

MINUTES

NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION MEETING 8:30am 16 February 2010

Armstrong Room, Lake Wanaka Conference Centre Wanaka

Board Members: J Acland (Chairman), J Aspinall, K Booth, P Brown, M Bayfield, J Forbes, B Stephenson, B Stuart.

In attendance: M Neeson (Chief Executive), P Litras and C Bell

Opening Comments

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

Conflict of Interest Register

No conflicts of interest were declared.

Confirm Agenda

The Board confirmed the Agenda for the meeting. Mr Acland noted an item for general business.

2. Chief Executive's Report

The Board welcomed the Chief Executive's written report and confirmed that it should feature as a regular item on the agenda and be distributed with the board papers.

The Chairman advised that the terms of two board members would cease in April and that he would discuss board membership with the Minister.

The Board discussed the need to widen the group of stakeholders it had been traditionally engaged with.

Kay Booth asked for progress on the request for a paper on risk management for the mapping system project.

The Board asked for advice relating to the term "best endeavours".

The Board discussed the process by which the Commission might manage disputes. The Chief Executive advised that this was being considered by staff and that he would discuss it with the Board.

Action: The Board agreed to receive the Chief Executive's Report for the period ending 11 February 2010.

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** K Booth **Carried**

3. Quarterly Report to the Minister (to 31 December 2009)

The Board asked that in future these reports have a cover note detailing the action required of the Board.

Action: The Board received the December Quarterly Report to the Minister.

Moved J Aspinall **Seconded** B Stuart **Carried**

4. National Walking Access Strategy Framework and Outdoor Access Code

An update on the draft strategy framework and the Outdoor Access Code had been provided at the Board's workshop held on Monday 15 February.

The draft strategy and the draft code had been released for consultation on 30 September 2009 by the Minister of Agriculture. Written submissions were called for from the public and interested parties. The submission period closed on 18 December 2009.

A total of 70 submissions were received on the Code and the draft Strategy. The Board asked to see all the submissions and the analysis at their next Board meeting.

The Board were asked to forward any interim comments on the draft strategy to the Chief Executive.

The Board will be considering a final draft of the strategy and the code at their March meeting.

5. Meeting with the Minister

The Board had received earlier a copy of the letter to the Minister of Agriculture on the Commission's proposed strategic direction. The letter was to inform the meeting between the Chairman and the Minister on Thursday 18 February. Mr Forbes advised that he was available to join the Chairman at the meeting; his offer was accepted.

6. The Contestable Fund

The Board discussed a revised paper on the contestable fund. Amendments were made, including providing for an eight week application process and naming the fund the 'Enhanced Access Fund'.

Mr Forbes proposed that the Commission explore the possibility of leveraging the fund through corporate and other sponsorship especially while the fund had a substantial base amount. The board asked for a paper on this proposal.

Action: Following discussion the Board:

- a. **noted** that the Commission has the function of administering a contestable fund under Section 10 (1) (h) of the New Zealand Walking Access Act 2008.

- b. **agreed** that the quantum of the Enhanced Access Fund (the fund) be \$200,000 for 2009/10.
- c. **agreed** that the Commission would have one funding round a year.
- d. **agreed** to call for applications in March 2010 with allocations made by May 2010.
- e. **agreed** that the priorities for the fund are:
 - 1) addressing existing access problems including the resolution of disputes and allied activities such as signage;
 - 2) negotiating retention of existing access, or obtaining new access, including walkways; and
 - 3) supporting community access projects and needs (e.g. responding to visitor demand from outside the area).
- f. **agreed** that to leverage contributions from the fund applicants will require support from other interested parties (either monetary or in kind)
- g. **agreed** that eligible project activities include:
 - 1) supporting community access initiatives, such as negotiation and other allied services (e.g. legal, surveying and administration costs);
 - 2) supporting the provision of information about access opportunities or the outdoor access code for the public or landholders;
 - 3) supporting the provision of access signage on both public and private land;
 - 4) providing access facilities, such as stiles and other structures to facilitate access on either private or public land and mitigate impacts on the environment;
 - 5) providing for other matters relevant to the promotion of walking access, (e.g. research and education programmes);
 - 6) other activities that will promote access.
- h. **agreed** that the criteria for evaluating applications and hence allocating funding are:
 - 1) applicants meeting the eligibility requirements for applicant status, fund priorities and project activities;
 - 2) evidence of projects contributing to one or more of the following:
 - i. certain, enduring and practical access for the public;
 - ii. enhanced opportunities for access;
 - iii. improved knowledge about access generally.
 - 3) consideration being given to:
 - i. evidence of demonstrated need for the project;
 - ii. expected outcomes and benefits to the public;
 - iii. any risks that may not be easily mitigated;
 - iv. the quality of the project plan;

- v. the ability of the project team to complete the project as described.
- i. **agreed** that if funds sought by applicants meeting the criteria exceed available funds other factors such as geographic mix, known urgency or project duration may be considered bearing in mind that the Commission reserves the unrestricted right to:
 - 1) not apply all of the amount in the Enhanced Access Fund;
 - 2) fund a lesser amount than sought by the applicant.
- j. **agreed** to establish an evaluation panel of three persons to assess applications and make recommendations to the board of the Commission;
- k. **agreed** that the evaluation panel comprise two board members and one staff member;
- l. **agreed** the Board of the Commission makes final decisions regarding funding allocations; and
- m. **noted** that the priorities, criteria and processes may need to be reviewed prior to running a second round in light of experience.

(**Note:** the Board advised that it would like to consider all the applications together with those recommended by the evaluation panel.

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** K Booth **Carried**

7. Joint Signage Initiative: Update

The Chief Executive introduced the item and noted that the joint signage initiative from Federated Farmers was a good opportunity for the Commission to work with one of its key stakeholders. He added that the Commission's involvement with this initiative did not preclude it from working with others stakeholders on similar projects. He invited Cathie Bell to speak to the paper.

Ms Bell advised that there was an expectation from Federated Farmers that the Commission would make a contribution towards the signage and that Federated Farmers had advised that there was support from its members for the signs.

The Board agreed that this initiative should be seen in context with the Commission's overall purpose and all its key stakeholders. It considered whether there should be a branding and signage strategy established first but agreed that it was desirable to make progress with this proposal.

The following suggestions were made:

- the signage be kept simple in respect to the number of logos, the colour and lettering;
- materials that are used for the signs needed to be long lasting;
- signs need to be able to accommodate changes in details;
- easy to use so that farmers can attach signs easily;
- should feature standard symbols for no dogs, guns etc; and

- prefer not to use “w” as it means walkways as defined under the Act. Could use “A” for access or the Commission’s logo.

Action: The Board

- noted** that one of the functions of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission (NZWAC) is funding the provision of signage over any land (Section 10 (1) (h) of the New Zealand Walking Access Act 2008);
- agreed** that the proposed joint signage project is an effective tool available to the NZWAC to contribute to achieving the NZWAC’s intermediate outcomes;
- agreed** that the NZWAC leads the development of the proposal in consultation with Federated Farmers New Zealand (FFNZ);
- agreed** that the project be discussed with stakeholders at the March stakeholder forum;
- noted** that any agreement with administrators of public land and other private land such as forestry will need to be covered on a case-by-case basis; and
- noted** that, while the project itself would probably need to be rolled out in stages and targeting particular areas/sectors, the project could be launched at the FFNZ annual meeting in Wellington in June subject to discussion with FFNZ and others.

Moved B Stephenson **Seconded** J Aspinall **Carried**

8. Governance Manual

The Board noted that the proposed governance manual had been circulated to all members as a draft and no comments had been received.

Action: The Board agreed to the governance manual for the NZ Walking Access Commission

Moved M Bayfield **Seconded** B Stuart **Carried**

9. Financial Policies

The Board considered a paper proposing amendments to the Commissions’ Entertainment and Travel policies to provide for increased clarity and certainty.

Action: The Board agreed to the revised financial policies on Entertainment and Travel.

Moved K Booth **Seconded** M Bayfield **Carried**

10. Confirm Minutes

Action: The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 23 November 2009 as being a true and correct record.

Moved K Booth **Seconded** M Bayfield **Carried**

10.1. Matters Arising

The Chief Executive advised that the Mountain Safety Council had yet to progress the proposed website on safety. The Commission had advised the Council that the Commission's funding contribution should be returned if the project was being dropped. The Chief Executive said that Ms Bell would follow-up with the Council.

12. Schedule of Correspondence

Action: The Board received the schedule of correspondence.

Moved J Aspinall **Seconded** B Stuart **Carried**

13. Acknowledgement

On behalf of the Board and staff, the Chairman thanked John and Sue Aspinall for their hospitality on 14 and 15 February at Mt Aspiring Station.

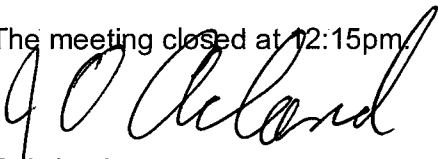
14. General Business

Mr Aspinall advised that at an appropriate time he will seek a leave of absence for medical reasons. The Chairman thanked him for the early notice.

Wanaka Forum

The Board were pleased to see that the forum had attracted a large number of participants. The Board thought that the comments and views expressed by participants on the work of the Commission and the proposed Mapping System, in particular, had been valuable. It also noted the ideas raised in Mr Mason's presentation and will consider them.

The meeting closed at 12:15pm.


J O Acland
Chairperson
22/03/10