

MINUTES
NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING

18 November 2015

Boardroom, New Zealand Walking Access Commission, Wellington

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

In attendance: M Neeson (Chief executive), R Cullinane (Operations manager) and D Knott (Corporate services manager).

Opening Comments

The meeting commenced at 8:15 am.

The Chair welcomed board members, noting newly appointed board member B Stuart, and staff to the meeting. The Chair invited P Brown to open the meeting with a karakia.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts were declared

Confirm Agenda

The board confirmed the Agenda for the meeting.

2. Confirm Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held in Christchurch on 21 September 2015 were circulated and read.

Action: The Board

- a) **confirmed** the minutes of the 21 September 2015 meeting as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

Moved B Stephenson **Seconded** P Brown **Carried**

Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.



3. Risk management report

The board discussed a report on risk management, and reviewed the risk management register.

M Neeson reported that there were 6 risks on the register – three as previously reported (achieving performance measures, reputation and relevancy, and legislative compliance), and three new risks (external environment, understanding New Zealander's access culture and heritage, and relationships with Iwi) having been added following the board's August 2015 risk workshop.

Following discussion, the board assessed that ratings for achieving performance measures (risk 1), understanding New Zealander's access culture and heritage (risk 5), and relationships with Iwi (risk 6) risks be reduced (i.e., lower level of risk), and that the rating for the external environment risk (risk 4) be increased (i.e., higher level of risk).

The legislative compliance risk also captures the recently enacted Health and Safety at Work Act that will become effective from April 2016. M Neeson outlined the Commission's compliance programme, noting that the Commission was working on three phases: health and safety of employees and contractors; implications for gazetted walkways; and a fact sheet and guidelines for recreational access on farms. The health and safety on farms initiative is being progressed jointly with WorkSafe New Zealand, Federated Farmers of New Zealand, and Fish and Game New Zealand.

The board reiterated to management its expectation that employees and contractors, including the regional field advisors, are able to conduct their work in a safe manner. Management was requested to provide a report regarding the Commission's health and safety policies and preparation for the changes required by the Health and Safety at Work Act, 2015 at the board's next risk management review to be conducted in February 2016. B Stephenson suggested that the board consider receiving a briefing from an external party after considering the management reports.

Action: The Board

- a) **discussed** the risk management report for November 2015;
- b) **confirmed** the risks and the descriptions and mitigating actions, and amended the risk ratings applied by management for 4 of the identified risks;
- c) **noted** the resource implications of Risks 3 (legislative compliance) and 6 (relationships with Iwi), and
- d) **requested** further advice and reports on the implications of the *Health and Safety at Work Act, 2015* for its February 2016 meeting.

Moved P Brown **Seconded** B Stephenson **Carried**

4. Strategic Review and Statement of Performance Expectations (2016-2020)

The board discussed a report on the Commission's strategic intentions for 2016-2020, and reviewed a draft letter to the Minister regarding the Commission's performance framework, proposed priorities for 2016-2017, and strategic intentions.

M Neeson advised the board that the draft letter to the Minister did not signal any change in strategic direction or intentions. The Minister's 2015 Letter of Expectations had not indicated any change in strategic direction for the board to consider, and neither did management consider a change in the direction as outlined in the current 2014-2018 Statement of Intent was necessary. M Neeson advised the board that the Statement of Intent had to be reviewed by July 2017.

Upon review of the performance framework measures, the board requested that the public awareness of the Commission measure be removed for the 2016-2017 Statement of Performance Expectations as the Board considers the appropriate measure of public awareness should be on access outcomes and not on the Commission. The board also noted that the 2016-2017 Statement of Performance Expectations will provide financial projections for four years, beyond the period for the review of the *Walking Access Act*, in 2018-2019.

M Neeson advised the board that final performance measures and the letter to the Minister would also be influenced by the outcome of discussions on later Agenda items, including reports on priorities and implications, and development of the walking access mapping system. Changes to the letter to the Minister would be circulated to board members for comment prior to being despatched.

Action: The Board

- a) **approved** the release of, following inclusion of Board comments, the proposed letter to the Minister, and
- b) **confirmed**, with one amendment, the performance measures to be included the Statement of Performance Expectations for 2016-2020, and
- c) **noted** the need to review the Statement of Intent by July 2017.

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

5. **Priorities and implications**

The board discussed a report on operational priorities and funding implications.

The board noted that the Commission has fixed revenue from the Crown of \$1.789 million, and that the government expects agencies to manage within budget - the core message is "more, smarter".

M Neeson reported that, from a personnel management perspective, the Commission has to balance the need to reduce the amount of accrued annual leave, maintain motivation and engagement, whilst retaining productivity. This impacts on the Commission's ability of to undertake significant projects with current resources. As a consequence, it has become necessary to reprioritise existing, and planned, workloads for the next three years.

M Neeson advised the board that the planned video and relaunch of the outdoor access code have been moved to 2016-2017. Offsetting this work is a need to complete the Follow the Kiwi Way project, improve the both sides of the fence website, and provide assistance to programmes that will support the Commission's aims with new immigrants and educating the public on access.

M Neeson also advised the board that the walking access mapping system (WAMS) has been reviewed over the past year, and enhancements are required to retain its currency and appeal to users. This is the topic of a following Agenda item. The board had allocated \$60,000 in the current year for WAMS enhancements, and it is proposed to reallocate those funds, and an additional \$197,797 to a new project to be completed by 30 June 2015, titled the 'WAMS transformation project'.

M Neeson reported that the board had previously allocated \$20,000 for corporate support. This work had now been clarified and an additional \$10,000 would be required for an upgrade of the Commission's SharePoint, and completion of Information Technologies (IT) policies.

Following the board's review of risks at its August 2015 meeting, an additional \$25,000 per annum for the current year, and each of the following two years would be required for a programme to further relationships with Maori. The board noted that a separate discussion is needed on how to progress this topic.

The Board noted that these changes to the Commission's priorities would impact on the current year's performance, and would also be incorporated into the 2016-2017 Statement of Performance Expectations.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** to move \$30,000 from the 2015-2016 budget to the 2016-2017 budget for the NZWAC video and the re-launch of the Outdoor Access Code;
- b) **agreed** to additional funding of \$31,500 in 2015-2016, and \$7,500 in 2016-2017 for Communications projects;
- c) **agreed** to additional funding of \$197,797 in 2015-2016, and \$20,000 in 2016-2017 for the WAMS transformation project;
- d) **agreed** to amortise the capitalised portion of WAMS transformation project costs over a three year period;
- e) **agreed** to increasing funding for Corporate support from \$20,000 to \$30,000, for IT policies and upgrading SharePoint, and
- f) **agreed** to additional funding of \$25,000 in 2015-2016, \$25,000 in 2016-2017, and \$25,000 in 2017-2018 to further relationships with Maori.

Moved P Mudford **Seconded** B Stephenson **Carried**

6. Enhanced Access Fund – 2015 Round (tranche 1)

The board discussed a report on the applications to the Enhanced Access Fund, for tranche 1 of the 2015 funding round.

M Neeson reported that the Commission received 13 applications, amounting to \$148,400 by the closing date of 30 September 2015.

The EAF grants assessment panel met on 26 October to review all applications, and recommended a number of applications for board approval. Given the limited financial support available from the EAF, the panel's recommendations cover projects that will

support priority 1 (secure certain and enduring access to the outdoors), and priority 2 (information including signs).

M Neeson reported that he had also approved two grants under the chief executive's discretionary authority.

Action: The Board

- a) **approved** funding for six applications from the 2015 EAF funding round, tranche 1 as recommended by the assessment panel;
- b) **agreed** that the chief executive advises all applicants of the Board's decision, and invites the successful applicants to confirm their agreement to any conditions set by the Board;
- c) **directed** the chief executive to consider appropriate timing of the release of decisions and participation by interested Board members and regional field advisors in local announcements;
- d) **agreed** that the chairman write to the Minister for Primary Industries advising him of the decision, and
- e) **noted** that the chief executive has approved two discretionary EAF grants amounting to \$7,000 (GST exclusive)

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

7. **Walking Access Mapping System (WAMS)**

The board discussed a report on the walking access mapping system and the chairman thanked staff for the background research and analysis leading to the report.

M Neeson reported that three significant risks areas need to be addressed: technical, management and performance shortcomings. Technical issues covered the host server capacity and performance, the desktop viewer that is out of date and costly to maintain, and database services; management issues covered the cost and time for Commission staff, and third party contractors, to make changes to the system, data sourcing and integrity; and performance shortcomings covered poor mobile performance, download speeds, functionality, content and 'ease of use'.

To manage these risks, the Commission has initiated a 'WAMS transformation project' the primary objective of which is to have an infrastructure that is adaptable to constant technological change and where maintenance, development and enhancement can be done in a timely manner by Commission staff. The outcome of this project will reduce dependence on, and the cost of, third party involvement resulting in significant cost savings for the Commission.

M Neeson reported that the end result will be a significant enhancement for users. Most notable would be the availability of a fully functioning WAMS on a range of mobile platforms with contemporary performance and functions, increased loading speed, content and functions that may be available to specific user groups, and ease of on-going incremental improvements.

The project is planned for completion by 30 June 2016.



Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the technical, management and performance risks associated with the Walking Access Mapping System;
- b) **approved** the WAMS transformation project;
- c) **agreed** to allocate \$272,797 for the project in 2015-2016, and \$20,000 in 2016-2017;
- d) **noted** the cost for the migration component is firm and will be met from funds being relocated from other projects (see agenda item 5).
- e) **noted** updated costs for the remaining technical components will be reported at the February 2016 meeting.

Moved P Brown **Seconded** B Stephenson **Carried**

8. Information Security Policy

The board discussed a report on the development of the Commission's information security policy.

D Knott reported that these security measures are the minimum required to prevent problems, including fraud, sabotage, errors and omissions, and system unavailability.

However, the board noted that the draft policy was detailed and requested that management, whilst ensuring the guidance of the government's chief information officer is followed, ensures that it was readily understandable and not overly burdensome when completed.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that the information security policy is in its formative stages, and
- b) **agreed** to reallocate funding to enable a work programme to implement this policy for completion by 30 June 2016.

Moved P Mudford **Seconded** B Stephenson **Carried**

9. Insurance Renewal report

The board discussed a report on the Commission's insurance policies.

D Knott advised that the Commission had the following cover: Material Damage, Business Interruption, General Liability, Professional Indemnity, Employers Liability, Statutory Liability, Internet Liability, and Directors and Officers Liability.

D Knott also reported that the Commission had also received advice from its insurers that in respect of liability for Walkways, subject to the policy terms and conditions, where the Commission was legally liable for third party property damage caused by the public's use of a track then the General Liability policy can respond to a claim of that nature.



Following discussion, the board requested management to arrange increased cover for statutory and directors and officers liability.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** that the level of insurance cover is appropriate, with the exception of statutory liability and directors and officers liability, and requested that management arrange increased cover for these policies.

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

10. **Quarterly report: First Quarter 2015-2016**

The board discussed the quarterly report for the period ended 30 September 2015.

M Neeson advised that the number of cases “Under action” is 265 (231 ‘In progress’ and 34 ‘On hold’) and that there has been a gradual increase in the total of active cases over recent quarters. In regions with new regional field advisors (RFAs), there has been an increase in the number of active cases over the past 5 quarters and there is no specific case type responsible for this increase. The number of active cases is expected to reduce as RFA experience and skillsets increase.

The board noted the effort put into communications, including the updated corporate website, Follow the Kiwi Way website and project, access awards and Top Outdoor Spot.

D Knott reported that for the quarter ended 30 September 2015, there was a consolidated (General Fund and Enhanced Access Fund) deficit of \$1,000 against a budgeted deficit of \$108,000. This occurred due to a number of significant projects not progressing as anticipated, which were still expected to be completed by 30 June 2016.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the Commission’s Quarterly Report for the quarter ending 30 September 2015.

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

11. **Chief executive’s report**

The board discussed the Chief executive’s report for 30 November 2015.

M Neeson reported that priorities for the remainder of 2015-2016 are to complete the more significant projects which are either needed to meet SPE targets or are projects commenced in 2014-2015 still to be concluded. The high priority projects are the WAMS transformation, launching “Follow the Kiwi Way” website, completing the Coronet/Soho walkway easements, review of corporate policies (including IT security), appointing regional field advisors to cover Auckland, the lower North Island, and upper South Island, and implementing changes for health and safety.

M Neeson advised the board that the Whenua Iti Outdoors application for EAF funding, although not supported by the EAF panel, had merit and he would consider how the

Commission could assist this group as it supported the Commission's objective of educating immigrants on access to New Zealand's outdoors.

The board asked for a policy paper on available options in lieu of the Commission pursuing legal walking access in applications under the Overseas Investment Act.

Action: The Board

- a) **discussed** the Chief Executive's report for November 2015, and
- b) **requested** a paper on options in lieu of legal walking access in applications under the Overseas Investment Act.

Moved B Stephenson **Seconded** P Brown **Carried**

12. Operations Quarterly Report: 1 July to 30 September 2015

The board discussed the Operations report for the quarter ending 30 September 2015.

R Cullinane reported that significant activities during the quarter included the training of new RFAs, a RFA workshop in July, the WAMS mobile viewer upgrade, continuing reduction of active Overseas Investment Act (OIA) cases and further progress in developing applications to the Commissioner of Crown Lands for easements on Coronet Peak and Glencoe Crown Pastoral Leases.

The board noted that recent meetings with Department of Conservation staff have been positive and encouraging, with one recent example being the meeting in late September regarding a joint approach (including the Rangitikei District Council) to access to the Ruahine Forest Park.

Also noted was the progress in bringing a resolution to a long standing case for access to, and along, the Clutha River; progress with the FAQ addressing the issue of health and safety and recreational access on farms; and the increased resolution rate of OIA cases.

R Cullinane advised the board that long-standing regional field advisor for the 'Top of the South' and West Coast (Chris Tonkin) had terminated his contract, effective from mid-December 2015.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the operations quarterly report for the period 1 July to 30 September 2015.

Moved B Stephenson **Seconded** P Mudford **Carried**

13. Schedule of Significant correspondence

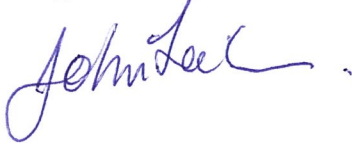
Action: The Board noted the schedule of significant correspondence.



Closing comments

The Chair thanked board members, and staff, for their attendance and contributions and invited P Brown to conclude the meeting with a karakia.

The meeting closed at 10:15am.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Forbes', is written over the printed name.

J Forbes
Chairperson

Notes

The board met Chrissie Murray, Associate Audit Director, Audit New Zealand at 10:45am on Tuesday 17 November 2015 to discuss the audit Management Report for the year ended 30 June 2015.

The board held a workshop on Crown entities in the state services on Tuesday 17 November 2015 with a representative from the Ministry for Primary Industries attending.

The chairman advised the board that he and the chief executive had met with representatives from the Ministry for Primary Industries on Tuesday 17 November to discuss the timing of the 2016 board member appointment process.

