

MINUTES
NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING
5 October 2017
Wellington

Board Members: J Forbes (chair), P Mudford, B Stuart and R McNeill.

In attendance: E Pyle (chief executive), R Cullinane (operations manager), P Culling (corporate services manager), A Wilson-Goldman (communications manager).

Opening Comments

The meeting commenced at 12:30pm

The Chair welcomed Board members and staff and opened the meeting with a karakia.

1. Apologies

An apology was received from P Brown.

Action: The Board

- a) **accepted** the apology for absence from P Brown.

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

Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts were declared.

Confirm Agenda

The Board confirmed the agenda for the meeting.

Moved R McNeill **Seconded** B Stuart **Carried**

2. Confirm Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held in Wellington on 27 July 2017 were circulated and read.

Action: The Board

- a) **confirmed** the minutes of the 27 July 2017 meeting as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

Moved R McNeill **Seconded** B Stuart **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 October 2017.

The chief executive's report covered a range of issues including an update on the projects the Commission is currently working on - South Island High Country, Puhoi-Warkworth-Matakana, Ruahines, Upper North Island, Central North Island and the Marlborough/Kaikoura road re-build.

E Pyle reported that the annual audit of the Commission's 2016-2017 financial year had been completed by Audit New Zealand who required a change to the draft annual report previously circulated to the Board. The required change was that compensation due from the New Zealand Transport Agency be accounted for in the 2016-2017 financial year. The Board agreed to accept Audit New Zealand's advice on the accounting treatment of the compensation.

E Pyle reported on the significant implications of the Matakana Trails Trust environment court decision which requires subdivisions under the Auckland Unitary Plan to have an integrated transport plan that must address connectivity including walking and cycling.

The Board noted that the chief executive had attended the Ernst and Young, Darden entrepreneurship course, and that a fuller report on this would be tabled in the future.

Action: The Board

- a) **discussed** the chief executive's report for October 2017.

Moved P Mudford **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

4. South Island High Country Access Project

A Wilson-Goldman gave a presentation on the South Island High Country access project, outlining the key themes from his meetings in Christchurch, the Mackenzie Basin, Ohau, Dunedin, Waitaki, Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago.

The Commission's work has highlighted the significance of growing tourism and the pressure it put on communities especially around local infrastructure. The Chair proposed the Commission approach Local Government via the regular Zone 5&6 meetings with a recommendation that a working party be formed to address this growing issue.

The Board

- a) **acknowledged** the presentation and discussed the key points it contained.

5. Coronet Peak Station easements – survey costs

R Cullinane advised the Board that the Commission will likely be responsible for the survey costs for walkway easements on Coronet Peak Station as a consequence of decisions made by the Overseas Investment Office in 2010. The costs were expected to be between \$50k and \$80k.

The Board

- a) **noted** that the Commission is likely to be liable for the easement costs.
- b) **directed** management to inform the Board only if the expected costs varied significantly from those anticipated.

Moved R McNeill **Seconded** B Stuart **Carried**

6. Access culture and heritage

E Pyle presented a paper that characterised access culture in the 21st century and identified some of the implications this had for the Commission’s work.

A wide-ranging discussion took place that included early settlers to New Zealand, historical practical access of getting from one place to another, military tracks, Murihiku migrations, recreational walks to iconic scenic locations and the role of the initial Walkways Commission.

The board agreed that access needed to be considered from an economic viewpoint such as increasing tourism numbers, infrastructure needs funding, and regional development.

The Board

- a) **noted** and discussed the paper on access culture and heritage.

Moved B Stuart **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

7. Walking Access Strategy 2017-2022

A Wilson-Goldman presented an updated Walking Access Strategy.

Some minor editorial changes were required to the narrative including a look at the connection of Māori to their awa (river). Some wording to the actual strategy and priority of projects, uses and benefits was discussed. An English vision statement was discussed to complement the Māori te mauri o te hīkoi statement. Journeys across our Land had general agreement.

The Board

- a) **approved** the Walking Access Strategy 2017 – 2022 subject to changes discussed and agreed at the meeting to be incorporated into the Strategy.

Moved R McNeill **Seconded** J Forbes **Carried**

8. Review of the Walking Access Commission Act

E Pyle advised the Board that over the next few Board meetings a set of papers would be presented outlining the Commission's achievements and future direction. These papers would help form the basis for the Commission's input into the review's terms of reference.

The Walking Access Act 2008 requires the Minister to formally review the Act as soon as is reasonably practicable after the expiry of the period of 10 years from the commencement of this Act; 29 September 2018. It is the Minister's responsibility to prepare the terms of reference for a review of the Act, after consultation with the Commission.

The first paper in this set was presented to the Board and it outlined the history of the Commission including its creation and its predecessors; the 1975 Walkways Commission and 1990 New Zealand Walkways Act.

The Board discussed the paper and indicated that it would also like to see issues such as tourism and the economy addressed. This would help highlight the pressures on access in terms of people numbers, funding and infrastructure. The Board also agreed that the Commission's Statement of Intent should have a close alignment with the issues being raised as part of the review process.

The Board

- a) **discussed** the Review of the Walking Access Act and agreed with the approach being taken along with some changes from the meeting.

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

9. Walking Access Awards

A Wilson-Goldman presented a paper outlining some options for the Walking Access Awards. It was recognised by the Board that the awards were valuable and well received. A key issue is the process of awarding the awards – in front of the local community, at an event in Wellington or both.

Board comments focused on the need to acknowledge award recipients in front of their local communities, to focus on the good work that was being done across New Zealand and where possible to have a good geographic balance. The Board also considered there to be positive aspects of a Wellington event in relation to relationships with other Wellington-based organisations. The Board considered the advantages and disadvantages of the options for presenting the awards.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** to delegate to the chief executive and chairman the timing and logistics of the Walking Access Awards.

Moved P Mudford **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

10. Annual Report 2016-2017

A Wilson-Goldman and P Culling presented the Board with the audited Annual Report for the financial year 2016-2017.

P Culling advised the Board that Audit NZ had completed their review of the Commission's financial statements and performance information and had confirmed that there were no issues of audit significance. The draft management letter as per the Audit Arrangement Letter is not due until 23 October 2017 and the Commission's audit opinion date is 31 October 2017. It is expected that audit clearance will be received prior to 23 October 2017.

P Culling explained that the only significant change to the draft annual report previously circulated to the Board was that the auditors required the \$800,000 compensation due from the New Zealand Transport Agency resulting from the Moir's Hill Walkway revocation to be included in the 2016-2017 financial statements. After some discussion the Board decided that the accounting treatment required by the auditors was acceptable¹.

Action: The Board

- a) **approved** the Commission's Annual Report for period ending 30 June 2017.
- b) **agreed** that the J Forbes (chair) and P Mudford co-sign the 2016-2017 Annual Report, statement of responsibility, financial statements and letter of representation for, and on behalf of the Board.

Moved B Stuart **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

11. Statement of Intent 2018-2022

E Pyle informed the Board that the Commission must prepare a new Statement of Intent (SOI) in the first quarter of 2018. The SOI sets out the Commission's direction and what the Commission hopes to achieve. In practical terms the SOI sets out; what we do, why we do it and how well we intend to do it.

The paper's goal was to start the conversation about the focus and content of the Statement of Intent.

Seven areas of focus were outlined in the paper and these were considered by the Board.

In a wide-ranging discussion, the Board outlined its views including the need to focus on the reason for the Commission's existence, the importance of accurate data and information, the benefits of having a Commission, the importance of good relationships with key stakeholders particularly landholders, the wider role of access to include

¹ Subsequent to the board meeting the Auditors confirmed that the \$800,000 should be included in the 2016/17 financial year on the basis that the Moirs Hill Walkway was closed on 9th December 2016 to enable preparatory work for the Puhoi-Warkworth motorway.

urban growth, managing the impact of tourism, and the concept of access being a ribbon across the land.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** that the areas of focus for the upcoming Statement of Intent, as outlined in the paper were appropriate, subject to points raised at the meeting.

Moved P Mudford **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

12. Digital Strategy

A Wilson-Goldman gave the Board a further presentation on the proposed digital strategy/web presence for the Commission focusing on three aspects of improved web presence; content for landholders, content for trail building community groups and the use of social media.

The new web presence will likely take several months to build and will require outside technical expertise to complete. The proposed launch of the new website is set down for mid-2018.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** with the Commission's continuing work on its approach to creating a digital strategy.

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

13. Proposal for a Rodney Access Partnership Strategy

B Jenkins (policy and partnerships advisor) updated the Board on the proposed partnership agreement between the Commission, Department of Conservation and the Auckland City Council to manage the delivery of a trail network strategy in the Rodney area of Auckland.

E Pyle advised the Board that the formal agreement between the Commission, the NZ Transport Agency and Department of Conservation had been signed on 12 September 2017 and that \$800,000 would be received by the Commission as compensation in mid-October².

It was agreed that there were a significant number of issues that needed to be addressed with the project's proposed three-year work programme. These included the recruitment of a suitably qualified person to successfully manage the project to completion and logistical arrangements with the Auckland City Council.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** to invest the \$800,000 compensation money in the work programme.

² Subsequent to the board meeting payment was received on 9th October.

- b) **agreed** in principle to the partnership with DOC and the Auckland Council.
- c) **agreed** to staff progressing the partnership agreement and the programme.
- d) **noted** that the Board would sign-off the partnership agreement in due course.

Moved R McNeill **Seconded** B Stuart **Carried**

14. Outdoors forum, regional fora and a national trail leaders group

E Pyle spoke to the Board about a new model for the Commission and the NZ Recreation Association that would facilitate working more closely together and with others in the sector with an objective of improving connections across the outdoors sector.

The issues involved included; costs associated with forums, where the forums would be held, national versus local forums, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that management intends to focus on regional trail leaders' forums in the upcoming year.
- b) **noted** that management does not intend continuing to sponsor the Outdoors Forum in its current format.
- c) **agreed** that the Commission should scope and report back to the Board on a national trail leaders group.
- d) **agreed** that the Commission explore the concept of a periodic outdoor recreation summit.

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** Penny Mudford **Carried**

15. Commissions Values

E Pyle outlined the Commission's proposed values to the Board.

The compilation of the list of values arose from an exercise undertaken by Commission staff, regional field advisors and the Board. The Board suggested weaving in the concepts of commitment, innovation, collaboration and service.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that management had ran an exercise with the Board, staff and regional field advisors to identify the Commission's values.
- b) **agreed** with the Commissions values as outlined in the report subject to the points raised at the Board meeting.

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

16. Controlling Authority for Walkways

E Pyle presented a paper that sought approval from the Board for the Commission to become a Controlling Authority in specific situations and then closing the walkway pending its development. The effect would be that the Commission would be able to assume the role of a Controlling Authority for a walkway as the need arose until such time as the walkway could be developed

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that the Commission risks losing access opportunities associated with Overseas Investment Office properties where it cannot find a controlling authority.
- b) **noted** that there can be a misalignment between the Commission's long-term view on access and the shorter-term views on access that public bodies and community groups have.
- c) **noted** that the Board agreed to the Commission becoming a controlling authority in exceptional circumstances at its December 2016 Board meeting.
- d) **agreed** that the Commission will assume the controlling authority role for walkways in the absence of another public body doing so, and will close the walkway to the public until such time as the walkway can be formed, marked managed and maintained by a third party.
- e) **delegates** to the chief executive the decision on the Commission becoming the controlling authority and closing the associated walkway.
- f) **directs** the chief executive to inform the Board whenever this mechanism is used.

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

17. Budget/Statement of Performance Expectations

P Culling informed the Board of the approach being followed in preparing the Commission's draft budgets for the next five years. It is the intention once the budget has been reviewed and approved by the Board it will form the basis of the forecast financial statements to be included in the upcoming 2019-2023 Statement of Performance Expectations.

The paper outlined the proposed increase in total expenditure and resulting deficit over each of the next five years. The proposed increase included; creation of a digital strategy, move to office 365/share-point, regional meetings, staff recruitment and regional field advisor activities. It also made allowance for the \$800,000 to be received from the New Zealand Transport Agency for the Moir's Hill Walkway revocation and the expenditure associated with this project.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** with the overall approach taken in preparing the forecast financial statements for the Commission's Statement of Performance Expectations.

Moved R McNeill **Seconded** J Forbes **Carried**

18. Quarterly Report 1 April to 30 June 2017

The completed Quarterly Report to June 2017 was given to the Board for information.

Action: The Board

a) **noted** the completed Quarterly Report to June 2017.

19. Significant correspondence

Inwards

There was no significance correspondence.

20. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held in Auckland on 21-22 November 2017.
Venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 2.30pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Forbes', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

J Forbes
Chairperson

