

MINUTES
NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION MEETING
10:30am, 20 May 2015
Hotel Coachman, Palmerston North

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

In attendance: M Neeson (Chief executive), R Cullinane (Operations manager) and D Knott (Corporate services manager).

Opening Comments

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

1. Apologies

Peter Brown advised that he would depart the meeting at 11:30am, and offered his apology thereafter.

Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of Interests.

Declaration of Interests

The Chair advised the meeting that the annual declarations of interests were required, and that they should be provided to D Knott directly.

Confirm Agenda

The board confirmed the Agenda for the meeting.

2. Confirm Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held in Hamilton on 26 February 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 26 February 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 risks related to achieving performance measures for the current year and succession management remain the highest risk exposure for the Commission. One new risk, regarding effective communications, had been included in this report replacing the previous measure on stakeholder dissonance.

The Chairman invited the board to consider whether the risks being reported by management were appropriate at the governance level. P Mudford felt that reports tend to be introspective and asked that management identify and include more governance-related and future-focused risks (e.g., relevance, reputation, impact of external events, decisions and trends). An environmental scanning exercise would be timely. The board noted that some of the current risks are internally focused and could be reworked and become one risk.

Action: The Board:

- a) **discussed** the risk report for May 2015.

Moved M Bayfield **Seconded** P Brown **Carried**

4. Legislative compliance - 2015

The board reviewed and discussed a report and checklist on statutory compliance as at May 2015. The compliance checklist sets out the key statutory requirements and compliance measures for significant legislation, as identified by the Commission, plus additional statutes that are pertinent to the Commission's operations.

In response to a question from P Mudford regarding pending changes to the health and safety legislation, M Neeson advised the board that management was awaiting the select committee review of the proposed legislation before taking further advice with respect to the impact on the Commission and its operations.

Action: The Board

- a) **discussed** the 2015 legislative compliance review, and
- b) **asked** for a briefing on the impact of the proposed health and safety legislation on the Commission and its operations when it is reported back from the Select Committee.

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

5. Healthy communities and walking access

The board discussed a paper on how the work of the Commission could contribute to the Government's healthy individuals and communities policy. M Neeson proposed that the Commission work in partnership with other agencies and use its knowledge and skills to contribute to wider government policies, create new partnerships with different communities and increase Commission awareness.

Board members asked management to consider: whether the both sides of the fence website had a role to play in this project, linking rural and urban New Zealand, a multi-cultural approach to the outdoors, promoting outdoor activity generally, and the impact on the Commission's resources to undertake this programme of work.

The chairman observed that the Commission, and this project, helps "anchor" changes in behaviour in the outdoors and provides a new direction relating to national identity.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** that further work on linking the skills and knowledge of the Commission to the government's health goals is an appropriate direction for the Commission to pursue;
- b) **agreed** that the Commission works in the Eastern Bay of Plenty area in partnership with the Tairāwhiti District Health Board and other agencies to help to develop walking access opportunities;
- c) **agreed** to write to Hon Nathan Guy seeking his agreement, as responsible Minister, to the Commission approaching the Minister of Health for a meeting to discuss how the Commission's work can contribute to the focus on obesity using the proposed Tairāwhiti / Eastern Bay of Plenty initiative as an example, and
- d) **noted** that Commission staff will continue to work with key health and recreation agencies to assist in the health and community sports initiatives being developed.

Moved P Brown **Seconded** M Bayfield **Carried**

6. Enhanced Access Fund – 2014 round (tranche 4)

The board discussed a report on applications for tranche 4 of the 2014 Enhanced Access Fund (EAF) round. D Knott reported that the EAF assessment panel had considered two applications received in tranche 4.

The panel recommended one application for funding. This was in favour of Vision Kerikeri for \$1,272 plus GST towards signage for the Wairoa Stream Waterfall track, conditional on Vision Kerikeri successfully obtaining a walkway easement over private property to access the Wairoa Stream Waterfall track.

Action: The Board

- a) **approved** funding for one application from tranche 4, as recommended by the assessment panel;
- b) **agreed** that the chief executive advises all applicants of the Board's decision, and invites the successful applicant to confirm their agreement to any conditions set by the Board;
- c) **directed** the chief executive to consider appropriate timing of the release of decisions and participation by interested Board members and regional field advisors in local announcements; and
- d) **agreed** that the chairman write to the Minister for Primary Industries advising him of the decision.

7. Enhanced Access Fund – Review

The board discussed a report on an external review of the Enhanced Access Fund (EAF) completed by EvaluationConsult in April 2015. This review was initiated to assist the board in determining, after 5 years of operations, the success of the EAF in achieving its objectives and principles given the changes to both the annual allocation budget, and the fund's priorities, during that timeframe. The survey included interviews with board members, staff, regional field advisors and a survey of grantees.

The review findings showed that community projects supported by the EAF had outcomes which were well aligned to the Commission's goals, that the assessment process had integrity, there is a high level of satisfaction with the allocation process from successful applicants, the EAF is successful in leveraging community funds from third parties and utilising volunteer time, and that the EAF is a good relationship building tool for the Commission.

The board considered the review as a positive confirmation of the EAF and that close to \$1million has been allocated to access projects. The board confirmed the 2015 funding round, with applications being sought in two tranches. It asked that the guidelines for applicant's on the website focus more heavily on the Commission's objective for projects that will secure enduring access.

The board confirmed that the EAF would not be used to fund infrastructure projects.

The board also asked that in future, when and if applicants are being advised of unsuccessful applications, the advisory letter should contain advice and suggestions for alternative sources of funds and support.

The board asked that regional field advisors work more closely with potential applicants to ensure projects are better aligned with the EAF criteria and to liaise with unsuccessful applicants to help them in this process.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the conclusions and recommendations in the report by EvaluationConsult on the review of the Enhanced Access Fund;
- b) **agreed** to continue with an annual EAF round, seeking applications in two tranches;
- c) **agreed** that the EAF priority in 2015-2016 is on projects that will secure enduring access, such as negotiation of easements to secure access over private land, surveying of land for access purposes signs and contributions to the costs of obtaining access-related Resource Management Act consents;
- d) **confirmed** that annual quantum available was reduced to ensure that the EAF will be self-sustaining (i.e., annual grants would equal the level of investment income) (Note: estimated at \$63,300 in 2015-2016);
- e) **confirmed** that the board's EAF assessment panel members would be P Mudford and B Stephenson, and
- f) **agreed** that the chairman writes to the Minister for Primary Industries concerning the report and advising him of the board's response.

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

8. Recognising contributions to walking access

The board discussed a report on recognising contributions to walking access, and agreed to invite public nominations. M Neeson advised the board that he would bring the list of nominations to the September 2015 meeting for board consideration.

The board asked that a process be created in which all nominees are recognised not only those selected for a formal award.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** to award certificates to recognise the leadership, achievements and contributions of people and organisations who have or are working to enhance and strengthen walking access heritage;
- b) **agreed** to three award categories: individuals, community organisations and central / local government, and
- c) **agreed** to invite public nominations and for recipients to be chosen by the board in September with awards given at appropriate events and occasions.

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

9. Walking Access Survey 2015

The board discussed a report covering the results of the online Walking Access Survey conducted by Colmar Brunton during February and March 2015. Survey results are also used in the Annual Report to report against selected performance measures.

Public awareness of the Commission has increased by to 7%, from 6% in 2013. This presents a challenge for the Commission and its communication programmes are being reviewed in response to the measure. The Commission's leadership role has, for the past three years, been directed at local government and to a lesser extent the Department of Conservation as the main decision-makers in respect of land management and access. This quietly facilitative role has not attracted public attention. The survey indicates that the public endorses the way the Commission operates.

The survey confirmed key aspects of the Commission's operating environment including: that New Zealanders value access to the outdoors and regularly participate in outdoor recreation; there is high demand for public access information and easy access to it, and that the Commission's focus on "enhancing New Zealand's access heritage and culture" is having positive results.

The survey sought information on the public's knowledge of the Queen's Chain and it indicated that awareness was greater than expected, at 55% on average. The board considered this result to be positive as anecdotal comment has been that the term is not widely known by the public. The survey shows that awareness is not confined to older age groups. The results also show that the term may not resonate with new immigrants and the Commission will need to assess how it communicates with them.

Board members considered the results to be acceptable given the limited funding for awareness building and communications programmes. It noted that more attention will need to be given to leveraging partnerships and that the Commission's

communications will have to be more aspirational including the use of social media in a more targeted and less institutionalised way.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that the results of the 2015 public survey undertaken by Colmar Brunton about the New Zealand Walking Access Commission;
- b) **agreed** to repeat the survey in early 2017;
- c) **agreed** that the Chairman advises the Minister for Primary Industries of the results of the survey and that the report be placed on the Commission's website with an explanatory statement covering its purpose and limitations, and
- d) **noted** the value of the survey results to set targets that drive performance in the next Statement of Performance Expectations.

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

10. Financial governance – travel policy

The board discussed a report on a revised travel policy. The policy was previously approved in May 2010.

The revised policy reflected changes to All of Government contracts for travel related services, articulated the approval process and expanded on the differing requirements for domestic and overseas travel.

Action: The Board

- a) **approved** the revised travel policy.

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

11. Kaumatua Policy

The board discussed a report to review and approve a Kaumatua policy. The role of the Kaumatua was established in 2010 and, whilst there was a terms of reference for the position, no formal policy was adopted.

The board requested that the scope of the Policy be refined to reflect "Maori" culture, and that the engagement (paragraphs 10, 11, 12 and 13) be amended with the inclusion of "...on behalf of the Commission".

Action: The Board

- a) **approved** the Kaumatua policy, as amended.

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

12. Tophouse Road report - finalisation

The board discussed a final report on the Tophouse Road.

M Neeson reported that, as requested Brian Hayes had now finalised his previous report dated January 2014 titled "The legal status of the Tophouse road – Formal

legality in terms of the Public Works Acts – Implied dedication by the Crown”. Mr Hayes had reviewed the report’s conclusions to reflect additional background material from research from the National Archives.

M Neeson reported that it seems that there was no formal authority for the construction of the hydro road over the lease of Rainbow Station and no steps taken to legalise the road once constructed.

M Neeson considered that further research by the Commission into the background of the road construction and realignment, would add little to the analysis. The Commission had already spent a considerable amount, both financially and in time, on this topic. He also noted that an earlier view that the concept of implied dedication might apply to the current road is not clear cut and has not been pursued

M Neeson advised that Mr Hayes was not in a position to do further research currently. Board members undertook to help identify suitable candidates to undertake access related legal research.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that the report on the Tophouse Road has been completed;
- b) **noted** that it does not reach a firm conclusion on the status of the road;
- c) **agreed** to advise the Minister for Primary Industries;
- d) **agreed** to put the report on the Commission’s website once the Minister has been advised, and
- e) **requested** that M Neeson write to B Hayes expressing the board’s appreciation for his dedication and assistance to the Commission.

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

13. Walking Access Mapping System

The board discussed a report on a development strategy for the walking access mapping system (WAMS) and R Cullinane gave a short overview presentation.

R Cullinane reported that a WAMS development project has been initiated to develop the Commission’s strategy (including a programme of work) for WAMS looking out two to four years. The first phase of the strategy is to review the architecture of the back-end infrastructure of WAMS. This is expected to involve an upgrade to ArcGIS 10.3 and possibly a migration to a cloud hosting provider with a flexible cost structure. The result will be significant enhancements for users. Most notable would be the availability of a fully functioning WAMS on a range of mobile platforms with contemporary performance and functions, and increased loading speed.

M Neeson advised that indicative costs will be available for the August board meeting. Implementation would be incremental and within a wider framework and not as a single large project such as WAMS 2.

Board members said they would be seeking detail on future-proofing, user-determined requirements as opposed to Commission-driven development particularly with mobile platform development, and a full analysis of alternate options and cost implications and an undertaking that any development will not be detrimental to existing functionality, features and usability.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that a WAMS development project has been initiated;
- b) **noted** that the proposed strategy is to establish WAMS as an adaptable and flexible system in an environment where web and GIS technology standards will continue to evolve;
- c) **noted** that the proposed strategy is not expected to involve large complex projects and that development would be done incrementally;
- d) **noted** that comprehensive user feedback will be sought on an ongoing basis; and
- e) **noted** that a draft WAMS strategy will be provided for the August 2015 board meeting (including a programme of work and indicative costs).

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

14. Quarterly report: Third Quarter 2014-2015

The board discussed the quarterly report for the period ended 31 March 2015.

M Neeson reported that the number of cases “yet to be closed” will exceed the target. There are three main reasons for the increase: the loss of three regional field advisors in the quarter meant that case management in their regions slowed or was not progressed; two existing RFAs and the operations manager were involved in the selection and interviews of the replacement RFAs, and an increase in the number of Overseas Investment Act cases received.

M Neeson reported that the Commission’s programme of work under way and due for completion by 30 June is ambitious and may not be fully completed by balance date. However, for the quarter costs were significantly under budget, particularly within operational costs with significant savings recorded for EAF grants, board costs (one board member less, and the meeting planned for March rescheduled to April), regional field advisor costs (due to resignations), performance measurement costs (Colmar Brunton biennial survey due for completion in the fourth quarter), and deferred marketing / awareness programmes.

The Chairman asked that the board be advised regularly on access cases arising from Overseas Investment Act cases that might not be pursued due to the inability to find a controlling authority for a walkway.

The board also asked that Commission advice and reports to purchasers following an Overseas Investment Act-related assessment include a requirement that the purchaser advise the Commission regularly on progress with implementing its recommendations.

The board asked that management provide a report on how it is sharpening the Commission’s response to purchasers.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the Commission’s Quarterly Report for the period ending 31 March 2015.

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

15. Chief executive's report

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

M Neeson reported that the proposed recipient of the inaugural Aspinall Scholarship, Caroline Depatie, has sought a six-month deferral of the commencement of the scholarship as she has had to return to Canada for personal reasons.

The Commission is assessing its position in respect of a proposed walkway at Helena Bay (near Whangarei). The walkway arises from, and meets, a specific (amended) condition of the purchase agreement conditions approved by the Minister under the Overseas Investment Act. It is intended to progress this walkway only on condition that the Department of Conservation will be the controlling authority.

M Neeson advised the board that he had met with the chief executive of the Ministry for Primary Industries on 31 March. The board agreed to invite the chief executive to meet board members and be briefed on the Commission

The 2015 WAMS user survey had been concluded, and two points are notable: sources of awareness are similar to 12 months ago and overall satisfaction measures show a decrease (statistically significant) in users who rate the information provided as useful. These results will be factored into the WAMS strategy project and the communications review.

Silvereye Communications have been engaged to assess the feasibility of a public awareness programme called "Walk A [Queens] Chain". This would be a flagship project to begin in late 2015 to raise awareness of NZ access culture and heritage, foster healthy individuals and communities, reignite awareness of the outdoor access code and encourage use of the mapping system. This project is still at the concept stage and, if it proves to be viable, details will be available at the August meeting for board consideration.

Recruiting regional field advisor/s for Taranaki / Manawatu and the Waikato absorbed a lot of management time. Rex Hendry was appointed to cover Taranaki / Manawatu and Felicity Brough for the Waikato position.

A project is under way to look at the creation of access by local government. Local government creates access in many ways but there is no formal comprehensive record. The project is a pilot one to test a methodology. It includes investigating the different plans, strategies (such as Open Space and esplanade reserve policies) that councils produce to identify local and regional pressures and opportunities and to test those aspirations with actual implementation, and how they contribute to meeting the objectives of the Walking Access Act.

M Neeson also reported that the draft 2015-2019 Statement of Performance Expectations had been sent to the Minister for his comment, and that it was intended to print and present this document to Parliament as soon as practicable following the Minister's approval.

Action: The Board

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

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** P Mudford **Carried**

- b) **agreed** that, provided the Minister had no changes to the draft 2015-2019 Statement of Performance Expectations, the Foreword and Statement of Responsibility be signed by J Forbes and P Mudford, and released in accordance with the requirements of the Crown Entities Act.

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

16. **Operations Quarterly Report: 1 January to 31 March 2015**

R Cullinane reported that recruitment of regional field advisors during the quarter consumed a significant amount of management time. This exercise was now completed.

Other activities during the quarter included: the development of Requests for Proposals for the preparation of impact assessments and easement documentation for the Coronet and Glencoe walkways; engaging a contractor to process the backlog of Overseas Investment Office cases, and recruitment of a fixed term GIS advisor to assume responsibility for routine WAMS management during the development of the WAMS strategy.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the operations quarterly report for the period 1 January to 31 March 2015.

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

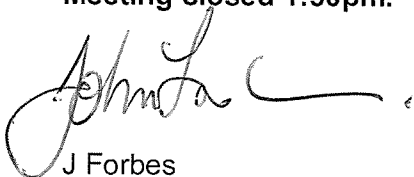
17. **Schedule of Significant Correspondence**

Action: The Board noted the schedule of significant correspondence.

Closing Comments

The Chair thanked board members and Commission management for their participation at the meeting, and invited B Stephenson to conclude the meeting with a karakia.

Meeting closed 1:50pm.



J Forbes
Chairperson

Notes

1. The board held a workshop to discuss agenda items in the afternoon of Tuesday 19 May, and in the morning of Wednesday 20 May 2015.
2. The board hosted a forum (3:15pm to 4:30pm) for representatives of local government and the Department of Conservation on Tuesday 19 May.
3. The board hosted a forum (5:15pm to 6:30pm) for recreation groups and interested parties on Tuesday 19 May.