

MINUTES
NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING
23 February 2021
Wellington/via Zoom

Members: D Cameron (Chair), H Allison, P Coburn, P Henare, H Mexted, C Wade-Brown, R Tipene, L Chase

In attendance: R Cullinane (Chief Executive), P Culling (Deputy CE), S Day (Strategic Communications Manager), L Edwardson (Principal Advisor – operations), M Weatherall (Executive Director – Te Araroa), S Cruickshank (GIS/IT Manager) and J Yang (minutes)

Opening Comments

The meeting commenced at 1.20pm.

P Henare opened the meeting with a karakia.

The Chair welcomed Board members and staff.

This meeting was originally scheduled to be held in Warkworth, in conjunction with meetings with local iwi representatives, the Te Araroa Trust board and stakeholders in the area, and a high-level strategy workshop. Due to increase to Alert Level 3 in Auckland, these were postponed, and this board meeting moved to Zoom. The board noted its disappointment that these meetings were unable to go ahead.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies received.

Conflicts of Interest

C Wade-Brown is a member of the Te Araroa Trust Board and is also on the organisation committee for the 2WALKandCYCLE conference.

Confirm Agenda

The Board confirmed the agenda for the meeting.

2. Confirm Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held in Wellington on 25 November 2020 were circulated and read.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **confirmed** the minutes of the 25 November 2020 meeting as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

Moved P Henare

Seconded H Allison

Carried

Matters arising from the minutes

No matters were arising from the minutes.

3. Chief Executive's report

The board discussed the chief executive's report for February 2021.

R Cullinane gave a strategic summary of the year to February and reported on the 2019/2020 Annual Report and audit; Audit and Risk Committee meetings; Māori partnership and engagement; Statement of Intent update; Statement of Performance Expectations update; staffing; operations; Enhanced Access Grants; Te Araroa; Walking Act review policy development; regional leadership and strategies; partnerships and policy; stakeholder engagement strategy; identity, values and brand update; the upcoming Virtual Field Trip; the Aspinall Scholarship; geospatial and information technology; health and safety; and recent notable meetings.

Māori partnership and engagement

Di Grennell has been contracted to provide advice on implementation of the Māori Partnership Strategy Framework. Di will be facilitating a Māori capability hui next week for all staff and regional field advisors. Management would report on the hui at the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting in April.

Operations

The Commission has recently made several submissions to select committees and regional council long-term plans that are significant to the Commission's work. The board commended the regional field advisors and operations teams for their excellent work on these submissions.

The board also noted the importance of the Commission maintaining a focus on access in peri-urban areas as much as backcountry.

Stakeholder engagement strategy

Much of the Commission's work involves working with stakeholders. Preliminary work on a stakeholder engagement strategy has been done, however the Commission is not currently in a position to do a more in-depth review of the strategy. Current partnerships and projects are being consolidated and reviewed. A framework will be sent to the board to clarify the Commission's current stakeholder relationships and strategy.

Identity, values and brand update

The next part of this project will involve surveys and workshops with stakeholders. The board discussed the direction of project and how it would relate to future stakeholder engagement. An update on the project would be provided at the next board meeting in May, and the finding from the workshops will be made available in due course.

Aspinall scholarship

The two recipients of the Aspinall scholarship for 2020 presented their work to commission staff and board members on 29 January. The Chair commended the recipients and their thought-provoking research.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **discussed** the chief executive's report for February 2021.
- b. **directed** management to provide a paper on the Commission's stakeholder relationships and strategy at the next board meeting in May.
- c. **directed** management to report to the Audit and Risk Committee on progress with the Māori engagement strategy.

Moved H Allison **Seconded** P Coburn **Carried**

4. **Health and safety report**

P Culling presented the health and safety report as of February 2021.

This is a regular report, covering any accidents, near misses, on-going issues/any actions taken, initiatives, and any other relevant matters.

There were no accidents and no near misses since the last report.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the Commission's February 2021 Health and Safety report.

Moved H Mexted **Seconded** H Allison **Carried**

Part A

5. **2021 timetable**

J Yang presented the Commission's 2021 planning and reporting timetable, for the board's confirmation.

The board requested that Outdoor Access Award and CE performance review dates be to the timetable when available.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **confirmed** the planning and reporting timetable for 2021.

Moved P Henare **Seconded** H Mexted **Carried**

6. **Outdoor access champion awards**

S Day invited the board to select the recipient of the 2021 Outdoor Access Champion Awards.

The awards recognise individuals or organisation who have made significant and lasting contribution to public access to the outdoors in New Zealand. Nominations for the awards were open from 30 October 2020 to 31 January 2021.

One nomination was received, and the board approved that the nominee receives the award.

The board noted that there have been few female nominees nor awarded and would like to see more women encouraged to apply for the award.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **approved** the winner of the 2021 Outdoor Access Champion award.
- b. **noted** that management will arrange a local presentation to the winner in the first half of 2021, and the nearest board member will be invited to attend and present the award on behalf of the Commission.

Moved C Wade-Brown

Seconded P Henare

Carried

7. **Potential form and functions post-Act Review**

R Cullinane presented a paper discussing the potential form and functions of the Commission if the recommendations of the 2019 Report on the Review of the Walking Access Report are funded and implemented. This also includes the Māori Partnership Strategy and implementation.

There is unlikely to be any legislative changes made to the Act in the next two years. Implementation of any non-legislative recommendations now would need a significant increase in funding.

The Commission's future work will likely involve more collaboration with other agencies and external stakeholders. The outdoor recreation sector is fragmented which can limit progress. The Commission is well placed to be involved in cross-government work in this space as we are able to work across all land types and have a much broader legislative scope than some other agencies and departments. The board emphasized the importance of networking across government and a range of stakeholders to forward the Commission's future strategy work.

The board noted that it would like some advice relating to a possible future role for the Commission in facilitating public access with *mana whenua* post-settlement. Te Arawhiti would be consulted.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **discussed** the potential form and functions of the Commission post-Act Review and how the Māori Partnership Strategy may be implemented in this context.

- b. **directed** management to organise a meeting between the board and Te Arawhiti relating to the Commission's future role in facilitating public access with *mana whenua* post-settlement.

Moved P Henare **Seconded** P Coburn **Carried**

Part B

8. Q2 Quarterly Report

P Culling presented the Commission's Q2 quarterly report for 2020-2021 as submitted to the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI).

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the Commission's Q2 Quarterly Report, as submitted to MPI.

Moved P Henare **Seconded** H Mexted **Carried**

9. Audit matters

P Culling presented Audit New Zealand's findings from its audit of the 2019-2020 Annual Report, and the minutes from the audit and risk committee meetings on 8 December 2020 and 15 December 2020.

The board requested that a standing list of action points from Audit and Risk Committee meetings be created and circulated.

The board also discussed the Commission's obligations under te Tiriti and requested some clarity be provided around any Audit New Zealand expectations relating to this.

Action: The Board

- a. **noted** Audit New Zealand's report to the board on the Audit of the Commission for the year ended 30 June 2020.
- b. **noted** the minutes from the audit and risk committee meetings on 8 December 2020 and 15 December 2020.
- c. **discussed** any issues or areas of concern.

Moved L Chase **Seconded** H Mexted **Carried**

10. Te Araroa update

M Weatherall presented the board with an update on developments managing Te Araroa.

The current focus is on getting more New Zealanders doing individual sections of the trail, with the intention of walking the trail across their lifetime. As a result of COVID-19 there have been more locals walking the trail, as well as more media attention.

Action: The Board

- a. **noted** the Te Araroa report for February 2020.

Moved H Allison **Seconded** L Chase **Carried**

11. Significant correspondence

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the letter from Te Puni Kokiri and the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment announcing a new progressive procurement policy with a focus on Māori businesses.
- b. **directed** management to incorporate the procurement policy into the Commission's Māori engagement strategy.

Part C

12. Other Business

Carbon Neutral by 2025

The Commission will be participating in the Carbon Neutral Government Programme. The first steps will involve calculating the Commission's carbon emissions and setting and reporting on reduction targets. The board will be kept updated on progress.

Updates from other agencies

The board noted that there will be some changes for the Commission, as a Crown agent, under the new Public Service Act 2020. Management will keep the board informed of any recommendations or directives from the Public Service Commission or other agencies.

2WALKandCYLCE conference

Due to the postponement of the conference and a clash of the new conference dates with the March RFA workshop, the Commission will no longer be unable to attend. This is unfortunate and the event be a good opportunity to raise the profile of the Commission.

13. Closing comments

The chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

P Henare closed the meeting with a karakia.

14. Next meeting

The next board meeting will be held on 5 May 2021, location TBD.

The meeting closed at 4pm.

D Cameron

Board Chair