



WALKING ACCESS
ARA HĪKOI AOTEAROA

NEWS

FROM THE NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION

❖ ISSUE 01 // NOVEMBER 2009

Draft documents launched to help secure walking access

Two draft documents to help secure access to beaches, lakes, rivers, and mountains were officially launched by Agriculture Minister David Carter and Commission Chair John Acland in Christchurch on 30 September.

The draft *Outdoor Access Code* and the draft *National Strategy on Walking Access* outline the Commission's objectives and set out a code for responsible behaviour outdoors, especially when crossing private land.

At the launch, Agriculture Minister David Carter said the development of the draft National Strategy and the Code was a big step forward in clearing up long-running confusion around walking access issues.

"New Zealanders love the great outdoors. Part of our connection to the outdoors is secured through a unique legacy woven into our history – the Queen's Chain," he said.

"But because it's part legal fact and part myth, there is confusion about the rights of citizens and landowners over access to beaches and waterways. One of the jobs of the Commission is to help clear this up, and I'm confident a National Strategy will go a long way towards doing this."

Mr Carter said the Commission's job to provide readily-available information on current legal access was a key task.

"It's this lack of easy information that has led to so much debate and division... Past talk of land-grabs and rights-to-roam have clouded the real issues – that is, the need to safeguard both private property rights and public property rights.

"With the right will, a balance can be struck, and deliver certainty to all parties. I believe this is where the Commission's proposed project of a mapping system to make information readily available to the public will be very useful indeed."

Mr Carter said the heart of the National Strategy – that is, a need to create practical and enduring access that respects the



» Agriculture Minister David Carter launches the draft documents with Commission Chairman John Acland.

rights of everyone and sustains the environment – summed it all up.

"When coupled with a code of conduct to promote a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities of access, your work is certainly on the right track. "I am thrilled to be here to officially launch this work."

❖ Welcome to the first issue of *Accessing New Zealand*. This regular newsletter brings you news and updates about the work of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission.

Call for submissions



» Agriculture Minister David Carter speaking at the launch of the draft Code and Strategy.

The Commission is calling for submissions on the draft *Outdoor Access Code* and the draft *National Strategy on Walking Access*.

The Strategy sets out the goals of the Commission and how they will be achieved. The Code is designed to assist both users and land managers to understand and respect each others' interests.

Chair John Acland says that public feedback will be used to improve the documents and refine the policies of the Commission.

John Acland said the Commission dealt with issues that had been controversial in the past.

However, a huge amount of work had been done over the past few years to ensure that stakeholders from recreational groups and landowners understood the issues and were involved in decision-making.

He said the Commission's draft Outdoor Access Code spelt out the need for people to behave properly and to take responsibility for their actions in the outdoors.

"It also asks landholders to continue the traditions of New Zealand, which have seen it as customary for landholders to give access to people wanting to cross their land."

"We want to hear from as many people as possible so we can ensure that we have represented the needs of all of our key stakeholders," he said.

Submissions are due by 18 December 2009. Email them to contact@walkingaccess.govt.nz or post them to NZWAC, PO Box 12-348, Thorndon, Wellington 6144.

Copies of the draft documents are available on the Commission's website www.walkingaccess.govt.nz.

Meet the new Chief Executive

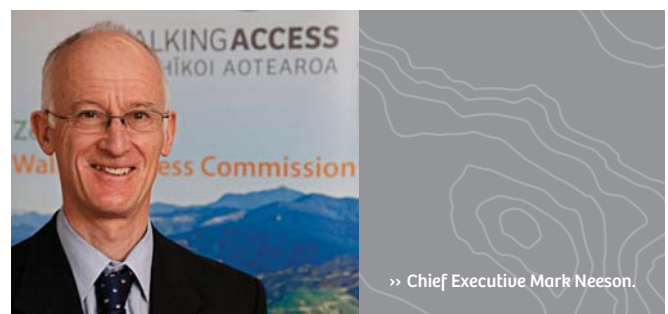
Chief Executive Mark Neeson was appointed in June 2009 to lead the Walking Access Commission.

Mark has substantive experience and qualifications in natural resource management, an extensive career in the public service, and a lifelong interest in outdoor recreation.

Of his new role, Mark says that he is looking forward to working with communities to realise the goals of the Commission.

"Better walking access to the outdoors can only be achieved by working with local communities on a local level. We will employ this strategy to determine what people actually want, need, and are capable of accessing and using in their locality," he says.

"I look forward to hearing from communities so we can create better walking access opportunities for all."



» Chief Executive Mark Neeson.

❖ Better walking access to the outdoors can only be achieved by working with local communities on a local level.



» The board of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission. From left to right: Peter Brown, Brian Stephenson, John Aspinall, John Acland, Barbara Stuart, John Forbes, and Kay Booth. Maggie Bayfield is absent from the photo.

Introducing the Board

The Walking Access Commission is overseen by eight Board members. Collectively they have significant experience in farming, forestry, public service, land management, law, Maori interests, public consultation, local government, recreational access, and dispute resolution.

Chairperson

John Acland CNZM

Board members

Brian Stephenson

Peter Brown

Kay Booth

John Aspinall

Maggie Bayfield (absent from photo)

John Forbes

Barbara Stuart

Members of the Board of the Commission were appointed in October 2008, with appointments initially made for a relatively short term, to 28 February 2009, reflecting the conventions that apply during a pre-election period. They were reappointed in April 2009 by Agriculture Minister David Carter for terms ranging from one to three years.



THE NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION

The New Zealand Walking Access Commission was created in 2008 to enable better walking access opportunities, giving people more freedom to enjoy New Zealand.

Its functions include:

- » A leadership and coordination role for providing public access to the outdoors
- » Providing information about the location of existing public access
- » Developing a code of responsible conduct for the public and landholders
- » Facilitating and negotiating new public access across private land.

The Commission is a Crown entity and is responsible for administering the Walking Access Act 2008.

The Walking Access Commission's logo is based upon the visual metaphor of 'the pathway'. This reflects the positioning statement of the Commission, 'Whaia nga tapuwae o nga Tupuna' (follow the ancestral

footprints). The 'stepping stones' used to illustrate New Zealand's distinct shape also represent an arrow head indicating direction and forward movement. 'Ara Hikoi Aotearoa' is a literal translation of 'Walking Access'.



IN BRIEF

Maps in development

Maps to show where people can get walking access to the outdoors are in development.

Once completed, the maps will be available on the Commission's website www.walkingaccess.govt.nz.

The Commission issued a Request for Proposal for a Public Access Mapping System on 15 May 2009. National and international enquiries were received and ten substantive proposals were received and assessed.

The Mapping System will be developed and tested in 2010.

Contestable fund

The Commission is developing a contestable fund to help local communities improve walking access opportunities in their region. The purpose of the fund is to obtain, develop, improve, maintain, administer, and signpost walking access over land.

More information about the fund will be available in 2010.

Funding for community walkway

The Commission has contributed to the Waitakere City Council to help establish and build Te Henga Walkway. Much of the walkway crosses private land.

The Commission is developing a contestable fund to help local communities improve access opportunities in their region.

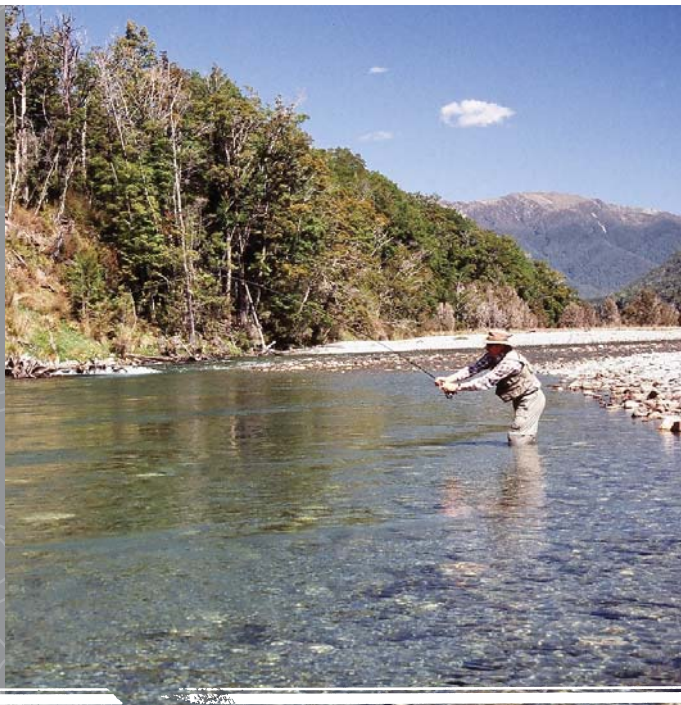


Photo: Les Hill

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