

MINUTES
NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING
16-17 November 2021
Wellington/via Zoom

The meeting commenced at 1.10pm on 16 November 2021.

Board members in attendance:

D Cameron (Chair), H Allison, P Coburn, P Henare, R Tipene, and C Wade-Brown.

Also in attendance:

R Cullinane (Chief Executive), P Culling (Deputy Chief Executive) S Day (Communications Manager), K Douglas (National Operations Manager) and J Yang (Corporate Services Advisor, minutes).

Opening comments

P Henare opened the meeting with a karakia.

D Cameron (via Zoom) welcomed Board members and staff, then handed over to P Henare to chair the meeting in person.

The board self-assessment and review of the board governance manual that was planned to coincide with this meeting was postponed. This was due to the last-minute unavailability of some board members, and other board members being unable to attend in person.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from L Chase, for the full meeting.

Apologies were received from H Mexted, for the first day of the meeting.

Apologies were received from R Tipene, for the second day of the meeting.

Confirm Agenda

The Board confirmed the agenda for the meeting.

Conflicts of Interest

C Wade-Brown is also a member of Te Araroa Trust board.

2. Confirm Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held in Wellington on 20-21 July 2021 were circulated and read.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **confirmed** the minutes of the 20-21 July meeting as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

Moved C Wade-Brown

Seconded P Coburn

Carried

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

The board requested that the stakeholder list (item 14) and the letter and presentation to iwi leaders (item 17) be sent around to the board for completeness.

The board noted that since the July meeting, Te Araroa birthday celebrations were cancelled due to uncertainty around COVID-19. Instead, a letter to Ministers and accompanying information pamphlet is being developed.

3. Chief executive's report

The Board discussed the chief executive's report for November 2021.

R Cullinane gave a strategic summary of the year to November and reported on staff, strategy development, Te Araroa; the Carbon Neutral Government Programme; the identity, values and brand update; audit and risk; regional projects in Tairāwhiti, Franklin-North Waikato and Pūhoi to Mangawhai; enhanced access grants; health and safety; and IT and GIS updates.

Staffing

There are two new appointments to the senior management team. D Macredie, is the new Strategic Relationships Manager | Pononga Whakatere, started in early October. A new GIS Team Manager is expected to start in early December, on secondment from DOC for 1 year.

IT and GIS

Two big projects have recently launched. These have been a part of the Commission's goal to make GIS data more readily available for the public to use.

Pocket Maps, a free mobile phone app, was released in September. There has been good feedback from the public, as well as publicity, including an RNZ interview with one of the Commission's GIS analysts.

The Open Data Portal was launched in October and makes the Commission's GIS data, including publicly accessible land data, freely available for anyone one to use.

Papers for both projects have also been submitted as part of the ESRI Global User Conference in 2022.

Other discussion

The Board discussed the need to clarify and agreed on a process for coming to a consensus when making resolutions via email. It is anticipated that the Board may need to do this more often in future.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **discussed** the chief executive's report for November 2021.

Moved P Coburn **Seconded** C Wade-Brown **Carried**

4. Health and safety report

P Culling presented the health and safety report as of November 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.

The board noted the possibility of a COVID-19 vaccination policy for staff and visitors to the Wellington office. The risks around COVID-19 were also discussed at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 11 November. Management agreed to do some more work and planning on this issue and to bring it back to the committee at its next meeting.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the commission's November 2021 health and safety report.

Moved H Allison **Seconded** P Henare **Carried**

Part A

5. Draft 2021-2025 Annual Report 2020-2021

R Cullinane presented the draft of the Commission's *Annual Report for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021* for the Board to review.

The draft annual report was reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee on 11 November. The committee provided comments and suggestions which will be incorporated where appropriate.

The Board acknowledged the tightness of the budget and need for more funding to address the non-legislative recommendations from the act review and meet the Minister's expectations.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **reviewed** the Commission's draft *Annual Report for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021*.
- b. **designated** that Don Cameron (chair) and P Henare (board member) sign the *Annual Report for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021*, statement of responsibility, financial statements, and letter of representation for, and on behalf of, the Board.
- c. **agreed** to hold a special meeting after audit clearance has been obtained, to adopt the annual report.

Moved H Allison

Seconded C Wade-Brown

Carried

6. 2022 reporting and planning timetable

J Yang presented the Commission's 2022 planning and reporting timetable.

At its meeting last week, the Audit and Risk Committee noted the likelihood of the final audit being delayed in 2022, and suggested meeting dates toward the end of the year be moved to accommodate this. The Board noted that there would likely be some amendments to dates for the second half of 2022.

The Board discussed the possibility of having a meeting outside of Wellington next year, dependent of the situation with COVID-19. One possibility is to align the February meeting dates with the opening of the Invercargill to Bluff section of Te Araroa Trail.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the planning and reporting timetable for 2022.

- b. **noted** that will be some amendments to meeting dates toward the end of the year due to likelihood of the final audit being delayed again.

Moved H Allison **Seconded** D Cameron **Carried**

7. Outdoor Access Champion Awards 2022

S Day presented a paper inviting the Board to select the recipients of the 2022 Outdoor Access Champion Awards.

There was a specific push for women to be nominated for the award this year. Five highly deserving individuals were nominated across a wide range of work, all of whom are women. The board selected all 5 nominees to receive the award in 2022.

The board discussed the need for some clarity around the management of the awards. There is currently no formal documentation around the process and criteria for the selection of awardees. A formal policy for the Outdoor Access Champion Awards will be drafted and brought to the next board meeting.

The board also emphasised the importance of involving iwi in the awards.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **agreed** on the winner(s) of the 2022 Outdoor Access Champion award.
- b. **noted** that management will arrange local presentations to the winners, in the first half of 2022 where possible, and the nearest Board member to each award will be invited to attend and present the award on behalf of the Commission.
- c. **directed** management to draft a policy on the Outdoor Access Champion Awards.

Moved P Coburn **Seconded** C Wade-Brown **Carried**

Part B

8. Māori partnerships update

Due to the unavailability of the Strategic Relationships Manager on the 16 November, this item was deferred to 17 November.

9. Audit and Risk Committee

P Culling gave a verbal report of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 11 November 2021 and presented the deputy chief executive's report as provided to the Committee, and the Committee's workplan for 2022.

The Board noted that the Committee discussed ongoing and future risks relating to COVID-19 and discussed the likelihood that COVID-19 would become endemic in the near future. Further work needs to be done on how this would affect staff and regional field advisors, as well as how vaccination status and mandates may affect the Commission's work, especially in the field. Management is looking at how best to manage these new situations, and how any potential risks might be mitigated.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the report from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 11 November 2021.
- b. **noted** the Audit and Risk Committee's work plan for 2022.
- c. **directed** management to assess the implications of spread of COVID-19 and staff and RFA vaccination status when working in the field.

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

10. Insurance renewal

P Culling presented the Commission's insurance renewal and cover for the period 14 October 2021 to 14 October 2022.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the Commission's renewal and level of insurance cover and associated premiums.

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

11. Q1 quarterly report

P Culling presented the Commission's Q1 report covering 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021, as submitted to MPI.

Performance measures will be reviewed early next year, and MPI has agreed to provide support for this.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the Commission's Q1 quarterly report.

Moved H Allison **Seconded** P Henare **Carried**

12. Operations update

K Douglas gave an operational update and presented the case statistics report for Q1.

The Commission welcomed two new Regional Field Advisors (RFAs); one for the Hauraki, Thames Coromandel and Bay of Plenty | Hauraki, Te Tara-o-te-ika-a-Māui me Te Moana-a-Toitehuatahi area, and the other for the Hawke's Bay and Gisborne | Te Matau-a-Māui me Te Tairāwhiti area. The new RFAs are taking over from two long-serving RFAs who have now retired.

In Q1 2021/2022, the Commission continued to take part in cross-agency hui, including with LINZ and DOC, make operational submissions and create new access.

The Board noted that most of the Commission's submissions are publicly available on the Commission's website.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the operations report and quarterly case statistics report for the period 1 July to 30 September 2021.

Moved P Henare **Seconded** H Allison **Carried**

The meeting adjourned for the day at 4.30pm on 16 November 2021.

The meeting reconvened at 10.30am on 17 November 2021.

Board members in attendance:

D Cameron (Chair), H Allison, P Coburn, P Henare, C Wade-Brown and H Mexted.

Also in attendance:

R Cullinane (Chief Executive), P Culling (Deputy Chief Executive), D Macredie (Strategic Relationships Manager), S Day (Communications Manager), K Douglas (National Operations Manager) and J Yang (Corporate Services Advisor, minutes).

Part B continued

8. Māori partnerships update

D Macredie presented an update on progress with the Māori partnerships.

The board noted and discussed suggestions for where the Māori Partnerships Strategy could be improved and updated. This included adding clarity around the use of the terms tangata whenua and mana whenua and elevating te Tiriti to be the overarching guidance rather than the core reason for interactions with Māori. There is also scope for including a guideline around communication in Māori settings, and using the three tiers of wairua, whakapapa and whanau, as a structure for different levels of interaction. A draft strategy, with the updates suggested, will be presented to the board at its next meeting.

The board also noted suggestions for how the Commission could implement its strategy and also adding value for Māori as part of its operational work. These included:

- connecting with iwi around te ara tupuna, with the possibility of creating a trails network and/or linking some trails with Te Araroa,
- giving emphasis to Māori leadership traits when developing capability and for performance reviews,
- developing a Māori strategy by rohe for each RFA to complement their work,
- telling more Māori stories and history and
- increasing leadership and participation in tracks and trails, and
- connecting with other agencies around this work, which also provides an opportunity for the Commission to be a leader and set an example in this space.

The board agreed that the Commission's progress and plans in this space should be reflected in the budget bid where possible, and that any future legislative change to the *Walking Access Act 2008* should have meaningful inclusion of Māori partnership.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the updates with the commission's Māori partnership strategy.
- b. **noted** that the Strategic Partnerships Manager will provide a draft revision of the existing Māori partnership strategy for the board to discuss at the next board meeting.

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

13. Communications and partnerships

S Day gave an update on the communications and partnerships area.

The Commission hosted the first Trails Groups Online Hui in September. This was a small but impressive start and is intended to build into a network that allows the groups to support each other. More resources are also being developed for trails groups around creating high quality signage and tracks. This will include design guidelines,

consistency of information and some digital guidelines. There is also the possibility of supporting a trails group as a case study.

The Board emphasised the importance of making guidelines clear and specific for different active transport types.

The Board also noted that there are now several similar tracks and trails databases available, and that meetings are being planned with other groups on how we can better collaborate.

The Board was also updated on the Commission's new name. On 18 September 2021, the Board selected Herenga ā Nuku – Aotearoa as its preferred option, out of 5 potential names. Minister Whaitiri endorsed this name on 2 November 2021. The Commission has also advised the Iwi Leaders Forum of the choice and sought its endorsement.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the communications and partnerships update.

Moved H Allison **Seconded** D Cameron **Carried**

14. Te Araroa update

R Cullinane gave an update on Te Araroa for November 2021.

Interviews for the Executive Director – Te Araroa role have been conducted, and a preferred candidate has accepted the role and will start in January 2022.

The board discussed setting time aside at a future meeting for an in-depth discussion on the future of the Memorandum of Understanding and partnership with Te Araroa Trust. The first board-to-board meeting with Te Araroa Trust Board was held in July. It is intended that these meetings will occur every 6 months, where possible.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** Te Araroa update report for November 2021.
- b. **noted** further board discussion on the future of the Memorandum of Understanding and partnership with Te Araroa Trust is needed.

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

15. Planning for the budget bid

P Culling updated the Board on progress on the upcoming budget bid.

The Board noted that the Commission's baseline funding remains unchanged at \$1.789 million per annum, and there will be a \$1.807 million per annum funding cliff if budget bid is unsuccessful.

The Board discussed the need to provide a clear narrative to Ministers and other decision makers, emphasising the Commission's role supporting physical and mental health, economic recovery, resilience, equity of access for iwi and educational opportunities.

The budget bid should reflect the current COVID-19 environment where possible.

Resolved: The Board

- a. **supported** the budget bid scenario.
- b. **noted** the planning that is underway.
- c. **directed** senior management to consider the Minister's comments while preparing the budget bid.
- d. **requested** that an updated budget narrative be circulated to the Board for comment.
- e. **directed** staff to work with the Minister's office to organise a meeting at Parliament.

Moved C Wade-Brown **Seconded** H Mexted **Carried**

Part C

16. Significant correspondence

Resolved: The Board

- a. **noted** the communication regarding the Public Service Pay Gaps Actions Plan, dated October 2021.

17. Other Business

COVID-19 update

H Mexted gave an update on COVID-19 health planning that is happening. The Board noted the government's shift away from elimination towards resilience, and the importance of having as many people as possible vaccinated prior to shift to the traffic light system.

Parliamentary Expo

The Board discussed planning for the potential meeting at Parliament with other Ministers. Key messages should be made clearly and repeatedly. The Board will be regularly updated on the planning and messaging for the meeting.

18. Closing comments

The chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The Board expressed its appreciation for the quality of the Board papers and the resources provided for the meeting with Minister Whaitiri.

H Allison and P Henare noted that they were unsure if their terms would be extended, and in the case that this was their last board meeting, extended their thanks for the time on the board. Both greatly enjoyed being on the board and appreciated the support provided by staff during their tenure.

P Henare closed the meeting with a karakia.

19. Next meeting

The next Board meeting is currently scheduled for 22-23 February 2022 in Wellington.

This may be moved to coincide with the opening of the Invercargill to Bluff section of Te Araroa. If this happens, then the next would meeting would be in March 2022 in Invercargill, exact dates to be decided.

The meeting closed at 1.45pm.

D Cameron

Board chair