

# MINUTES

## NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION MEETING

1:30pm, 03 October 2011

Copthorne Solway Park Hotel

### MASTERTON

**Board Members:** J Forbes (Chairman), P Brown, M Bayfield, B Stephenson and M Barnett.

**In attendance:** M Neeson (Chief Executive), J Heffield (Communications Advisor), H Barker (Corporate Services Manager), N Henderson (Regional Field Advisor) and R Cullinane (Operations Manager).

#### Opening Comments

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

#### 1. Apologies

J Aspinall

#### Conflict of Interest Register

No conflicts of interest with any board papers were declared. Mike Barnett advised the Board that his role as project manager of the Round the Mountains Trail (in Southland) had generated publicity and the Southland Fish & Game Council was opposed to the cycleway along part of the Oreti River and his name appeared in the media.

#### Confirm Agenda

The Board confirmed the agenda for the meeting.

#### 2. Overarching key messages

The Board discussed the proposed key messages to be used in all its external communications material. The objective is to deliver clear, coherent and consistent key messages to maximise the Commission's chances of being understood and valued. The key messages are:

##### Role:

- The New Zealand Walking Access Commission leads and supports efforts to enhance free, certain, enduring and practical access to the outdoors, in a way that respects everyone's rights and the environment.

##### Benefits:

- Free access to beaches, lakes, rivers and mountains is a wonderful part of New Zealand's culture.

- Improving walking access means people are able to enjoy recreational activities, improve their health and appreciate our unique natural environment.
- Enhanced access to the New Zealand outdoors has a positive economic impact by improving the visitor experience for domestic and international tourists.

**The role of others:**

- We can all enjoy free access to the outdoors, so long as we respect private and public property and the environment.
- The New Zealand Walking Access Commission works closely with landholders, local and central government, iwi, business, recreation groups and the public, who all have a role in improving access to the outdoors.

The board considered whether the emphasis should be on access rather than walking access but agreed to retain the current focus.

**Action: The Board**

- a) **noted** the overarching key messages being used by the New Zealand Walking Access Commission in all its external communications.

**Moved** Mike Barnett      **Seconded** Maggie Bayfield      **Carried**

**3. Board planning 2012-2013**

The Board considered a paper which proposed a revised planning and reporting framework for the board for 2012-2013, including the timing of board meetings. The revision provides for quarterly board meetings plus an extra day in October for a national forum and, if required, a strategic planning and/or an extra board meeting in March.

The board discussed the proposal and while noting the logic behind it, it affirmed its view that regular meetings are needed to remain an effective working unit. The quarterly cycle was agreed to coupled with the two "strategy" meetings. It was also noted that, if needed and appropriate, some meetings might be held over two days.

**Action: The Board**

- a) **agreed** to an amended planning and reporting framework for the board for 2012-2013 including quarterly board meetings with two strategic meeting days (six meeting days per year).

**Moved** Peter Brown      **Seconded** Brian Stephenson      **Carried**

**4. WAMS 2 communications plan 2011-2012**

The Board discussed a proposed communications plan for the Walking Access Mapping System project (WAMS 2) for the period 2011-2012. The objective is to allow the Commission to increase awareness of the system and the WAMS 2 project while effectively managing communications risks. In discussion, it was suggested that the Commission also consider as audiences, organisations involved in GIS-related work

such as the NZ Planning Institute. The Commission's communications should also include community newspapers.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **agreed** to the communication plan for WAMS 2 for the period 2011-2012.

**Moved** Mike Barnett      **Seconded** John Forbes      **Carried**

## 5. **Confirm Minutes**

**Action:** The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 1 August 2011 as being a true and correct record.

**Moved** Maggie Bayfield      **Seconded** Mike Barnett      **Carried**

## 6. **Chief executive's report**

The Board discussed the CE's report for the period 1 July to 16 September 2011. Points of note in discussion: the Commission plans to work with the Overseas Investment Office to increase its understanding of what we do; and the Commission needs to promote access in schools (rather than promoting the Outdoor Access Code alone) so that the access message grows from there.

The Board asked that the Operations Manager provide a report, within the CE's report, on progress with significant cases including maps and plans where possible. The board agreed that this could, if appropriate, be provided by email at the time the agenda is despatched.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **noted** the Chief Executive's report for September 2011.

**Moved** Peter Brown      **Seconded** Brian Stephenson      **Carried**

## 7. **Legal advice on liability arising from signs**

The board considered a paper on the design and wording of signs which landholders can use to identify voluntarily provided access. The issue is whether the signs allow landholders to adequately warn of any significant out-of-the ordinary hazards on a route marked for access, and whether the current design of the signs could create a liability to landholders under the Act.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **noted** the legal advice;
- b) **noted** that the Commission will seek further advice from the Crown Law Office on the implications of the Brandons' advice; and
- c) **noted** that the board will be asked to consider a formal policy on signs marking voluntary access over private land based on the advice received from the Crown Law Office.

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

The chair was vacated and Maggie Bayfield took over chairing the meeting.

#### **8. Schedule of Significant Correspondence**

In addition to the circulated correspondence, letters were tabled from the Minister supporting the Commission's position on access to Central North Island forests and Wakatipu Trails Trust thanking the Commission for their assistance.

**Action:** The Board received the schedule of significant correspondence

**Moved** Peter Brown **Seconded** Mike Barnett **Carried**

#### **9. Walking Access Mapping System performance – 1 July to 16 September 2011**

The officers advised that the system was working well technically, that there had been a high peak during the launch in July and that a presentation to the Primary Products Select Committee on 15 September had been very positive.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **noted** the summary of the Walking Access Mapping System technical performance for the period 1 July to 16 September 2011.

**Moved** Brian Stephenson **Seconded** Mike Barnett **Carried**

The chairman returned and the board debriefed on the meeting.

The meeting closed at 3:40pm.

**Next meeting: Monday 21 November 2011, Christchurch.**



J Forbes

Chairperson

03/10/11

**Note:** The Board held a forum for local government in the region, a regional forum and a workshop. It also met with Anders and Emily Crofoot from Castlepoint Station. Mr Crofoot is a member of the National Board of Federated Farmers and the Federated Farmers representative on access.

Three topics were covered in the workshop:

#### **Board self review – 2011**

The board held a self review. Commission staff were not present. At the conclusion the chairman advised the chief executive and staff that pertinent conclusions to note were:

1. While the board recognises its role is governance, the board members have a passion for access and local knowledge and the Commission can use these skills to further the strategic outcomes of the Commission.
2. The Chair will speak to the Minister about succession planning.
3. The Commission should challenge its stakeholders more vigorously.
4. Board members wish to attend a course on understanding strategic financial information.
5. Board members wish (over time) to attend the Institute of Directors course.
6. The board would like to debate ideas and strategic topics at an early stage, perhaps focusing on one topic and exploring it in-depth, rather than multiple topics and skimming the surface.

### **Enhanced Access Fund**

The Board welcomed the opportunity at an early stage to review the current principles and guidelines prior to the next funding round. It noted that, while the fund was working well, staff and regional field advisors should seek board knowledge at an early stage in the assessment process, that potential use of tracks/walkways is a pertinent criterion and that the Commission needs a strategy to maintain the quantum of the fund.

The board noted that the focus of the EAF has to be on the access outcomes it wants to achieve.

The board affirmed its reluctance to consider “out of round” applications.

The chief executive advised that a paper would be prepared for the board’s November 2011 meeting to finalise arrangements for the 2012 round.

### **Strategy**

The Board reviewed the Commission’s strategic objectives and priorities including an environmental analysis, stakeholder engagement analysis, SWOT analysis and indicative strategic priorities to assist the drafting of the Commission’s next Statement of Intent.

