

Notes of Meeting of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission with the Waitakere City Council, Henderson, Monday 27 April 2009

Attendees

Board Members

J Acland (Chair), J Aspinall, M Bayfield, K Booth, P Brown, J Forbes, B Stephenson, B Stuart.

Hunter Donaldson; Bruce Lynch.

Waitakere City Council

Dr Graeme Campbell, Danielle Hancock, Fenella Thomas, Gyles Bendall, Kyle Balderston
Reg Phillips (Auckland Regional Council),

Graeme Campbell opened the meeting at 10.00 am and welcomed the Members of the Commission. A karakia was given by P Brown.

Graeme reminded the Members that

- The New Zealand population principally lives in urban places and there is a large demand from these dwellers for a variety of walking experiences as a respite from their urban life
- Urban dwellers are often looking at front country for short walks and day trips (as opposed to back country for longer tramps or remote experiences)
- While the cost to purchase front country land can be high there is real value for money in providing these experiences. The cost per kilometre per walker on front country walks will usually be many times lower than for back country walkways (such as the Routeburn Track)
- The Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act was enacted on 9 April, 2008 and recognises the national, regional and local significance of this area. It provides consistent application for both public and private land and put a lid on subdivision (so subdivision reserves will not provide a network of walks here.)
- Walkways are not core business for local authorities
- Walkways are more than tracks. Users require toilet facilities, rubbish collection and removal, and secure parking
- Multiple agencies are involved in any walking access. For the Waitakere City Council these currently include the Auckland Regional Council and the Queen Elizabeth 2 Trust as well as landowners. Who you are when you are negotiating matters. Landholders want to restrict riotous behaviour and any liability against risks, such as fires. They want any relationships to be with an enduring entity and often want the security of the Crown
- Landowners usually do not want to alienate or subdivide their land

- The Council's experience is that to be successful the Commission needs to create relationships with people who have local knowledge.

A schedule of the cost proposals to complete the Lake Wainamu track was provided.

Kyle Balderston led a discussion on the proposal to establish a walkway at Te Henga and provided the Commission with cost proposals for the Lake Wainamu track

Councillor Mitchell joined the group for a site visit to Te Henga to look at the proposed walkway route, and for afternoon tea at the home of the landowner, Mrs Vicky Bethell.

At 7.00 pm the Members attended a presentation, at the invitation of the Waitakere City Council, by Dr Morgan Williams (former Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment) on the future of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area.