Zealanders and overseas visitors can access our outdoors; people agree public access to the outdoors in New Zealand is being strengthened and valued; and people agree the Commission is credible, trusted, reliable, and responsive.

This means that over the next three years the Commission needs to connect with that section of the public that is interested in access but not yet engaged – the bulk of New Zealanders – and to have a clear “call to action”.

M Neeson noted that the focus of activity for the next two years will have three components:

- An intensive high-level marketing and awareness-raising programme with (potentially) the “Walk a Chain” concept and Both Sides of the Fence website as the main delivery vehicle in addition to ‘business as usual’ projects (including increasing media profile and social media);

- increased attention to working with, and building relationships with, other organisations to leverage their access-related communications activities and resources, and
- an emphasis on telling the “Access Story”, changing behaviour, influencing external audiences and creating alliances.

As part of the presentation, the board also considered a proposed project with a working title of “Walk a Chain”. This aims to further integrate the Outdoor Access Code and Both Sides of the Fence website programmes and the Walking Access Mapping System. The project would be in the nature of a challenge to all New Zealanders to link up in their aspirations to promote walking for health and appreciate New Zealand’s free, certain and enduring walking access.

The board requested that the communications strategy be amended to specifically refer to, and include, non-traditional access-stakeholders, for example new immigrants. The board recommended that the Outdoor Access Code brochure be translated into Asian languages (e.g., Chinese) to reflect the increasing number of tourists from the region.

The communications strategy should be amended to reflect the need to protect and enhance the Commission’s reputation and that communications tactics should include stories which strengthen that objective. The board noted, however, that the Commission’s credibility depended heavily on its performance.

The board asked that regional field advisors be encouraged to publicise stories about their work to engage more deeply in the Commission’s communications work, including social media.

Board members noted that *i*-Sites are a very important place where people seek information and the Commission should be developing a close relationship with them.

The board endorsed the “Walk a Chain” project for further development, recommended a name change to “Walk a Link in our Chain” and discussed organisations that could be invited to participate in the project.

**Action:** The Board

- noted** the Communications Strategy 2015-2018, and
- endorsed** the “Walk a Chain” project for further development with change of name to “Walk a Link in our Chain”.

**Moved** M Bayfield      **Seconded** P Mudford      **Carried**

## 8. Quarterly report: Fourth Quarter 2014-2015

The board discussed the quarterly report for the period ended 30 June 2015. M Neeson requested guidance on how the board preferred to receive the report on performance measures. The board requested that the chief executive’s report be placed high on the agenda and include a specific reference to performance measures, including trends, results, problems, achievements as may be appropriate.

P Brown asked that, if possible, the quarterly reports include comparative information for the same quarter in the preceding financial year.

The board noted that the year-end financial position is stronger than budgeted and retained surpluses exceed the board's policy range. The board discussed possible additional projects and asked the chief executive to report in September 2015 on the feasibility of identified projects including increasing expenditure on programmes such as improving communications, marketing of the Both Sides of the Fence website, working with iwi on the East Coast and Te Urewera, WAMS and the "Walk a link in our Chain" initiative.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **noted** the Commission's Quarterly Report for the period ending 30 June 2015.

**Moved** M Bayfield      **Seconded** B Stephenson      **Carried**

## 9. Chief executive's report

The board discussed the chief executive's report for August 2015.

M Neeson reported that applications for the second Aspinall Scholarship would be sought soon.

M Neeson reported that the local office of the Department of Conservation had declined to be the controlling authority for proposed walkway at Helena Bay (near Whangarei). The walkway arises from, and meets, a specific (amended) condition of the purchase agreement conditions approved under the Overseas Investment Act. It is intended to escalate this matter within the Department of Conservation. The board noted that if the Department of Conservation confirmed its position then the walkway would not progress.

M Neeson advised that the Commission's Statement of Performance Expectations 2015-2019 was presented to the House on 6 August 2015.

The board discussed the workload associated with processing Overseas Investment Act-related applications, working with iwi on walking access and health and options to increase the Commission's presence in the Auckland region.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **noted** the Chief Executive's report for August 2015.

**Moved** J Forbes      **Seconded** M Bayfield      **Carried**

*The board adjourned at 5.00pm on Tuesday 11 August and resumed at 8.30am on Wednesday 12 August. The Chair noted M Bayfield's apology for Wednesday's board meeting.*

## 10. Operations Quarterly Report: 1 April to 30 June 2015

The board discussed the Operations report for the quarter ended 30 June 2015.

R Cullinane reported that managing the four new regional field advisors had consumed a significant amount of time. He advised that the impact assessment for the Coronet and Glencoe walkways had been completed, that the walkway easements were still being developed and very good progress had been made in reducing the backlog of Overseas Investment Office access cases.

R Cullinane advised that, in response to a question about managing risks associated with departure of key GIS personnel, a plan was in place should this situation arise.

**Action:** The Board

a) **noted** the operations quarterly report for the period 1 April to 30 June 2015.

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

## 11. Schedule of Significant Correspondence

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

The meeting closed at 11.15am on Wednesday 12 August, 2015.



J Forbes  
Chairperson

## Notes

1. The board held a workshop to discuss agenda items in the morning and early afternoon of Tuesday 11 August.
2. The board hosted Martyn Dunne the chief executive/Director-General of the Ministry for Primary Industries and his staff in the morning of Wednesday 12 August.

