

MINUTES
NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING
12th April 2018
Wellington

Board Members: J Forbes (Chair), B Stuart, P Brown and R McNeill.

In attendance: E Pyle (Chief Executive), P Culling (Corporate Services Manager), R Cullinane (Operations Manager), A Wilson-Goldman (Communications Manager), M Fleck (Senior Analyst), E Morris (Corporate Services Advisor)

Opening Comments

The meeting commenced at 1pm

The Chair welcomed Board members and staff and P Brown opened the meeting with a karakia.

1. Apologies

An apology was received by P Mudford.

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 Kerikeri on 22nd February 2018 were circulated and read.

Action: The Board

- a) **confirmed** the minutes of the 22nd February 2018 meeting as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

Moved P Brown **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

Matters arising from the minutes

E Pyle reported that progress had been made on organising a strategic workshop for Board members and staff. The intention of the workshop is to develop a shared vision for the Commission's future in the context of the review of the Walking Access Act.

The CEO reported that a proposal from a suitably qualified provider has been received and is being evaluated.

J. Forbes advised that a Board self-assessment was probably overdue.

3. Chief Executive's report

The Board discussed the Chief Executive's report for April 2018.

E Pyle reported on: staffing changes at head office and the appointment of a new Regional Field Advisor for the Auckland region; the 2018 audit process; the 2018 top outdoor spot competition; the impact of proposed changes to the Overseas Investment Act; the WAMS data completion project; Taranaki tracks and trails strategy; the completion of the development stage of the Commission's new website and publication of a digital strategy; the access opportunities around the Kahutia and the 1 billion trees initiative, LINZ, easements on the Coronet Peak/Soho Properties; and the OIO dispute in relation to Kawakawa Station.

E Pyle reported that there have been no health and safety incidents reported in the last quarter. The Board emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Commission's risk profile is up to date and that there are regular discussions around health and safety, particularly regarding the work of the Commission's Regional Field Advisors.

The Chief Executive's report also included an update on the projects the Commission is currently working on - South Island High Country, Auckland peri-urban (Puhoi-Warkworth-Matakana), Ruahines, Upper North Island and Central North Island.

The Board also discussed the Environment Select Committee's report on the Commission.

Action: The Board

- a) **discussed** the Chief Executive's report for April 2018.

Moved P Brown **Seconded** B Stuart **Carried**

- b) **considered and acknowledged** the report of the Environment Select Committee following the Commission's Annual Review.

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

4. Overseas Investment Office work

E Pyle presented a paper that updated the Board on the Commission's Overseas Investment Office (OIO) work.

Since 2012 the Commission has assessed 282 OIO applications. Access was recommended on 101 of these and 14 cases have been fully implemented with 66 cases in the implementation stage.

The Commission invests significant resources in work related to OIO cases and has developed a strong working relationship with the OIO.

While the Commission has streamlined the processes, it uses in relation to the OIO cases the work required is still considerable. It is estimated that the cost to the Commission in this area is approximately \$300,000 per annum.

The Board stressed the importance of measuring the wider benefits to businesses and the community of access gained through OIO cases rather than simply measuring outcomes in metres or kilometres. The Board also commented on the importance of ensuring there is a consistency in the Commission's approach to promoting public access across various land types, not just in OIO cases.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that 14 OIO cases have been fully implemented and there are around 66 going through the implementation process;
- b) **noted** that the Commission has invested around \$1.5m in OIO cases since 2012;
- c) **noted** that Commission staff are now working closely with OIO staff to increase the rate of implementation.

Moved R McNeill **Seconded** P Brown **Carried**

5. Overseas Investment Office policy

E Pyle presented a paper that updated the Board on the Government's policy proposals that could result significant changes to the Commission's Overseas Investment Office (OIO) work.

Proposed changes to the Overseas Investment Act could impact the Commission's OIO assessment work. Changes to the Commission's policy in relation to this will largely depend on the final form of the Overseas Investment Act legislation.

It is expected that the number of OIO applications received by the Commission will remain the same or increase for purchases of farmland and will increase for forestry applications if cutting rights are included. If OIO case numbers were to increase this would result in a higher workload for the Commission with additional resources required.

The Commission is currently seeking legal advice on its ability to charge for time spent on OIO cases.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that because of recent policy changes relating to the purchase of farmland the Commission may be asked by the OIO to assess more sales of farmland;
- b) **noted** that the Government is seeking to streamline sales of forestry land but also to include cutting rights under the OIO framework and that the impact of these changes for the Commission is unclear;

- c) **noted** that any significant increases in OIO applications the Commission assesses will have resourcing implications;
- d) **noted** that the Commission is working on a charging regime, with the first step being to seek legal advice.

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

6. Update on the completeness of WAMS

E Pyle presented a paper to update the Board on the completeness of the Commission's Walking Access Mapping System (WAMS).

The Commission relies on the cadastre as a source of data for WAMS. Currently this data is not 100% accurate due to incomplete metadata, and to easements and esplanade strips that have not been surveyed and/or digitally captured.

The Commission plans to partner with organisations who hold this type of information, such as councils and the Department of Conservation, in order to add the missing information to WAMS.

The Commissions' goal is for WAMS to become a comprehensive source for this information and to display 95% of all readily known available public access data. Back capture of non-digitised data is an ongoing issue.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** to a goal of WAMS showing at least 95% of all readily known available public access data;
- b) **noted** that Management will confirm a realistic timeframe for this target after a receiving a report on the completeness of WAMS in the middle of this year;
- c) **noted** that the Commission will explore a working group with DOC, LINZ and local government;
- d) **noted** that the Commission will increasingly source data from other agencies which is likely to require partnership agreements.

Moved B Stuart **Seconded** P Brown **Carried**

7. Update on the Taranaki outdoor access strategy pilot and learnings to date

E Pyle presented a paper that updated the Board on the Commission's work with Sport Taranaki piloting an approach to developing an outdoor access strategy.

The work has involved Lincoln University's Design Group (TDG) who have designed an outdoor access strategy based around the concept of the maunga extending from the national park to the sea, with a network of trails connecting to key landmarks in the

area. The strategy also includes an educational component for local school children. Presentations of initial findings to Sport Taranaki, councils and regional mayors have been well received, with presentations to iwi planned.

Dr. M. Abbott, the head of TDG, gave the Board a presentation on the pilot work completed to date.

A discussion was held on the possibilities of Commission using the pilot model to develop access strategies in other parts of the country.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that the Commission's work on access, tracks and trails in Taranaki has been well received by Taranaki councils.
- b) **acknowledged** the contribution and the work of Dr. Abbott and his TDG team.

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

8. Update on Rodney Access Network Strategy

E Pyle presented a paper updating the Board on the Rodney Access Network Strategy.

The Commission is working closely with the Auckland Council to develop a positive partnership to progress the Rodney project and is in the process of finalising a draft Memorandum of Understanding with the Council.

The appointment of a project manager will be a significant part of the Project. The Commission will have day to day management responsibility for the project manager who will be formally employed by Auckland Council. The project manager will work closely with the Matakana Coast Trails Trust and the Commission's Auckland Regional Field Advisor.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that Management is close to finalising a draft-final MoU with AC for the Board's consideration;
- b) **noted** that Management is working with AC and the MCTT on a job description;
- c) **noted** that under the MoU the AC will be the principal employer.

Moved B Stuart **Seconded** P Brown **Carried**

9. Website update, digital strategy and WAMS

A Wilson-Goldman presented a paper updating the Board on three recent events in the digital communications area. Firstly, the development phase of the Commission's new website is now complete. The next step is preparation of new content and review of existing content prior to migration to the new site, which will replace the existing corporate, Both Sides of the Fence, and Follow the Kiwi Way websites.

Secondly, the Commission has published a Digital Strategy as required by the 2017-18 Statement of Performance Expectations. The strategy details the goals and tools required to become a key source of information for public access to the outdoors, to build knowledge and trust in the Commission and its work, and to enhance key partnerships with stakeholders, local and central government and non-government sectors.

Thirdly, the mapping system has been updated and broken in to five new maps to improve data display and better target information to users.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** the completion of the development phase of the Commission's new website;
- b) **noted** the publication of the Commission's digital strategy, as required by the *2017-18 Statement of Performance Expectations*;
- c) **noted** the successful launch of five new maps, replacing the previous all-in-one map limitation

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

10. **Kahutia, 1 billion trees and public access**

E Pyle presented a paper that sought to alert the Board to the potential for access to be incorporated into the Hawke's Bay Kahutia project and the Government's 1 billion trees initiative.

The Board agreed that it is important that the Commission investigates potential opportunities such as the Kahutia project to pursue appropriate public access. The Commission's role in this could be to initially offer support to the lead agencies involved and suggest ways that we could help with the goal of obtaining wider access for various outdoor recreation groups.

Action: The Board

- a) **agreed** that the Commission explore the potential for access to be considered as part of regional and national forestry development initiatives.

Moved P Brown **Seconded** J Forbes **Carried**

11. Draft 2018-19 Statement of Performance Expectations and 2018-22 Statement of Intent

P Culling presented a paper that sought Board approval for drafts of the Commission's *2018-19 Statement of Performance Expectations* (SPE) and the *2018-22 Statement of Intent* (SOI). After the drafts have been approved, they will be sent to the Associate Minister of Agriculture for feedback and approval.

The Board were informed that the lay-out and style of the current SOI and SPE had been changed to reflect a more modern and succinct style. The changes were based on recommendations from Audit New Zealand.

Action: The Board

- a) **approved** the revised drafts of the 2018-19 SPE and the 2018-22 SOI.
- b) **agreed** to provide any additional feedback by 20 April 2018.
- c) **noted** that near-final drafts of both documents will be provided for Ministerial review by 26 April 2018.

Moved B Stuart **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

12. Update on Kauri dieback, tracks/trails and outdoor access in Northland

E Pyle presented a paper to the Board with an update on the scoping work that Management is doing on access in relation to kauri dieback and outdoor access more generally in the Northland region.

Councils are currently rolling out track closures in several infected forests to protect kauri. There is scope for the Commission to become involved in developing and promoting alternative walking access for the public. The Commission is working with partner agencies such as the QEII National Trust on a workshop for landowners to give advice and clarity about the issue.

The Commission is exploring working with mayors and iwi to apply TDG's Taranaki trails model (see item 7 above) in the Northland area, regarding local needs.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that the Commission is working with QEIIINT, Federated Farmers, Northland Regional Council, iwi and DOC on a workshop(s) for landholders in relation to public access and KDB. The workshop(s) is likely to be held in July.
- b) **noted** that NZRA would like to partner with the Commission to explore new access opportunities in kauri areas because of closures of recreational areas particularly in the Auckland region.

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** P Brown **Carried**

13. Update on South Island High Country project

E Pyle and A Wilson-Goldman presented the Board with an update paper on the South Island High Country (SIHC) work.

The Commission's South Island High Country Access Report was released for public submissions on 27 March. To date over 280 submissions have been received, the clear majority endorsing the report. This indicates a high level of interest in the topic. A consultation report will be produced summarising the feedback.

The Commission is scheduled to present the report to a meeting of Zone 5 and 6 mayors in mid-April. The next step would be to put together a high level working party comprising local government elected officials and officers, and representatives from key agencies and interested parties (Department of Conservation, Land Information New Zealand, Federated Farmers etc) to begin work on a strategy to address the issues raised in the Report.

Action: The Board

- a) **noted** that the Commission's SIHC access report has been released for public comment.
- b) **noted** that the work by government agencies in the Mackenzie area provides an opportunity for the Commission to promote access in that area of the SIHC.

Moved P Brown **Seconded** J Forbes **Carried**

14. Revocation of Whareana Walkway

E Pyle presented a paper to the Board seeking approval to revoke the Whareana Walkway (the Walkway). In accordance with Delegation of Statutory Functions and Powers, the Board is required to approve revocation of all or part of a Walkway.

It is proposed to replace the Walkway with esplanade strips as esplanade strips are considered a more appropriate instrument to ensure enduring public access along the Kahaho stream.

Action: The Board

- a) **approved** the revocation of part of the the Whareana Walkway.
- b) **noted** that the esplanade strips will be surveyed and registered.

Moved J Forbes **Seconded** R McNeill **Carried**

15. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on in Wellington on July 4th and 5th

The meeting closed at 2.30pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Forbes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

J Forbes
Chairperson

