

7 April 2022



Tēnā koe [REDACTED],

Thank you for your query about the Walking Access Commission's budget, work and processes. As a small agency, most of our work responds to inquiries from the community and stakeholders. Much of our work is leadership — we work alongside other organisations and individuals to ensure access to the outdoors is valued, enduring and understood. However, we do not represent a specific community. Rather, we work to realise the objective of the Walking Access Act.

Establishing Access

The Commission became operational in 2010 with the statutory objective to:

'lead and support the negotiation, establishment, maintenance, and improvement of walking access and types of access that may be associated with walking access, such as access with firearms, dogs, bicycles, or motor vehicles.' (Walking Access Act 2008, section 9)

To meet this objective, we have a range of statutory functions, including:

- providing national, regional and local leadership on co-ordinating access with relevant stakeholders,
- publishing maps and information about public access over land,
- facilitating resolution of disputes about access, and
- negotiating with landholders to obtain access.

Our work includes establishing gazetted walkways over public and private land. The legal term 'walkway' does not refer just to walking access but can include other public access such as biking or horse riding, depending on the circumstances.

As well as establishing walkways, our work includes:

- advocating for and creating legally enduring easements and formed tracks,
- negotiating informal access agreements across private land with the permission of the landowner,
- resolving disputes over existing access, and
- supporting territorial authorities and community groups to establish tracks and trails.

As well as the Walking Access Act, the Commission works with other legislation to establish access. This includes the Overseas Investment Act 2005, Resource Management Act 1991, Conservation Act 1987, Land Transfer Act 1952, Local Government Act 2002, Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993 and Treaty of Waitangi Settlement legislation.

Funding

Since its establishment in 2009, the Commission has been funded by an annual appropriation from the Crown of \$1.8 million. In 2020, the Commission received a 2-year only increase in the

appropriation to \$3.5 million each year. The Commission's financial details including Crown funding are reported in our annual report, which is publicly available on our website: <https://www.walkingaccess.govt.nz/about-us/publications/category/annual-reports>

We do not record how money is spent or allocated according to specific access modes. In many instances, the access we seek is multi-modal. For example, the Pūhoi to Mangawhai project in North Auckland includes over a hundred kilometres of walking, cycling and horse trails. In other instances, our work aims to help all people with access, regardless of mode. Our work mapping and educating about unformed legal roads would be an excellent example.

I'm very happy to discuss our work with you. Perhaps we can help with specific access issues for horse riding in [REDACTED].

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ric Cullinane', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ric Cullinane

Chief Executive | Tumuaki