

**MINUTES**  
**NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION**  
**BOARD MEETING**  
**26 September 2016**

**Boardroom, New Zealand Walking Access Commission, Wellington**

**Board Members:** J Forbes (Chair), P Brown, P Mudford and B Stuart.

**In attendance:** E Pyle (Chief executive), R Cullinane (Operations manager) and D Knott (Corporate services manager)

**Opening Comments**

The meeting commenced at 1:40 pm.

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

**1. Apologies**

An apology for not attending the meeting was received from Robin McNeill

**Action:** The Board

a) **accepted** the apology for absence from R McNeil.

**Moved** J Forbes                      **Seconded** P Brown                      **Carried**

**Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**Confirm Agenda**

The board confirmed the Agenda for the meeting.

**2. Confirm Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held in Wellington on 17 August 2016 were circulated and read.

**Action:** The Board

a) **confirmed** the minutes of the 17 August 2016 meeting as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

**Moved** P Brown                      **Seconded** P Mudford                      **Carried**

## **Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

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

The board discussed the Chief executive's report for September 2016.

E Pyle reported that the Commission had partnered with the New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) to sponsor the Outdoor Forum on 1 & 2 September at which the Commission facilitated a workshop attended by around 90 participants regarding access challenges and opportunities. A further workshop, in conjunction with the NZRA, is planned for Hamilton on 29 November 2016 with a focus on trail development in the Auckland / Waikato / Tauranga area.

Two summer studentships at Auckland and Lincoln Universities are being sought, as part of the Aspinall Scholarship. The project with Auckland University will explore incentives and planning frameworks that encourage granting of access. The project with Lincoln University is to research an internet-based system where landowners and those seeking access can interact online to agree access.

Board members discussed overseas investment office recommendations for Onetai Station regarding access to and along the North Taranaki Coast and access to native forest owned by the Native Forest Restoration Trust, the Hunter Valley Station regarding access up the Hunter Valley and into the surrounding conservation land, and the Kawakawa Station regarding access along a river and to the Haurangi Forest Park.

**Action:** The Board

a) **discussed** the Chief executive's report for September 2016.

### **4. Walking Access Champion Awards winners 2016**

The board discussed a paper regarding the 2016 Walking Access Champion Awards and the Board's views on the format for the awards in 2017.

The Commission had invited public nominations for its Walking Access Champion Awards from 2 August to 2 September 2016. The Awards are to recognise people and organisations for exceptional contributions that have enhanced, and strengthened the heritage of, walking access.

The Commission received 18 nominations with some of the nominees being nominated by multiple parties.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **agreed** that Walking Access Champion Awards for 2016 to be awarded to:
- R Hamilton and M Lange (Central Otago),
  - R Eatwell (Queen Charlotte Track),
  - D Major and A Gard'ner (Awaroa beach),
  - Te Araroa Wellington Trust (Paekakariki Escarpment Loop),
  - Nelson Tasman Cycle Trails Trust (Dun Mountain Trail and Great Taste Trail),
  - Whareroa Guardians Community Trust (Whareroa Farm tracks).

- b) **discussed** the future format for the awards and requested that management present recommendations to a future board meeting.

**Moved**      B Stuart                      **Seconded**              P Brown                      **Carried**

## 5. Strategy

The board discussed a paper on the development of the Commission's National Strategy, including the approach for access to New Zealand's High Country.

### *Development of the National Strategy - Update*

E Pyle reported that management have developed a framework for the strategy which seeks to connect projects, results, uses and benefits. The benefits provide a very important context for the areas the Commission is planning to work on over the next five years. Wider discussion with stakeholders, which is now being planned, will provide feedback on the Commission's proposed programme of work. The aim is to have the new National Strategy completed by mid-2017.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **endorsed** the proposed framework for the National Strategy

**Moved**      P Mudford                      **Seconded**              B Stuart                      **Carried**

### *Securing Access in the South Island High Country*

E Pyle reported the South Island High Country is a popular destination for international and local tourists seeking a wide range of access opportunities in a spectacular landscape. Recreational access to the South Island High Country is under increasing pressure as demand for access increases and access opportunities decrease. The South Island High Country Access project is one of the Commission's proposed 'location based' projects with the objective to establish high quality recreational access to the South Island High country, and create an access friendly culture among landholders, local government, statutory agencies and recreation groups. Initial discussions had been held with the Department of Conservation, Federated Mountain Clubs, Otago Fish & Game, Public Access New Zealand, and staff of Federated Farmers.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **endorsed** the development of a South Island High Country strand to the National Strategy.

**Moved**      J Forbes                      **Seconded**              P Brown                      **Carried**

### *Moirs Hill Walkway - Auckland*

E Pyle advised the Board that the proposed Puhoi to Warkworth motorway will sever the Moirs Hill Walkway. In the obtaining of consents for the motorway, it was assumed by the New Zealand Transport Authority that the grantee for the Walkway easement was the Department of Conservation. However, the New Zealand Walking Access

Commission is the grantee of the Walkway easement by virtue of the transitional provisions of the Walking Access Act 2008, section 73. The Department of Conservation is the controlling authority. The Board requested that the Chief executive discuss this potential loss of the Moirs Hill Walkway with the New Zealand Transport Authority and report to the December 2016 board meeting. The option of developing access elsewhere in the area should be considered using the opportunity to "offset" the impact of the motorway on the Moirs Hill Walkway.

## 6. Strategic Risks for the Commission

The board discussed a paper on the risks the Commission faces.

E Pyle reported that the risks previously identified by management were achieving performance measures, reputation and relevancy, legislative compliance, external environment, changing demands for access and relationship with Iwi. Management regularly reviews the risks the Commission faces, and reports these on a quarterly basis with the next report to the board being the December 2015 board meeting.

Following discussion with the Board, it was agreed that the risks more relevant to the Commission's proposed strategic direction are relevancy, resourcing, adverse reactions from certain sectors and the associated impact on the Commission's reputation, failure to maintain a leadership role in the digital environment, relationship with Iwi, and the loss of key people.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **discussed** the risk report;
- b) **agreed** the proposed new risks to be reported to the Board, and
- c) **advised** that it would like management to present a revised dashboard of the new strategic risks the Commission faces at its December Board meeting.

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

## 7. Budget Revision 2016 - 2021

The board discussed a paper on a revision of the Commission's 2016-2021 forecast financial statements.

E Pyle reported that, as requested at the August 2016 Board meeting, management had prepared revised forecast financial statements for the Commission for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2021.

The revised financial statements contained a number of significant changes, commencing in the current financial period, i.e. 2016-2017. For the current year, these changes included significant reductions in communications, awareness and corporate support initiatives whilst savings identified for performance measurement, updating website content and contractors were offset by additional spending on personnel for new positions for government and stakeholder relations, communications, and operational support. New expenditure was identified for research, regional field advisors, improving the walking access mapping system and strategic advice.

In later years, the forecast included a programme of significantly increased Enhanced Access Fund grants and an increase in activity by the regional field advisors. Board members noted that the assumption of significantly increased EAF grants could be difficult to achieve and was dependent on the receipt of applications that conformed to the Fund criteria.

Options for third party revenue were also discussed but considered speculative at this stage.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **Approved** the revised budget for 2016-21

**Moved** P Brown                      **Seconded** J Forbes                      **Carried**

## 8. Annual Report 2015-2016 (subject to audit)

The board discussed a paper on the updated draft Annual Report for 2015-2016.

Eric Pyle advised board members that there had been no material changes since the draft reviewed at the August Board meeting and that the audit was to commence on Monday 26 September, to be completed by mid-October. Upon completion of the audit, Audit New Zealand would teleconference J Forbes and P Mudford with their findings and arrange for the exchange of the signed annual report, statement of performance and letter of representation and the auditor's opinion. Any material changes would be circulated to all board members for discussion.

Management was working to have the audit completed by 31 October 2016, and the printed annual report delivered to the Minister in early November 2016 for presentation to Parliament.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **approved** the Commission's Annual Report for the period ending 30 June 2016; subject to any changes arising from the audit, and
- b) **agreed** that J Forbes (Chair) and P Mudford sign the Annual Report, statement of responsibility, financial statements and letter of representations for, and on behalf of, the Board.

**Moved** J Forbes                      **Seconded** B Stuart                      **Carried**

## 9. Health and Safety report

The board discussed a paper on health and safety.

P Mudford advised the Board that she had previously reviewed the Health and Safety Policy prepared by management and now presented for board approval. Board members noted that the Health and Safety Policy was now a Board policy and not merely a management policy. The policy distinguishes responsibilities of the Board and management, and workers and shifts from being compliance driven to focus on a workplace that constantly strives to improve the health and safety of its people.

Board members requested management to prepare measurable targets for Board monitoring.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **confirmed** the health and safety report and policy;

**Moved** P Brown                      **Seconded** P Mudford                      **Carried**

## 10. Controlling Authority

The board discussed a paper on controlling authorities.

The Board considered the matter of assuming controlling authority (CA) responsibilities for walkway easements at its 17 August 2016 meeting. At that meeting, the Board noted the Commission has been approached by the Te Araroa Trail Trust with a view to becoming a CA. The Te Araroa Trail Trust is not a public body and, under the Walking Access Act, it cannot be a CA. An option is for the Commission assume the CA role for the Te Araroa Trust easement, and for the Te Araroa Trail Trust to be responsible for the day-to-day management and maintenance of the track under a management agreement with the Commission. The Board considered that this model could be used for other organisations that have sufficient structure and longevity to fulfil the day-to-day responsibilities of a CA, such as a regional cycleway group, and where a CA cannot be found from the relevant public bodies. The Board requested further information on this topic at the September meeting.

The key risk identified if the Commission were to assume CA responsibilities is the potential for Territorial Authorities (and possibly the Department of Conservation) to welcome this option as a reason to decline assuming CA roles themselves. Territorial Authorities are often reluctant to assume CA roles where they do not see direct economic, social, community or electorate benefits. Tracks such as the Te Araroa Trail can fall into this category.

To mitigate this risk, the Commission would need to make it unequivocal that it would only assume CA roles in specific circumstances; where an organisation that has sufficiently robust structures, competencies and longevity is willing to undertake the day-to-day management and maintenance of the easement at their own cost; where a robust management agreement between the organisation and the Commission can be agreed; and where no public body is available or willing to assume the CA role.

In the case that a managing organisation fails to meet the terms of the management agreement, and an alternative managing organisation or CA is not available, the walkway easement may be revoked.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **requested** management to prepare a Walkway Policy to reflect the Board's discussion for presentation to a subsequent board meeting.

**Moved** J Forbes                      **Seconded** B Stuart                      **Carried**

## 11. Walking Access Mapping System Development

E Pyle advised the Board that the walking access mapping system (WAMS) is now on a contemporary platform on updated software and running largely off-the-shelf applications and widgets. WAMS consumes the core data (base maps and cadastral data) directly from Land Information New Zealand and that development, enhancement and content changes may be done in-house without the need to engage third party developers.

R Cullinane advised the Board that user feedback on the upgrade to WAMS falls into one of two categories, largely based on the type of access information sought: Those seeking information on access as a means to an end (e.g. trampers, hunters, anglers seeking access to a recreational opportunity) report high levels of satisfaction. This sector is primarily interested in the Public Access Area layer rather than the quality of the access. Those seeking information on access as an end in itself (e.g. cyclists, walkers, seeking access opportunities for their own sake) report low satisfaction levels ("It's too hard and complex"). This sector is primarily interested in information on the track characteristics; length, grade, time to complete, track surface, related amenities, and suitability.

Board members noted that the Public Access Area layer is the unique point of difference or value-add provided by WAMS, and is a statutory function of the Commission. The accuracy and comprehensiveness of this layer is the highest priority within the WAMS strategy. The Public Access Area layer is currently incomplete and contains inaccuracies. Enhancement of the Public Access Area layer is an ongoing project and the next priority for WAMS is characterising any un-digitised data and proposing options for the best ways to capture the data digitally.

R Cullinane reported that meeting the needs of the cycling and walking sector (the access as an end in itself sector) could be most efficiently achieved by re-using selected existing data in a separate webmap/s. The 'track information map' would be available as an option on the WAMS landing page and would provide the data and information sought by the cycling and walking sector. Development of this webmap is technically straightforward and may be done in house, and existing data can be easily applied. The development of a location based project will also provide learning opportunities and inform the enhancement of the location based project support maps, the development of the track information map and the 'standard' WAMS map.

There are also three location based project case studies under consideration. These are for:

- Auckland - exploring how WAMS can assist the development of a trails strategy.
- the South Island High Country - a pilot map covering Otago supporting the development of the Commission's high country access strategy, and
- Canterbury tourism - a pilot, exploring how WAMS can provide a platform for providing information on walking and cycling in the Canterbury Region.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **discussed** the proposed development of WAMS, and
- b) **noted** that the Public Access Area layer enhancement project is ongoing and resourcing for this project will be scoped in Q3 of the 2016-2017 period.

**Moved**

P Brown

**Seconded**

B Stuart

**Carried**

## 12. Other business

### *Enhanced Access Fund – Panel*

P Mudford advised the Board that, with the non-reappointment of Brian Stephenson from 29 August 2016, the Enhanced Access Fund grants application assessment panel required another Board member.

Barbara Stuart agreed to join the EAF grants application assessment panel.

### *Kaumatua – P Tamiana*

P Brown advised the Board that the Commission's Kaumatua had taken ill. The Board requested that management extend the Commission's best wishes for a speedy recovery.

### *2017 Board meeting dates*

Board members noted that meetings for the 2017 calendar year will be scheduled on the following dates:

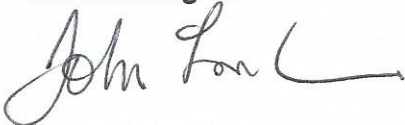
- February 21<sup>st</sup> / 22<sup>nd</sup>
- April 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup>
- May 29<sup>th</sup>
- July 26<sup>th</sup> / 27<sup>th</sup>
- September 26<sup>th</sup> / 27<sup>th</sup>
- November 21<sup>st</sup> / 22<sup>nd</sup>

## 13. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held in the Hawkes Bay area, on 1 December 2016.

The Chair invited P Brown to close the meeting with a karakia.

**The meeting closed at 2:55 pm.**



J Forbes  
Chairperson