

MINUTES
NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING
19th February 2020
Wellington

Members: D Cameron (Chair), H Allison, P Coburn, P Henare, H Mexted, C Wade-Brown, R Tipene, L Chase

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) and B Johnson (observer).

Opening Comments

The meeting commenced at 1.40pm.

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

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

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 Wellington on 27 November 2019 were circulated and read.

Action: The Board

- a) **confirmed** the minutes of the 27 November 2019 meeting as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

Moved H Mexted

Seconded C Wade-Brown

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 February 2020.

R Cullinane gave a strategic summary of the year to February and reported on: the Budget bid; progress with the next phase of the Act Review; the 2019/2020 Annual Report; insurance; latest updates on the GIS Project; sensitive expenditure; the Business Continuity plan; new Board Chair appointment; education programmes; the December RFA workshop; progress with regional strategic projects; progress in the partnerships and policy area; health and safety.

The Board was pleased with the progress on regional projects and the strategic approach used and anticipates for more of this type of work in future.

Action: The Board

a) **discussed** the Chief Executive's report for February 2020.

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

4. Health and Safety report

P Culling presented the Health and Safety report as at February 2020.

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 RFA Health and Safety review has now been completed.

The Board discussed the Commission's policies in the event of an emergency such as an earthquake. The Board were satisfied that Management has good protocols in place and staff are adequately prepared in the event of an emergency. Additionally, all staff and RFAs are set up to be able to work remotely.

Action: The Board

a) **noted** the Commission's February 2020 Health and Safety report.

Moved H Allison **Seconded** R Tipene **Carried**

Part A

5. Draft Statement of Intent

A Wilson-Goldman presented a draft *Statement of Intent 2020-24* to the Board, for feedback, and approval, once relevant feedback has been incorporated, to send the draft to the Ministry for Primary Industries and Minister O'Connor for their comment.

The Board agreed at its previous meeting on 27 November 2019 that a draft SOI be prepared to reflect the Commission having to revert to a significantly lower spend under scenario one, to be published only if the Commission's budget bid is unsuccessful.

The draft recognises that the current strategic framework will continue to apply for the 2020-21 financial year, after which a new reduced strategic framework will apply, with a reduction in outcomes, outputs and activities so as to be able to work within a reducing budget envelope. There is also emphasis on the need for additional funding in order to maintain current levels of activity across the breadth of the Commission's work.

The Board discussed making the wellbeing message more explicit and adding more emphasis on increasing sustainability into the strategic context, linking this closely with the *Report on the Findings of the Review of the Walking Access Act 2008*. The Board also requested more explicit acknowledgement of the Commission's obligations under *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*.

The Audit and Risk Committee will be sent the revised draft, incorporating the Board's feedback, before it is sent to the Ministry for Primary Industries and Minister O'Connor in March for comment. A final draft will then be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting in April and circulated to the Board.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that the Commission will only publish a new Statement of Intent this year if the budget bid is unsuccessful.
- b) **provided** feedback on the draft *Statement of Intent 2020-24*, at the meeting or in writing prior to 29 February
- c) **approved** management sending a revised draft to the Ministry for Primary Industries and Minister O'Connor for their comment.
- d) **noted** a final draft of the SOI would go to Audit and Risk Committee in April
- e) **decided** that Board member Peter Coburn will sign the final *Statement of Intent 2020-24* alongside the Board Chair.

Moved L Chase

Seconded

P Henare

Carried

6. Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE) 2020-2021

P Culling notifying the Board on the SPE process for 2020 – 2021.

The Audit and Risk Committee will have a first look at the draft SPE during its April 2020 meeting, at which time the Commission should have an indication of the outcome of the budget bid.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the process for the preparation and approval of the 2020-2021 SPE.
- b) **noted** that there are different funding and expenditure scenarios that depend on the outcome of the Commission's budget bid.

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

7. Outdoor Access Champion Awards

A Wilson-Goldman invited the Board to select the recipients of the 2020 Outdoor Access Champion Awards.

The awards recognise individuals or organisation who have made significant and lasting contribution to public access to the outdoors in New Zealand. Nominations for the awards were open from 29 October to 13 December, and nominations for three individuals were received.

The Board selected two of the nominees to receive the award in 2020.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** on the winners of the 2020 Outdoor Access Champion Awards.
- b) **noted** that management will arrange local presentations to the winners in the first half of 2020, and the nearest Board member to each award will be invited to attend and present the award on behalf of the Commission.
- c) **noted** that management will send letters to the unsuccessful nominee, congratulating them on their nomination and thanking them for their efforts.

Moved R Tipene **Seconded** H Allison **Carried**

8. Sensitive Expenditure Policy

P Culling presented the draft Sensitive Expenditure Policy, for the Board's discussion. This was based on the Auditor-General's guidelines and incorporates all the recommendations from the audit.

The draft Policy, incorporated sections from and refers to the Commission's current policies on Travel, Entertainment, Gifts and Hospitality as well as Credit Cards. The Board suggested incorporating these policies into Sensitive Expenditure for clarity as there is significant overlap. With the exceptions of the Credit Card Policy which should be kept separate.

The Board discussed including a section on sustainability into the Policy, noting a lack of policy around travel using public transport, and on carbon offsets for air travel.

The revised draft of the Sensitive Expenditure Policy will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at their next meeting in April for more detailed discussion.

Action: The Board

- a) **referred** the draft Sensitive Expenditure to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting in April 2020 for more in-depth discussion.

Moved H Mexted

Seconded

P Coburn

Carried

Part B

9. Update on regional projects

A Wilson-Goldman reported on the current status of strategic regional projects the Commission has been involved in and outlines potential opportunities for future projects should additional funding become available. Four projects were reported on: South Island High Country Access; Taranaki Tracks and Trails 2040; Puhoi to Pakiri; Connecting Franklin – North Waikato.

The Board commended the reports published from these projects and emphasised a need for these more in-depth reports in the regions. The Commission recognises that often there is a lack of a larger picture with smaller trails projects, and the need for leadership and wider strategy which the Commission can help provide in these areas.

The most recent project is the Connecting Franklin – North Waikato, which incorporates all the learnings and best practises gained from the previous projects. The project serves as a model of how to generate good buy in from the community as well as government, and critically the project has good connections with and strong support from the local iwi.

Unfortunately considering the Commission's financial position, and the Commission would need additional funding to begin any new regional projects. The Board discussed the possibility of having discussions with NZTA, especially regarding their regional planning and programmes.

The Board directed management to explore other funding options and models. Management will also be creating a project methodology that can shared and used by other groups and for future reference. The Board suggested presenting this methodology, using the regional projects as good examples, at relevant future conferences.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the update on regional projects.
- b) **noted** that no further projects can be undertaken unless fully funded by an external party or parties.
- c) **directed** management to explore options for external funding.

Moved P Coburn

Seconded

R Tipene

Carried

10. Q2 Quarterly Report

A Wilson-Goldman presented the Commission's Q2 report for 2019-20 as submitted to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

The Board discussed using the highlights section in future reports as an opportunity to further emphasize the huge amount of work the Commission is doing, and the need for increasing funding to continue doing this work.

Action: The Board

- a) **discussed** the Commission's Q2 Quarterly Report, as submitted to MPI.

Moved P Henare

Seconded L Chase

Carried

11. Financial planning projections update

P Culling updated the Board on the latest financial projections if the Commission's budget bid is unsuccessful and there is no increase in baseline funding.

The Board was concerned about the impact that the current financial situation and budgetary constraint was having on the work of the Commission's Regional Field Advisors. A proposal was put before the Board to use reserve funding that would allow RFAs to continue important operational work.

The Board agreed to increase the budget for Regional Field Advisor hours by \$100,000 per annum, starting from the next quarter on 1 April 2020, in order to alleviate some of the pressure on the RFA network. This increase will be reviewed by the Board in July, following the outcome of the Commission's budget bid. P Culling advised the Board that this extra expenditure will hasten drawdown of reserves, and (if subsequent budget bids are unsuccessful) the Commission will need to revert to baseline expenditure levels approximately 3 months earlier than previously projected.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the Commission's updated projected financial position, cash drawdown and associated timeline in this report.
- b) **approved** an amendment to the 2021 budget to include a further \$100,000 for RFA funding per annum, starting from 1 April 2020, to be reviewed at the start of the next financial year after the outcome of the budget bid
- c) **noted** this extra RFA funding will hasten drawdown of reserves by approximately 3 months
- d) **noted** the preliminary planning that is underway in the event that the budget bids are unsuccessful.

Moved L Chase

Seconded H Allison

Carried

Part C

12. Closing comments

The Chair thanked Board members, staff and observer B Johnson for their attendance at the meeting and their involvement and contribution.

P Henare closed the meeting with a karakia.

13. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held in Wellington on 21-22 April 2020.

The meeting closed at 2.40pm.

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

D Cameron
Chairperson