

MINUTES
NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING
27th November 2019
Wellington

Members: J Forbes (Chair), H Allison, P Coburn, P Henare, H Mexted, C Wade-Brown

In attendance: R Cullinane (Chief Executive), P Culling (Deputy Chief Executive), A Wilson-Goldman (Strategic Communications and Partnerships Manager), K Douglas (Co-Acting Operations Manager), L Edwardson (Co-Acting Operations Manager), J Yang (minutes), P Tait (Kaumatua) and B Johnson (observer).

Opening Comments

The meeting commenced at 12.30pm.

The Chair welcomed Board members, staff and observer B Johnson.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from R Tipene and L Chase due to illness. The Board sent its regards and wished them a speedy recovery.

Moved P Henare **Seconded** C Wade-Brown **Carried**

Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

Confirm Agenda

The Board confirmed the agenda for the meeting.

2. Confirm Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held in Invercargill on 18th September 2019 were circulated and read.

Action: The Board

- a) **confirmed** the minutes of the 18th September 2019 meeting as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

Moved P Henare **Seconded** H Allison **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 November 2019.

R Cullinane gave a strategic summary of the year to November and reported on: the Budget bid; the 2018/2019 Annual Report and the audit report; insurance renewal; the WAMS/GIS update which is due to go live next week; new board appointments; the progress of regional strategic projects; progress in the partnerships and policy area; health and safety.

The Board acknowledged the work the GIS team has put into the WAMS upgrade.

R Cullinane updated the Board about the proposed changes to the Overseas Investment Office and how this might affect the Commission. He also informed the Board that a workshop on the Connecting Franklin-North Waikato and Pūhoi to Pākiri projects would be presented at the Recreation Conference in Hamilton later that week, and that the Commission's work in Taranaki has been nominated for an award for Outstanding Policy, Research and Planning at the same conference.

The Board agreed to invite the Te Araroa Trust Chair and Chief Executive to its next board workshop, for the purpose of sharing information. It may also be timely to invite the Te Araroa Board to the Commission's Board meeting in early 2020.

P Tait formally invited the Commission to attend the apology to Rua Kenana at Te Urewera late next month.

Action: The Board

- a) **discussed** the Chief Executive's report for November 2019.
- b) **directed** the Chief Executive to invite the Te Araroa Trust Chair and Chief Executive to attend the next Board meeting in February 2020.

Moved H Mexted **Seconded** H Allison **Carried**

4. Health and Safety report

P Culling presented the Health and Safety report as at November 2019.

This is a regular report, covering any accidents, near misses, on-going issues/any action taken, proactive initiatives, and any other relevant matters.

There were no accidents and no near misses since last report.

The Board was informed the Commission is undergoing its annual review of contractor Health and Safety obligations (including for RFAs).

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the Health and Safety report.

Moved P Henare **Seconded** H Allison **Carried**

Part A

5. Enhanced Access Grants – 2019-2020 Tranche 1

J Yang presented a paper inviting the board to ratify the budget for Enhanced Access Grants (EAGs) for the 2019/2020 year and approve projects for the 2019/2020 EAG funding round Tranche 1 – for which applications closed on 30 September 2019.

Seven EAG applications were received for Tranche 1. An assessment of each applications was completed by the relevant Regional Field Advisor. The EAG assessment panel (board members H Allison, P Henare and management representatives P Culling and L Edwardson) met on 17 October 2019 prior to the Board meeting to review the applications for recommendations to the Board.

The Board discussed the EAG funding priorities, taking into consideration budget constraints. It was agreed that funding for the current tranche should focus on the main priority of securing free and enduring access. The Board approved funding for five projects as follows:

Applicant	Project	Funding approved (GST exclusive)
Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust/ Ruapehu District Council	Ameku Road Walking Track	\$5,700
Whangawehi Catchment Management Group	Whangawehi Walkway	\$9,615
Ilana Yannai and Justin Venable	Brennen's Creek/Blue Spur recreational access	\$4,500
Our Hut Heritage Hub	Sir Truby King Railway Bridge Track	\$8,096
Permolat Trust	Painkiller Track	\$10,520
Total		\$38,431

The Board also discussed the current outstanding liability on EAGs, which represents the amounts owing on all ongoing approved projects that have yet to be claimed. The Board requested that any projects which are not progressing should be closed, and that extensions for ongoing grants should only be given in exceptional circumstances. If funding is not picked up within the grant timeframe, grantees are welcome to reapply for an EAG, once the project resumes making progress.

The Board agreed to suspend Tranche 2, subject to Management discretion depending on budget availability.

Action: The Board

- a) **approved** funding for five applications from Tranche 1, totalling \$38,431.00 exclusive of GST.
- b) **agreed** that the Chief Executive advises all applicants of the Board's decision and invites the successful applications 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) **suspended** Tranche 2 of the current 2019-2020 EAG funding round, which may be reconsidered later in the year depending on budget availability.

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** P Henare **Carried**

6. Statement of Intent 2020-2025

A Wilson-Goldman updated the Board on the planning for a new Statement of Intent (SOI) to be published in 2020. The SOI is a statutory requirement and sets out the Commission's direction and strategic objectives over the next 3-5 years, as well as how it will achieve these.

Given the Commission's current financial situation, if additional funding is not received there will be an imminent reduction in the level of operation, significantly impacting the Commission's direction. A revised SOI, reflecting these changes, would need to be published prior to the end of the 2019-2020 financial year, by which point the Commission will know the result of the bid for additional baseline funding for Budget 2020.

A working draft of this SOI is expected to be brought to the Board at its next meeting in February 2020, with a finalised version to be completed by April 2020.

Once the policy and legislative processes are complete, with regards to the review of the *Walking Access Act 2008*, the Commission will need to produce a new SOI, regardless of whether it has received additional funding in the interim.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** to the preparation of a new SOI in 2020 to be published only if additional funding is not received.
- b) **directed** management to inform Minister O'Connor that the Commission plans to publish a new SOI in 2020 only if additional funding is not received.

Moved P Coburn **Seconded** P Henare **Carried**

7. 2020 Commission timetable

P Culling presented the Commission's 2020 planning and reporting timetable to the Board for feedback.

The Board was informed that the new Board Chair was expected to attend the next Board meeting in February 2020. The Board agreed to confirm the timetable up to June 2020, and to revisit the timetable in February with the new Board Chair.

Considering current budget constraints, the Board discussed the need for clarity on the purpose and efficacy of Board meetings when held outside of Wellington, which are

generally organised in conjunction with meetings with local stakeholders. The Board also raised the possibility of using Zoom video conferencing for future meetings or reducing the number of meetings over the year to 4.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted and confirmed** the Commission's 2020 planning and reporting timetable until June 2020.
- b) **considered** reviewing the Board meeting medium and format.

Moved P Henare **Seconded** C Wade-Brown **Carried**

8. **Draft Code of Professional Conduct for Crown Entity Board Members**

P Culling presented the Draft Code of Professional Conduct for Crown Entity Board Members, prepared by the State Services Commission (SSC), for the Board's feedback.

The SSC draft code, covering letter and fact sheet were circulated to the Board prior to this meeting to allow the board members time to review the draft and consider any feedback.

The Board also discussed the Commission's Code of Conduct for Board Members and the Board Governance Manual, and whether this should be refreshed and reviewed annually, possibly to coincide with the Board self-reflection.

Action: The Board

- a) **reviewed** the Draft Code of Professional Conduct for Crown Entity Board Members.
- b) **provided** feedback to the State Services Commission on the Draft Code.

Moved C Wade-Brown **Seconded** H Allison **Carried**

Part B

9. **Q1 Quarterly Report**

A Wilson-Goldman presented the Commission's Q1 quarterly report for 2019-2020, as submitted to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

This report had a shortened format compared to previous reports, which was agreed upon in discussion with MPI about what information it requires.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the Commission's Q1 quarterly report, as submitted to MPI.

Moved P Coburn **Seconded** P Henare **Carried**

10. **Aspinall Scholarship**

A Wilson-Goldman updated the Board on the latest recipient of the Aspinall Scholarship. The scholarship for 2019 was awarded to Declan Weir at the University of Auckland. His research has been completed and will be made available for the Commission in early 2020. The Commission will also seek to share his research on its website.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that the Aspinall Scholarship for 2019 has been awarded to Declan Weir for his research on tactical urbanism and active transport in Auckland.

Moved H Mexted **Seconded** P Henare **Carried**

11. **Realignment of part of the White Cliffs Track Walkway**

L Edwardson presented a paper informing the Board that part of the White Cliffs Track Walkway (the walkway) located on land owned by Ngāti Tama Custodian Trustee Limited will require realignment due to the proposed Mt Messenger bypass project. This will involve part of the current walkway easement being extinguished and a new easement over the new alignment being established.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the future extinguishment of the easement over part of White Cliffs Track Walkway will take place, a new easement will be created and declared a walkway by gazette.

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** P Coburn **Carried**

12. **Annual Report 2018 - 2019**

P Culling presented the audited final version of the Commission's *Annual Report for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019*.

The Audit and Risk Committee approved to the final version of the Report at its meeting on 15 November 2019 and recommended it be presented to the Board with the Committee's endorsement.

The report was tabled in parliament on 27 November and is published on the Commission's website.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the Commission's *Annual Report for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019* has been tabled in Parliament.

Moved P Henare

Seconded C Wade-Brown

Carried

13. Report to the Board on the Audit

P Culling presented Audit New Zealand's Report to the Board of the Commission for the year ended 30 June 2019.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the draft Report at its Special Meeting on 15 October 2019, and the final version with management's comments added, at its meeting on 15 November 2019. The Committee accepted the audit recommendations, and recommended a review of the sensitive expenditure policy, to be completed by the next Board meeting in February 2020.

The Board commended management on achieving a great audit outcome.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** Audit New Zealand's Report to the Board of the Commission for the year ended 30 June 2019.

Moved H Mexted

Seconded P Henare

Carried

14. Insurance Renewal Report

P Culling presented a paper updating the Board on the Commission's insurance renewal and cover for the period 14 October 2019 to 14 October 2020.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the insurance renewal process at its meeting on 15 November 2019.

The Commission's insurance broker from JLT/Marsh gave a presentation to the Board. The Board was advised about the level of cover for Regional Field Advisors.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the Commission's renewal and level of insurance cover and associated premiums.
- b) **noted** that the Commission's insurance broker JLT is to obtain a quote for some level of protection against cyber risk

Moved H Allison

Seconded P Coburn

Carried

15. Financial planning projections

P Culling and A Wilson-Goldman gave an update on the effect of the Commission of no increase in baseline funding if budget bid(s) are not successful.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the financial planning and projections in this report at its meeting on 15 November 2019, and recommended this paper be presented at the next Board meeting.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the Commission's current projected financial position, cash drawdown and associated timeline in the report.
- b) **noted** the probability of having to revert to a significantly lower spend under scenario one if the Commission's budget bids are unsuccessful.
- c) **noted** the preliminary planning that is underway for if the budget bids are unsuccessful.
- d) **noted** Audit New Zealand's comments on the approach being taken by the Commission.
- e) **discussed** any areas of governance concern that the Board has.

Moved P Coburn

Seconded P Henare

Carried

16. Audit and Risk Committee Report

P Culling presented a report from the Commission's Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 15 November 2019.

The Audit and Risk Committee meeting included: latest financial results, Walking access Act Review update, external/internal relationship concerns, Annual Report 2018-2019, Report to the Board on the Audit, insurance renewal, financial planning and projections, legislative compliance, risk management, and the draft planning and reporting timetable 2020. L Chase sent her apologies for the meeting.

P Culling gave a report on the recommendations from the meeting. Due to the timing of the Committee meeting it was not practical to present the minutes of the Committee meeting, these will be presented to the Board at its next meeting in February 2020.

The minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee Special Meeting on 18 October 2019 were also circulated to the Board.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 15 November 2019.

Moved H Mexted

Seconded J Forbes

Carried

17. Options if budget is overspent

P Culling presented a paper outlining the options for trimming spending if necessary if the Commission is running overbudget for the 2019-2020 financial year.

At the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 15 November 2019, the Committee noted that the Commission was running close to budget for the current financial year ending 30 June 2020. The budget is extremely tight, and any unplanned but necessary expenditure could take the Commission over budget by year-end. The Committee requested that management bring to the Board some options of where, if needed, the Commission could trim expenditure in the second half of the current financial year in order to remain within budget.

The Board considered the potential cost saving options identified by management. The Board agreed to suspend Tranche 2 of the 2019-2020 round of the EAG and suspend the Aspinnall Scholarship, subject to managements discretion. The Commission should ensure stakeholders are made fully aware of the reasons behind these suspensions.

The Board advised that due consideration should be given to staff and RFA morale, regarding changes to salaries and staff development budgets, cuts in these areas should only be considered in the last instance.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the budget pressures and potential cost saving options identified by management.
- b) **considered** which cost saving options should be implemented.
- c) **directed** management to implement cost saving options as appropriate within the parameters discussed for 2019-2020 financial year.
- d) **noted** the outstanding grant commitment position and suspension of applications to Tranche 2 of the 2019-2020 round of the Enhanced Access Grant.
- e) **commended** the staff for their significant efforts under the current budget pressures and recognise their excellent performance given financial constraints.

Moved P Coburn

Seconded H Mexted

Carried

18. Significant Correspondence

Action: The Board noted the following correspondence:

- a) Enduring Letter of Expectations (ELOE) from Ministers Robertson and Hipkins
- b) ELOE Briefing from Chapman Tripp

Part C

19. Closing comments

The Chair thanked Board members for their attendance at the meeting and their involvement and contribution.

The Board gave their appreciation for the Regional Round-up & Reporting put together for each quarter.

The Chair gave his appreciation for his time on the Board, and the members he has served with, and invited the Board members to be proactive in their direction for the Commission and look towards new challenges in access, especially in the increasing peri-urban space.

The Board members gave their huge appreciation and gratitude to J Forbes as Chair and wished him well in his future endeavours.

P Tait closed the meeting with a karakia and waiata.

20. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held in Wellington on 18-19 February 2020.

The meeting closed at 2.30pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Cameron', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

D Cameron
Chairperson