

**MINUTES**  
**NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION MEETING**  
**1:00pm, 17 November 2014**  
**StoneBridge Function Venue**  
**Geraldine**

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

**In attendance:** M Neeson (Chief Executive), R Cullinane (Operations Manager), D Knott (Corporate Services Manager) and G Holgate (Regional Field Advisor).

**Opening Comments**

The Chair welcomed attendees and invited Peter Brown to open the meeting with a karakia.

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**Conflicts of Interest**

There were no conflicts advised.

**Confirm Agenda**

The board confirmed the Agenda for the meeting.

**2. Confirm Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held in Wellington on 29 September 2014 were circulated and read. There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

**Action: The Board**

- a) **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting of 29 September 2014 as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

**Moved** M Bayfield      **Seconded** B Stephenson      **Carried**

**3. Priorities and implications (in confidence)**

The board discussed a report on policy matters arising in respect of operational priorities and funding implications. A supplementary paper was presented by M Neeson for clarification. The board noted that the context for the paper was to assist in the drafting of performance measures and the Commission's objectives and budget for the next four years.

The board noted that the Commission has fixed revenue from the Crown of \$1.789 million and that there are clear messages from the government that it expects cost savings by agencies and for agencies to manage within budget despite cost pressures and increasing expectations. There are no indications of any additional funding from the Crown in the medium term, and the Commission has not identified any third party funding opportunities.

**Action:** The Board:

- a) **discussed** the matter of balancing and determining Commission priorities;
- b) **agreed** that the draft letter to the Minister on strategic intent, the review of performance measures and the Commission's budget for 2015-2019 be amended and/or developed consistent with the board's discussion.

**Moved** M Bayfield      **Seconded** P Brown      **Carried**

In regard to the supplementary paper, the Board:

- c) **agreed** to the reallocation of funds in the 2014-2015 financial year, but noted that further information is required on WAMS server upgrade, particularly around ongoing annual costs, before a decision can be made;
- d) **agreed** to proposals and indicative costs for budget development and forecast purposes;
- e) **agreed** not to approve new grants from the Enhanced Access Fund for 2015-2016, but that the chief executive may continue making discretionary payments for projects to a maximum of \$20,000 per annum, with any one project payment not exceeding \$5,000, and
- f) **agreed** to review of the Enhanced Access Fund before May 2015.

**Moved** P Mudford      **Seconded** M Bayfield      **Carried**

#### 4. **Walkways and controlling authorities**

The board discussed a report on policy matters arising in respect of appointing controlling authorities for walkways, policy preferences, and whether to review the current Walkways Policy.

M Neeson advised that the statutory mechanisms for securing enduring access are limited and walkways are one way of achieving this. Access secured, for example, under the Overseas Investment Act processes, is often in the form of walkways which may be in isolated areas with future potential. The Commission cannot expect territorial authorities to pick up controlling authority responsibilities whenever the Commission decides to seek new access either on its own initiative or arising from Overseas Investment Office conditions or from a community project.

The following options were discussed by the board:

The option of the Commission accepting easements in gross that are not walkway easements avoids the restriction on the appointment of controlling authorities being required to be public bodies but potentially increases the liability of the Commission

and loses the statutory regime that applies to walkways, including the offence provisions. The Commission would remain responsible for any establishment costs and for maintenance, and would be directly responsible for the behaviour of users of the access who would be deemed invitees of the Commission.

The option of providing funding to a walkway controlling authority to carry out its functions, even if the commitment is for a limited period. The board noted that this option is constrained by the Commission's available funding.

The option of the Commission accepting the role of controlling authority itself in circumstances where a community organisation is prepared to fund and maintain the walkway. The Commission would delegate to the community organisation the practical administration of the walkway but would still be responsible for the statutory powers that are exercisable by a controlling authority. There would need to be a carefully drawn contract between the Commission and the controlling authority.

Until the policy is reviewed formally next year, the board's preference is for the current policy to remain in effect, with an escalation procedure. For example, the chairman advised that he would be willing to discuss any specific problem with the relevant local authority should it be helpful.

The board noted the cost implications of the options and recommended that staff also consider the possibility of regional councils becoming controlling authorities.

**Action:** The Board:

- a) **noted** the challenge in securing controlling authorities that are prepared to meet the costs of establishing and maintaining walkways; and
- b) **discussed** three options;
- c) **indicated** its preference for the current policy to remain in effect, pending further consideration, and
- d) **agreed** to defer the review of the Walkways policy until November 2015.

**Moved** M Bayfield      **Seconded** P Brown      **Carried**

## 5. **New access**

The board discussed a report on the definition of, emphasis on, priority to be given to, and options for, obtaining "new access".

M Neeson advised that there is no compelling reason to change the Commission's current approach - that is, for the purposes of achieving new access, it achieves this mainly through influencing and assisting others.

The board noted that "new access" is embedded in the Commission's functions and includes achieving it through others and by collaboration and support. The board considered the following set of priorities as its preferred current approach to obtaining new access: to promote and foster new access through its leadership function; to encourage and assist third parties to create new access through its Enhanced Access Fund, information and advice; and, as appropriate, to lead and co-ordinate projects which will lead to new and improved access at a regional or cross-regional level.

The board agreed that that the Commission's current priority is to pursue new access at the strategic rather than operational levels. It noted that there may be exceptional situations that require financial assistance, and the board will consider those on a case by case basis.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **discussed** how the Commission might achieve new access, and
- b) **agreed** a preferred approach to be reflected in the Statement of Performance Expectations for 2015 and out-years.

**Moved** P Mudford      **Seconded** M Bayfield      **Carried**

## 6. **Strategic intentions (2015-2019) and Statement of Performance Expectations (2015-2016)**

The board discussed a report on the Commission's strategic intentions for 2015-2019, and the draft letter to the Minister regarding the Commission's strategic intentions.

M Neeson advised the board that the Commission has 17 performance measures spread across outputs of strengthening access culture and heritage, and enhancing access opportunities, and 5 input measures. This number and range of performance measures is not manageable or achievable with current resources and workload.

The board noted that final performance measures and the letter to the Minister would also be influenced by the outcome of earlier discussions on priorities and implications, and new access (Agenda items 3 and 5).

**Action:** The Board

- a) **approved** the release, following inclusion of Board comments, of the proposed letter to the Minister, and
- b) **noted** the need to reduce the number and range of performance measures in the Statement of Performance Expectations for 2015-2019.

**Moved** P Brown      **Seconded** M Bayfield      **Carried**

## 7. **Risk management**

The board reviewed the risk management register.

M Neeson advised that the risks have been revised considerably since the August board meeting and, as a new baseline is being set, comparisons have not been made. This new approach reflects the discussion at the May board meeting which noted the need to consider risks at a higher level than that used previously. The new schedule of risks also incorporates those high level risks listed in the Statement of Intent 2014-2018.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **received** the risk report for November 2014.

## 8. IT risk assessment

The board discussed a report on a risk assessment of the Commission's information technology (IT) systems.

The objectives were to conduct a high-level assessment of information security and privacy practices and controls within the Commission, and to identify any gaps and residual risks.

The scope of the work included the Walking Access Mapping System and Both Sides of the Fence web sites, and the Commission's internal records management system. Overall, the review concluded that, there were controls in place to manage information security risks, and no major gaps were identified in the Commission's IT environment.

The board was pleased that the report showed no major gaps or risks in the Commission's information technology systems.

The board advised that its expectations and priorities, at the governance level, were: that the Walking Access Mapping System not to be down frequently, a low appetite for breaches of privacy, to avoid and/or minimise the risk of damage arising from malicious software or viruses, and having adequate and appropriate financial controls and security.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **confirmed** its expectations in the way the Commission manages its information management systems;
- b) **approved** the proposed projects to develop and document IT management policies and processes and notes that completion is subject to capacity constraints,
- c) **noted**, that the report showed no major gaps or risks in the Commission's information technology systems, and
- d) **agreed** to have training for board and staff in the management of information technology systems.

**Moved**    M Bayfield                      **Seconded**                      J Forbes                      **Carried**

## 9. J H Aspinall scholarship

The board discussed a paper regarding the creation of a scholarship to honour the contributions of John Aspinall and the Aspinall family to public access in New Zealand. The scholarship will help raise awareness of a niche topic amongst tertiary students and staff, and generate more interest in the links between urban and rural New Zealand.

Universities New Zealand drafted a set of regulations to manage the scholarship. The scholarship will be promoted through Universities New Zealand and the Commission's own media channels.

The board confirmed the need for a research strategy as noted in an earlier paper in August 2014 with examples being gaps in our knowledge about access, undertaking a

comparative study of access arrangements overseas, the amount of new access being created in New Zealand and public perceptions about access.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **approved** the creation of, and regulations for, a scholarship to honour the memory of John Aspinall and the Aspinall family and encourage academic interest in access;
- b) **confirmed** the need for a research strategy as noted in an earlier paper in August 2014, and
- c) **agreed** that the scholarship be announced following the board meeting on 17 November and through a structured media programme.

**Moved** M Bayfield      **Seconded** B Stephenson      **Carried**

## 10. Enhanced Access Fund – Round 2

The board discussed a paper regarding applications for tranche 2 of the 2014 fund round, and the panel's observations on the applications to date and the four tranche approach.

The board noted that the number and type of applications being received, and the increasing pressure on available staff and regional field advisor resources in the administration of each tranche, that four tranches may not be an efficient approach going forward. This will be included in the review of the Enhanced Access Fund this financial year.

D Knott reported that there were 6 applications for grants as at the closing date for 2014 tranche 2. A panel, consisting of Board members M Bayfield and P Mudford and Commission employees R Cullinane and D Knott, had reviewed all applications and recommended three for board consideration.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **approved** funding for three applications for tranche 2, for a total of up to \$23,900 (excluding GST);
- b) **agreed** that the chief executive advises each applicant of the Board's decision and invites 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 decisions;
- e) **agreed** to bring forward the review of the Enhanced Access Fund to the 2014-2015 financial year with the objective of a report before May 2015; and
- f) **noted** that, in accordance with his delegated authority, the chief executive made a discretionary payment from the Enhanced Access Fund for \$862.50.

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

## 11. Board policy – Code of conduct

The board reviewed a code of conduct policy. The original policy was approved in July 2009. The code is a guide for the Chairman and the board as to the manner in which they are expected to conduct themselves in their capacity as board members in their dealings with each other, Commission staff, and the public.

Significant changes in the revised policy include alignment to recent changes to the Gift policy, changes to documentation for the declaration of interests, and setting the review date to every 3 years, or as agreed by the board.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **approved** the Code of Conduct Policy (2014 version).

**Moved** J Forbes **Seconded** B Stephenson **Carried**

## 12. First quarter report

M Neeson advised the board that the Quarterly report for the period ended 30 September 2014 had been sent to the Minister.

The Board noted that there were no new cases of major significance during the period, and that operations staff were actively reviewing the number of cases under action to address the actual performance measure substantially exceeding target.

P Mudford noted the increasing trend in active 'other type' cases. R Cullinane responded that many new cases were tending to be more complex and time consuming, and Overseas Investment Act cases alone were now consuming approximately 20% of total available regional field advisor time. Given the increasing complexity and number of Overseas Investment Act cases, the number of cases yet to be closed target may require revision for the 2015-2016 performance measures.

Financially, the Commission was in surplus for the quarter, but as noted earlier in the Priorities and Implications (Agenda item 3) discussion and in the following Operations report (Agenda item 14) that addressing resource constraints, and the deferral of work from the first quarter, the outlook for the year is unchanged from the Statement of Performance Expectations.

The Enhanced Access Fund recorded income of \$22,000 for the quarter, and had paid \$750 in grants, and \$45,000 on board approved projects for communications and the walking access mapping system upgrade.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **confirmed** the Commission's Quarterly Report for the period ending 30 September 2014.

**Moved** P Brown      **Seconded** M Bayfield      **Carried**

### 13. Chief executive's report

The board received the chief executive's report for November 2014.

The board noted that the Commission had submitted a draft access easement to the Commissioner of Crown Lands regarding walkway easements on Coronet Peak and Glencoe, in early September, and that it had not received a response. M Neeson undertook to monitor the situation, and keep the board apprised of any developments in this case.

M Neeson reported that arrangements for the both sides of the fence web site "Top Spot" competition were progressing satisfactorily with recent support from Farmside and Skellerup.

The board noted the resignations of J Wauchop and N Beggs from their roles as regional field advisors. The chairman advised that he would write to J Wauchop and N Beggs expressing the board's appreciation for their work and best wishes for the future.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **received** the Chief Executive's report for November 2014.

### 14. Operations report

The board received the operations report for the quarter ended 30 September 2014.

R Cullinane reported that staff and regional field advisor case loads were beginning to exceed capacity. There were 10 Overseas Investment Act cases opened during the month, bringing the total number of active Overseas Investment Act cases to 80 as at 30 September. In total, there were 290 open cases at quarter end, well exceeding the target of 100 in the Statement of Performance Expectations.

The Board acknowledged the work by Steven Lau (GIS Advisor) and R Cullinane in ensuring that the walking access mapping system 10.2 upgrade project was successfully completed on time, and within budget.

The Board noted that two regional field advisors had resigned their contracts. R Cullinane reported that, consistent with the discussion in Agenda item 3, plans were being prepared to address regional field advisor workloads, and this included obtaining additional resources, initially for the next two years, and a review of all open cases.

R Cullinane responded to questions on the three cases noted in his report: Coronet and Glencoe - Overseas Investment Office Trails, Lake Sumner road access, and Forest Creek – Rangitata River.

**Action:** The Board

- a) **noted** the operations quarterly report for the period 1 July to 30 September 2014;



- b) **noted** that resources are increasingly being consumed by Overseas Investment Act applications, and
- c) **noted** the identified cases and proposed actions.

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

## 15. Schedule of Significant Correspondence

**Action:** The Board noted the schedule of significant correspondence.

## 16 Board Meeting dates 2015

The following dates were agreed for meetings in 2015, venues to be advised:  
February – 25<sup>th</sup> (arrive), 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>  
April – 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>  
May – 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>  
August – 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>  
September – 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>  
November – 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>

All meetings are scheduled for two days to allow for arrival and departure arrangements.

The Chair invited Peter Brown to conclude the meeting with a karakia.

**Meeting closed 4:35pm**



J Forbes  
Chairperson

## Notes

1. The Board held a workshop to discuss agenda items, throughout the morning.
2. The Board hosted a forum (10:15am – 11:15am) for representatives of local government and the Department of Conservation.
3. The Board hosted a forum (5:00pm – 6:30pm) for representatives of local government, interested parties and recreational groups.
4. The Board hosted a dinner for John and Rosemary Acland and representatives from the High Country committee of Federated Farmers NZ at which Mr and Mrs Acland were given an award by the Chairman for their contributions to access in New Zealand.

