

New Zealand Walking Access Commission | Ara Hīkoi Aotearoa

Submission to Aorere ki uta, Aorere ki tai, Pre-Draft Tasman Environment Plan

December 2020

The New Zealand Walking Access Commission Ara Hīkoi Aotearoa is the Crown agent responsible for providing leadership on outdoor access issues. We negotiate, establish and improve outdoor access for New Zealanders. This includes making people and organisations aware of where public access currently exists and ensuring that access endures over time.

Our governing piece of legislation is the Walking Access Act 2008. Our mandate includes all forms of public access, including on foot, cycling, horse riding and motor vehicles - and for all legitimate purposes.

General principles the Commission upholds include:

- Connecting people to the outdoors helps community wellbeing.
- Outdoor access infrastructure – roads, tracks, trails and paths - traverse a wide arrange of land types, of which council-controlled public land is one. Most active recreation is informal and relies on such connective infrastructure.
- The Commission supports a wide array of trail trusts, recreation groups and community organisations to retain and enhance the provision of this infrastructure. We connect them to local and central government agencies where appropriate.
- Unformed legal roads (ULR), sometimes referred to as paper roads, are a valuable resource for access to areas of cultural, historic, recreational and/or scenic value. We encourage councils to manage this resource with future public access in mind.

The Commission acknowledges the memorandum of understanding with Tasman District Council which facilitates a closer working relationship on unformed legal roads and access matters

The following are the Commission's broad comments on the relevant themes identified in the pre-draft plan process:

Climate change

The Commission submits the following:

- That active transport gets priority in all town centres to provide enhanced walking and cycling opportunities. This should include for example, Richmond, Motueka, Collingwood, Takaka, and Murchison.
- Connecting planned active transport networks with existing networks, reserves and destinations is important and can provide the added benefit of informal active recreation close to home.
- Connectivity *between* urban centres will provide opportunity for more non-vehicular trips through the growth and popularity of e-biking.

- We need well-designed and well-placed infrastructure to provide for growth in biking. For instance, we need bike parking at entrances to libraries, recreation facilities and supermarkets.

Rural areas

The Commission submits the following:

- Unformed legal roads (ULR) are common in the rural environment. The Commission endorses the public's right to access ULR where this will not damage the surface of the 'road'.
- ULR are a public good. If stopped, alternative and equal public access should replace them.
- Through the memorandum of understanding between the Commission and TDC we are committed to working with Council on evaluating road stopping proposals.
- The plan should consider rural active transport opportunities. The Commission recommends the rural development plan consider active transport opportunities and/or a roading environment that enables children, families and workers to travel safely on foot or by bike. This is particularly important where future development is likely to become more intensive.

Our towns and local centres

The Commission submits the following:

- Active transport should get priority in all town centres to provide enhanced walking and cycling opportunities. This should include for example, Richmond, Motueka, Collingwood, Takaka, and Murchison.
- Connecting planned active transport networks with existing networks, reserves and destinations is important. It can benefit passive exercise and wellbeing.
- Connectivity *between* urban centres will provide opportunity for more non-vehicular trips through the growth and popularity of e-biking.
- Connectivity *within* urban areas, such as from town centres to residential areas, and from residential areas to schools and recreation places, is important.
- We need well-designed and well-placed infrastructure to provide for growth in biking. For instance, we need bike parking at entrances to libraries, recreation facilities and supermarkets.

Coast and marine environment/freshwater

The Commission submits the following:

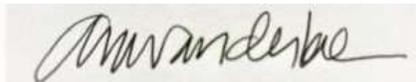
- The council should set aside or create esplanade reserves, esplanade strips or access strips when it subdivides land adjoining water bodies or the coastal marine area to facilitate public access.
- The council should seek public access linkages between reserves and public access adjoining water bodies or the coastal marine area.
- The council should retain the public access resource provided by unformed legal roads to or along water bodies or the coast. It should convert those unformed roads to reserves where vehicle access is inappropriate.
- The council should provide public access to outstanding natural features and landscapes in the coastal environment or the margins of lakes, rivers or wetlands, except where the impact of such access is incompatible with the duty to protect these areas or access across private land cannot be negotiated.

Forestry

- Another notable feature of the TDC landscape is plantation forestry. A form of land-use that sees large tracts of land with little human activity over long periods of time. Outside of harvest, forestry, mountain-biking, walking and sometimes, vehicle use are compatible land uses.
- The Commission commends TDC for its Kingsland Forest Park Management Plan and encourages the adoption of these key recreational outcomes in management of its other forests.
- The Commission encourages TDC to become an advocate for retention and use of existing legal public access in and adjoining plantation forests.

The Commission is available to work with TDC on the public access elements of the plan.

We are happy to talk to our submission. For more information on our submission please contact me on 027 484 4677 or ange.vanderlaan@walkingaccess.govt.nz.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Ange van der Laan'.

Ange van der Laan
Regional Field Advisor | Te Kaitohutohu Ā-Rohe
Walking Access Commission Ara Hīkoi Aotearoa