MINUTES

NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION MEETING

1:00pm, 29 September 2014

Revera House

Thorndon

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

In attendance: M Neeson (Chief Executive), R Cullinane (Operations Manager) and D Knott (Corporate Services Manager).

Opening Comments

The Chair welcomed attendees.

1. Apologies

Peter Brown

Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts advised.

Confirm Agenda

The board confirmed the Agenda for the meeting.

2. Confirm Minutes

The draft Minutes of the meeting held in Wellington on 4 August 2014 were circulated and read. There were no matters arising from the Minutes. Mr Stephenson noted an error in Item 11 - the words "Official Information Office" should be replaced by "Overseas Investment Office"

Action: The Board

a) **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting of 4 August 2014, with an amendment to Item 11, as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

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

3. Annual Report 2013-2014

At its August 2014 meeting the Board approved, in principle, the draft annual report. Following that meeting, staff worked with M Bayfield to finalise the narrative and a penultimate draft was circulated to board members for any final comments. The Board noted editorial changes to the narrative section, and requested additional wording in the Governance section. The Board agreed that the Annual Report be finalised, printed and delivered to the Minister's office for presentation to Parliament.

Action: The Board:

a) **approved** the Commission's Annual Report for the period ending 30 June 2014, and

b) **approved** J Forbes and M Bayfield signing the Annual Report and Statement of Responsibility for, and on behalf of, the Board.

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

4. Audit NZ

The Chair welcomed Clare Helm (Audit Director) and Zirus Zuber (Audit Manager) from Audit New Zealand, and Dr Mark Evans (Sector Manager) from the Office of the Auditor-General.

C Helm reported that Audit New Zealand had completed its review of the draft annual report and would be issuing an unqualified audit opinion. Audit New Zealand had noted in its Management Report to the Board that improvements to the statement of service performance were desirable but, nevertheless, they had improved from the previous year and had retained a "good" rating. The ratings for the management control environment, and financial information systems and controls, retained their "very good" ratings. C Helm asked the Board to sign a Letter of Representation from the Commission to Audit New Zealand in respect of the audit.

C Helm recommended that the Commission develop a policy to cover the management of contractors, including regional field advisors.

Dr Evans provided an overview of the Office of the Auditor-General's Annual Plan - 2014-2015. The audit theme for 2014-2015 will be Governance and Accountability, followed by Investment and Asset Management in 2015-2016, and Information in 2016-2017.

Action: The Board:

a) **approved** J Forbes and M Bayfield signing the Letter of Representation for the period ending 30 June 2014, for, and on behalf of, the Board

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

5. Post-election briefing (in confidence)

The board reviewed and discussed a draft post-election briefing for the incoming Minister. The Board agreed that the chairman write separately to the Minister with observations concerning the policy to purchase land adjoining waterways.

Action: The Board

a) **approved,** with amendments, the draft post-election briefing for the incoming Minister.

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

6. New access

The Board reviewed a paper on “new access”. The purpose of this paper was to gather board views so that a further paper could be presented to the November 2014 meeting for a wider discussion and consolidation of the Commission’s direction and development of a policy regarding new access.

Board members suggested that the revised paper comment on new access measured by territorial authorities and Land Information New Zealand, the role of controlling authorities including funding, the degree of influencing vis-à-vis directly arranging new access, what is feasible for the Commission to do itself, what might be achieved through partnerships, and consider the balance between current opportunities and future demand (a strategic approach)

The Board asked that the subsequent paper cover options and implications and a possible set of “core principles”.

Action: The Board

a) **discussed** approaches to, and options for, achieving new access and noted that a further paper would be prepared for its meeting in November 2014.

7. Survey results: 2014

The board reviewed a paper on two surveys (Corporate website, and the Walking Access Mapping System website) and a “meta-analysis” undertaken in 2014.

The results show that there is room for the Commission to play a more prominent role in facilitating increased walking access to the outdoors in New Zealand and that the Commission is performing at a high level in delivering an online walking access mapping system (WAMS) that is largely meeting users’ needs and expectations.

However, the low and unchanged awareness of the Commission suggests that the Commission’s focus on WAMS has been at the expense of other broader goals such as raising awareness and communicating with the public generally and that addressing this situation is a significant programme of work for the next few years. M Bayfield noted that the Board’s approval to spend EAF monies on an expanded communications programme, including the new addition of the social media initiative, will hopefully increase awareness of the Commission and subsequent surveys will show an improvement in this regard.

The most common suggested improvements for the desktop version of WAMS were to make it faster and more user friendly, and to provide more detailed public access information. The Board noted that staff is responding to these concerns, including improving the speed of loading, with practical fixes over the short to medium term.

Staff intend to brief the Board in November on a proposed “WAMS 3” project which would begin in early 2015. This project reflects the decision taken in August 2013 to begin reviewing the next phase of WAMS development in 2015 and a user reference/advisory group will be established as future enhancements need to reflect user requirements.

Action: The Board

a) **noted** the findings of the 2014 Corporate and WAMS user surveys and meta-analysis of surveys;

b) **noted** the management response to concerns about improving the functionality of WAMS, and

c) **noted** that a user reference group will be established as part of the work programmed for 2015 to investigate the next set of enhancements to WAMS.

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

8. NZWAC social media policy

The board reviewed and discussed a paper on a proposed Social Media Policy, incorporating a Social Media Strategy.

The Commission's intention to reach new audiences, and to engage with the public generally about access, necessitates using social media as part of its communications programme. Social media will help the Commission to amplify the effectiveness of other communications and should work in harmony with them. The entrance in to, and the board's aims and reasons for, social media are contained in the Social Media Strategy 2014-2018.

Action: The Board

a) **noted** that the board approved a Social Media Strategy 2014-2018 in August 2014;

b) **agreed** that the Commission begin engaging on Facebook and Twitter from early November 2014;

c) **noted** that the annual cost of doing so is estimated at $16,000 per annum, and

d) **noted** that, initially, the social media programme will be moderated by the Commission's external communications advisor, with additional input from the chief executive, and gradually brought "in-house".

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

9. Schedule of Significant Correspondence

Action: The Board noted the schedule of significant correspondence.

Meeting closed 3:55pm

John [signature]

J Forbes
Chairperson