

MINUTES

NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION MEETING

1:55pm, 15 March 2011

NZWAC Boardroom, Revera House

WELLINGTON

Board Members: J Acland (Chairman), J Aspinall, K Booth, P Brown, M Bayfield, J Forbes, B Stephenson and B Stuart.

In attendance: M Neeson (Chief Executive), H Barker (Corporate Services Manager) and Ric Cullinane (Operations Manager).

Opening Comments

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

Conflict of Interest Register

No conflicts of interest were declared.

Confirm Agenda

The Board confirmed the Agenda for the meeting with the addition of verbal reports from the Chief Executive and Operations Manager.

2. Operating Environment Update

The board reviewed the national implications of the Christchurch earthquake (political and financial) and the recent decision to merge the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry and Fisheries. It noted the role the Commission can play as a "heat sink" for access-related issues and how it acted as a stabilising force. The board noted the need to ensure that the Commission's 'core story' is completed quickly.

3. Leadership

The board discussed the concept of leadership and how it could be applied in the context of the Walking Access Act 2008. It agreed that it was now appropriate for the Commission to begin increasing its profile while ensuring that it maintains the respect and trust of key stakeholders and the public. It agreed that the board paper accurately expressed the Commission's role.

The board agreed that the Commission needs to engage with stakeholders other than those presently regarded as 'key' stakeholders. This reflects its view that the Commission is not the only 'access leader'. It proposes to take a collaborative and partnership approach with community organisations and stakeholders.

The board noted that Commission's role is not similar to any other Crown entity. It has elements of operations, education, influencing, research (factual information and advice) and leadership which are encapsulated in the Commission's three intermediate outcomes (opportunities, attitudes and leadership).

The board recognised that there will be times when the Commission will want to express a view or action which may not be welcomed at the time by one or more stakeholders.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** that the paper accurately reflects how the board regards the Commission's leadership role;
- b) **agreed** that the Commission's leadership role combines both active engagement on its own account and fostering the contributions of other 'access-leaders'; and
- c) **agreed** that the Commission increase its profile in the wider public arena, beyond its stakeholders.

Moved Kay Booth **Seconded** Brian Stephenson **Carried**

4. Enhanced Access Fund Evaluation Panel

Mr Forbes declared a possible conflict of interest: he advised that the Motu cycleway project may apply to the Fund. The board considered that the matter was not material as the paper concerned the appointment of the evaluation panel rather than substantive projects.

The board considered a paper on the assessment process for the 2011 round of applications to the Enhanced Access Fund. The board was advised that applications will, on receipt, be sent to the appropriate regional field advisors for preliminary assessment (adherence to criteria, feasibility, level of community support) so that the evaluation panel does not have to rely only on the application. The board noted that experience is showing that projects that are well-thought through before applications are made have a good chance of success. This, in turn, reflects the amount of community support and project organisation.

The evaluation panel will make recommendations in time for the board's May meeting and the board will take the final decision.

The chief executive noted that the decision-making process should be reviewed prior to the 2012 round.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** that the Enhanced Access Panel assessment process and membership be similar to that in 2010;
- b) **agreed** that the Panel comprise K Booth (panel chair), B Stuart, H Barker and R Cullinane; and

c) **agreed** that K Booth and B Stuart represent the board.

Moved John Aspinall **Seconded** Maggie Bayfield **Carried**

5. MAF update

Dan Bolger (Deputy Director-General) and Debbie Parker (Senior Advisor) from MAF briefed the board on the 'environmental' changes relevant to the board and the Commission. He covered the MAF/Ministry of Fisheries merger and the need for fiscal prudence especially since the Christchurch earthquake. He noted that the government is looking at both inputs and outputs with a strong emphasis on performance.

He congratulated the Commission on the success of the mapping system project. He noted that there are occasions where the Ministry can assist the Commission with political relationships.

The board thanked Mr Bolger and Debbie Parker for their positive and supportive relationship with the Commission. The board noted the value of the regular 6-monthly updates from senior MAF officials.

6. Confirm Minutes

Action: The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 15 February 2011 as being a true and correct record.

Moved John Forbes **Seconded** Kay Booth **Carried**

7. 2011/16 Statement of Intent (Draft)

The board reviewed and commented on a further draft Statement of Intent (SOI) prior to it being sent to the Minister in early April. The chief executive also tabled a 3rd version which had been prepared after despatch of the agenda copy; this latter version focused on editorial changes. The board agreed that the SOI, as amended, be considered as its final version unless the Minister sought major changes in which case the board would consider advice from the chief executive. The board agreed that this process would be by email.

Barbara Stuart proposed that, in light of the board's decision that the Commission saw itself as a 'leader among leaders' in respect of access, then it would be timely and appropriate for the Commission to sponsor a conference with a theme of 'leading the leaders'. She noted that the Commission can itself apply to the Enhanced Access Fund and a conference links directly with the Commission's leadership, education and research functions.

The board asked the chief executive to investigate the proposal and report back.

Action: The Board

a) **agreed** that the draft Statement of Intent for 2011/16 be forwarded to the Minister of Agriculture for his comments;

- b) **agreed** that the draft SOI be considered to be final provided that any substantial changes sought by the Minister be referred to the board for approval; and
- c) **agreed** to investigate the merits of a conference with a theme of “leading the leaders”.

Moved Peter Brown **Seconded** Maggie Bayfield **Carried**

8. **Enhanced Access Fund: Project Update**

The board discussed a report on progress with the 2010 EAF projects. It was advised that the report needed correcting as the Makarora project had not been cancelled as an alternative route was being investigated. The board asked for a copy of signage on all the new tracks and whether anything had been learnt from the cancellation of the Nuhaka project. The board was advised that the RFAs would this year be assessing EAF applications and those approved were likely to be more robust.

Mr Stephenson briefed the board on the opening of the Pahi Peninsula walkway on Saturday 12 March.

Action: The Board

- a) **Noted** the progress of the 2010 EAF projects.

Moved Maggie Bayfield **Seconded** John Aspinall **Carried**

9. **Chief executive's report**

The Chief Executive briefed the board on significant matters since the February board meeting. He noted the need for track markers and a discussion followed about whether these should be unique to the Commission or universal to New Zealand. The board **asked** him to investigate and report back.

He advised that it was planned to release the Walking Access Mapping System by means of a media briefing in the next month. It would not be a major event.

The Operations Manager advised that the Guidance on Unformed Legal Roads document was being well received by local government officials. Mr Forbes **asked** that the guidelines document be sent to the regional managers of the NZ Transport Agency.

He briefed the board on progress in the major operations projects including Molesworth Station, Acheron Road, Stone Jug Road, Wakatipu Trails, Kaiangaroa and Coronet Peak.

K Booth declared a conflict of interest and withdrew from the discussion on Molesworth Station.

K Booth **asked** that the chief executive consider the merits of fact sheets for recreation users, for example, on riverbed access and use.

Mr Aspinall advised the board that the Commission's stand at the Wanaka A&P Show appeared to be well managed with a steady flow of visitors. The board noted the value of participating at selected events.

The board discussed who might be responsible for setting standards for track building on private land when it is possible that a public agency may later be asked to assume responsibility for those tracks or walkways. The board **asked** the chief executive to investigate and report back.

10. Schedule of Significant Correspondence

The Board received the schedule of significant correspondence. The chief executive tabled four additional items:

- Select Committee News
- Supplementary report to the Local Government and Environment Committee (confidential until released by the Committee)
- Letter to the Minister of Transport on the Land Transport (Road Safety and Other Matters) Bill
- Letter to the chairman of the Auckland/Waikato Region Fish and Game advising resolution of the Old Stone Jug Road access problem.

11. Retirement of the chairman

The chairman noted that this was his last formal meeting of the board as chairman. He recalled some significant occasions and events during and after the consultation processes and how pleased he was with the enactment of the Walking Access Act in 2008. He thanked board members most deeply for their contributions and support for the board as a whole, the Commission and himself as chairman.

The board, in reply, warmly thanked Mr Acland for his contributions to walking access and his time as Chairman.

The meeting closed at 4:40pm.

Next meetings:

- on or about 19 April 2011 by email if required if there are substantive matters relating to the Statement of Intent;
- a workshop on Wednesday 4 May 2011 in Wellington on 3rd party revenue and an induction for any new board members; and
- a full board meeting on Monday 30 May 2011 in Dunedin, including a regional forum.


Chairperson

30-05-2011.

