

MINUTES

NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION MEETING

Monday 20 October 2008

8.30am – 4.00pm

Pastoral House (Level 10, Meeting room 2)
25 The Terrace, Wellington

Board Members: John Acland (Chair), Barbara Stuart, Kay Booth, Peter Brown, John Aspinnall, John Forbes, Brian Stephenson.

In attendance:

Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry (MAF): Mark Neeson, Manager Environmental Policy; Hunter Donaldson (Senior Policy Adviser); Jeannie Cozens (Policy Adviser - minutes); Neil McInnes (Manager Performance & Evaluation) 9.30 -11.00 ; Paul Stocks (Deputy Director-General, Policy) 10.35 -11.00; Trish McAuliffe (Chief Financial Officer) 1.45 - 2.10. Jim Lindsay (Consultant - communications).

Apologies: Maggie Bayfield (overseas).

1.1 Opening comments

J Acland (Chair) opened the meeting at 8.30 am and welcomed attendees. A *karakia* was provided by P Brown. The attendance of MAF officials and J Lindsay was noted and agreed.

a) Moved (J Forbes/J Aspinnall):

That the Chair write to past members of the various walking access committees and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry staff, to thank them for their work on walking access policy.

The motion was put: carried.

b) Moved (B Stephenson/J Aspinnall):

- *That Commission meetings will not be open to attendance by the public;*
- *That the Commission wishes to work with and involve stakeholders in developing Commission strategies; and*
- *That the Commission will endeavour to meet with stakeholders in December 2008.*

The motion was put: carried.

1.2 Roles

The roles of MAF and the Commission were discussed.

1.3 Conflict of Interest Register

The Commission's Conflict of Interest Register was tabled for updating as appropriate, by members.

Minister's visit (morning tea)

The Minister for Rural Affairs, Hon Damien O'Connor, gave a Letter of Expectation to the Chair of the Commission for 2008/09, which was tabled.

2.1 & 2.3 Legislation

Hunter Donaldson (Senior Policy Adviser, MAF) outlined provisions of the Walking Access Act 2008 and the Crown Entities Act 2004 applicable to the Commission.

2.3 Monitoring role

Paul Stocks introduced himself to the Board as the Deputy Director-General responsible for MAF Policy. He noted that the MAF monitoring role and Commission reporting obligations should reflect the scale and resources of the Commission. He understood, for example, that the Minister was proposing monitoring reports in February and June 2009 and quarterly thereafter. He suggested that the initial Statement of Intent need contain only broad objectives.

3.1 Administrative Issues

Interim administrative arrangements were discussed. The Commission considered these 'in committee' and officials left the room. Following their discussion officials returned and the following motions were proposed.

Moved (J Forbes/K Booth):

- a) That the Commission apply for an IRD number.*
- b) That the Commission register for GST.*
- c) That the Commission register with IRD as an employer.*
- d) That the Commission open a bank account with Westpac Bank.*
- e) That the Commission authorise the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to give effect to resolutions 1 to 4 above on behalf of the Commission.*
- f) That the Commission ratify the authority issued by the Chair-designate to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on 25 September 2008 to incur expenses on behalf of the Commission (copy of authority attached).*
- g) That the Commission delegate Mark Neeson of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry the power to incur expenses on behalf of the Commission for the purposes of facilitating the functions of the board, until such time as alternative arrangements are made and this delegation is rescinded.*
- h) That the Commission accept the offer of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to host the Commission on an interim basis until such time as the parties mutually agree, within the limits provided by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry delegations.*
- i) That the Commission ask officials to explore the possible need for a trust account to hold private funding, contributions, or sponsorship funding under section 10 of the Walking Access Act, and whether it is necessary and desirable for the Commission to seek charitable status.*

The motion was put: carried

3.3 Induction

Discussion took place on how the Board's induction and training needs were to be addressed.

Moved (P Brown/J Aspinall)

- *That MAF be invited to arrange an induction session on the Board's responsibilities; and*
- *That an independent provider be invited to provide a further induction session.*

The motion was put: carried

3.4 Financial Systems/accountability

MAF's Chief Financial Officer, Trish McAuliffe, was introduced to the Board. She noted that arrangements had been made for the approved funding to be transferred to the Commission as a non-departmental output; and that the approved capital funding, already held by MAF, could be transferred as soon as required.

She presented to the Board an outline of the financial management and reporting requirements for a Crown Entity. Topics discussed were as follows:

- the need to reach agreement with Treasury, through MAF, on a draw-down schedule for the operational funding (probably on a quarterly basis);
- the need to meet the Government's financial reporting standards (e.g. compliance with GAAP);
- the need to provide financial information in an appropriate form for inclusion in the Crown accounts;
- the role of MAF in the budgeting and appropriation process; and
- the need to work through MAF Finance to develop any new budget bid.

3.5 Walkways: MOU between MAF and DOC; Letter to controlling authorities

H Donaldson advised that the MOU between MAF and DOC would not be finalised until DOC has confirmed the list of formally gazetted walkways, existing easements and leases, and the controlling authorities that apply to existing walkways.

The Board noted the need to formally advise controlling authorities (of formally gazetted walkways), once these have been notified to MAF by DOC, of the Commission's role in respect of walkways.

It was noted that there is a need to develop a MOU between the Commission & DOC in relation to the administration of walkways.

Moved (J Forbes/K Booth)

- *That officials report at the Commission's next meeting on progress with completing the MOU between DOC and MAF on the administration of walkways, and*
- *That the members email to H Donaldson by 25 October with any comments on the draft letter to controlling authorities, and that it be signed by the Chair.*

The motion was put: carried.

3.7 Communications

J Lindsay reported on a draft design he had obtained from a website design company for the Commission's consideration in relation to a potential re-design of the walking access website.

Moved (Peter Brown/Barbara Stuart)

- *That the Commission authorise J Lindsay to explore website design options and report on these at the next meeting;*
- *That J Lindsay liaise with B Stephenson and K Booth on progress with the new website design; and*
- *That development of a communications strategy be placed on the agenda for next meeting.*

The motion was put: carried.

The Commission agreed that a programme of meetings be arranged between the Chair and Chief Executives of the Department of Conservation, Land Information New Zealand and Local Government New Zealand.

4.1 Work programme priorities

Statement of Intent (SOI)

H Donaldson outlined the statutory requirements for a Statement of Intent. He noted that a SOI was required in respect of the current financial year (to 30 June 2009) and that a further SOI needed to be completed prior to announcement of the Government's 2009 budget (likely to be in May 2009). The draft SOI for the current year would therefore need to be substantially completed by December 2008.

It was noted that work on the SOI would inform development of a national strategy on walking access. It was agreed that strategic issues be addressed further at the next meeting of the Commission.

Code of Responsible Conduct

It was noted the Walking Access Advisory Board had begun work on a Code of Responsible Conduct and that Claire Mulcock had done much of this work. It was agreed that:

- MAF approach Claire Mulcock on behalf of the Commission, as to whether she would be available to continue work on the Code of Responsible Conduct, and to ascertain the cost and scope of the work involved; and
- MAF ask Claire to liaise with Peter Brown on incorporation of tikanga Maori into the Code, and report back on progress at the next meeting.

4.2 Short Notice Access Opportunities

B Stephenson gave examples of opportunities for the purchase of properties with walking access potential that may arise at short notice. The Board noted that this raised issues relating to the Board's priorities that should be addressed in the strategy discussion at next meeting.

4.3 Overseas Investment Office (OIO)

During consideration of the Walking Access Bill reference was made to the need for the Commission to be consulted on proposals for the acquisition of sensitive land.

Moved (K Booth/Barbara Stuart):

That the Chair write to the Chief Executive of Land Information New Zealand noting the establishment of the Commission, and requesting that the Overseas Investment Office refer proposals for the acquisition of sensitive land to the Commission for advice on the walking access implications of these.

The motion was put: carried.

The Commission noted that MAF will be briefing the Minister for Rural Affairs on this matter and recommending that the Minister for Rural Affairs write to the relevant Ministers to draw their attention to the Walking Access Act 2008, and establishment of the Commission, and to request that the OIO consult the Commission on relevant applications for consent

5.1 Press Release by Chair

A draft media release by the Chair on the establishment of the Commission was tabled. It was noted that the media release will be included in an update of the walking access website, along with biographical information on members over the coming week.

5.2 Agenda

It was noted that Commission members need to be sent agenda documents at least one week in advance of the meeting.

5.3 Meeting schedule

It was agreed that further meetings of the Commission will be held on **Wednesday 12 November** and **Monday 8 December 2008** from 8.30 am to 4.00 pm.

It was also agreed that the December meeting would include a 1 ½ hour meeting with key stakeholders to meet members of the Commission, and that an email newsletter will be posted to those stakeholders unable to attend.

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