

New Zealand Walking Access Commission

Annual Report 2015-2016



WALKING ACCESS
ARA HĪKOI AOTEAROA



Presented to the House of Representatives
Pursuant to Sections 150-157 of the
Crown Entities Act 2004

The New Zealand Walking Access Commission seeks to enhance free, certain, enduring and practical walking access to the outdoors, and to strengthen our access culture and heritage.

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Cover image: Walking in Hanmer Forest, Canterbury.

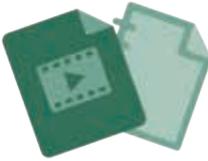
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Part 1: Highlights



New Follow the Kiwi Way website created to promote the Outdoor Access Code



New videos and teacher resources added to Both Sides of the Fence education website



5,823 visits to the Both Sides of the Fence website by Kiwi students and teachers



An estimated 60,000 people visited the Walking Access Mapping System



Five new walkways gazetted





43 access opportunities created or retained with Commission involvement



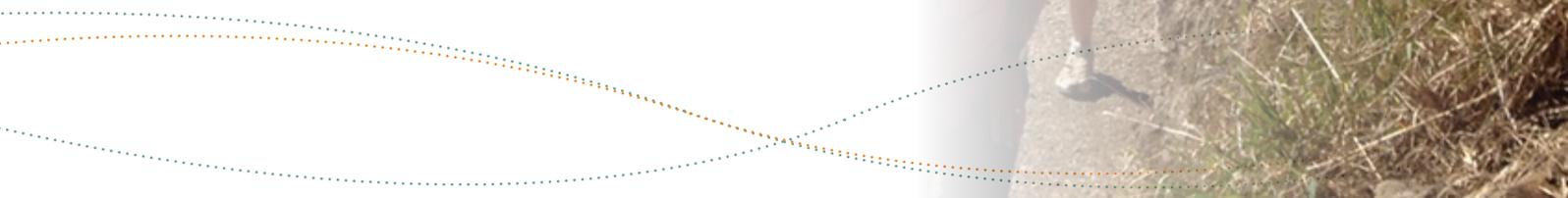
24 access disputes concluded



10 projects approved for funding through the Enhanced Access Fund



Upgraded version of the Walking Access Mapping System released



Part 2: Introduction

REPORT FROM THE BOARD

We are pleased to present the Annual Report of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission for the period 2015-2016. The Commission aims to enhance free, certain, enduring and practical walking access to New Zealand's outdoors, and to strengthen our country's access culture and heritage.

Over the past year the Commission has continued to provide leadership on national and local access matters to ensure existing access is protected for the long term. It has also worked to change attitudes, increase understanding of access responsibilities and create new access opportunities. The *New Zealand Walking Access Commission National Strategy 2010-2035* and *Statement of Intent 2014-2018* ensure the Commission maintains a consistent strategic direction and focus.

The New Zealand public continues to be passionate about access to the outdoors and will use access when it is provided. The high profile crowd-funding initiative led by Christchurch locals Duane Major and Adam Gard'ner to purchase the beach at Awaroa Inlet in the Abel Tasman National Park is an example of the latent public concern about access in New Zealand. More than 39,000 people collectively pledged more than \$2 million to purchase the beach and transfer it into public ownership.

The demand for new tracks is also strong, and there are many success stories. In the first three months after it opened, around 15,000 people have walked the recently completed walkway from Paekakariki to Pukerua Bay – part of the Te Araroa Trail near Wellington. This high level of usage demonstrates that New Zealanders and overseas visitors enjoy walking and access to the outdoors.

In the past year the Commission has expanded its relationships with agencies with an interest in outdoor access. A good proportion of our tourism industry relies on access to the outdoors and the Commission is strengthening its relationship with this sector. Access to the outdoors also provides the vital opportunities for physical activity that are so critical to healthy communities. It is pleasing to see the Commission's

developing relationship with the Ministry of Health's Healthy Families New Zealand initiative.

The Commission has established itself as a credible agency that is active in promoting access and resolving disputes around access. Credibility is crucial when it comes to resolving disputes over access, which is a core role for the Commission.

Another important role is the development of new access. Much of this is achieved through the work of the regional field advisor network, which works closely with groups and communities across our country to facilitate and advise on desirable walking opportunities.

New access is also achieved through advice to local government and central government agencies. Over the past year the Commission has provided advice on walking access conditions for more than 50 property sales to overseas buyers under *Overseas Investment Act* conditions. Some excellent access has been secured in areas all over the country.

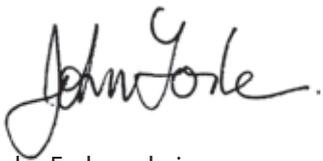
We want to congratulate the staff at the Commission on implementing the third version of the Walking Access Mapping System, which displays publicly accessible land across New Zealand. This was a significant undertaking for a small organisation and it was completed on time and under budget.

We would also like to thank Maggie Bayfield for her service on the board since the Commission's establishment. She made a tremendous difference to the workings of the board and an immense contribution and we wish her well for her future endeavours. Maggie has been replaced on the board by Barbara Stuart. Barbara is no stranger to the Commission and public access issues, having previously served on the board from 2008 until 2011.

Finally, I want to thank our recently retired chief executive Mark Neeson for his role in establishing the organisation and leading it for its first eight years. Mark successfully guided the organisation through some turbulent waters in its initial years and set it on the current course of being a trusted and respected

authority on public access. Mark ensured a culture of impartiality and advice based on excellent information. We wish Mark well in his retirement.

And we welcome Eric Pyle as the new chief executive. We look forward to working with Eric to build on the legacy that has been created.



John Forbes, chairman



Penny Mudford, board member



REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Firstly I want to acknowledge the work of Mark Neeson, who retired in February this year. Mark was the inaugural chief executive of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission and played a pivotal role in the Commission's establishment. I look forward to building on the foundations that Mark has laid for enhancing and developing access in New Zealand.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first few months in the role. A highlight has been the rollout of the third version of the Walking Access Mapping System. This has been achieved under budget, on time and without a glitch.

The Walking Access Mapping System is now on a flexible platform that will allow the Commission to introduce further and more regular iterative changes in response to public demand. I look forward to the Commission working with partners to develop new products and services that complement the mapping system's core function of displaying publicly accessible land across New Zealand.

Resolving disputes over access to the outdoors continues to be a focus for the Commission. With no coercive powers the Commission relies on its ability to provide accurate information on the legal aspects of access. I have been impressed with the evidence-based approach that the Commission brings to the negotiating table.

Over the past year, this approach has enabled the Commission to work closely with landholders, recreation and community groups, iwi, and central and local government to facilitate resolutions to issues ranging from obstructions to access on unformed legal roads to disputes caused by a lack of clarity about property boundaries or permitted recreation activities.

The Commission is involved in issues that are far greater than just walking. With a greater emphasis nationally on outdoor recreation, such as cycling, and increasing focus on tourism development, the Commission's range of partners continues to expand. This is particularly important in order to capitalise on the opportunities an increase in visitors brings. It also helps to mitigate some of the challenges posed by growing visitor numbers, such as increased demand for parking lots, toilets and signage, and the need to create entirely new tracks to relieve the pressure on existing trails.

The Commission has moved beyond just addressing disputes to working with groups proactively to set up all manner of walking, cycling and horse riding trails.

Over the past year we have seen some exciting developments on this front, and more than 40 tracks or routes have been created or retained with Commission involvement. These have ranged from walkways formalised through easements to new routes established with funding support from the Commission's Enhanced Access Fund.

This is a tremendously exciting time for outdoor recreation in New Zealand. I look forward to working with partners to help increase and promote greater access to New Zealand's outdoors.



Eric Pyle, chief executive

Part 3: Our organisation

PURPOSE

The New Zealand Walking Access Commission's purpose is to lead and support the negotiation, establishment, maintenance¹ 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.

The Commission's governing legislation is the *Walking Access Act 2008*.

GOVERNANCE

The Commission is governed by a board of five members appointed by the Minister for Primary Industries. The Commission is funded by Parliament through Vote Primary Industries and is accountable for its performance to the Minister for Primary Industries.

The Board is responsible for setting policy and strategic direction and for monitoring the overall performance of the Commission. The Board has a Chief Executive Performance Review Committee that undertakes work on its behalf. The Board holds frequent training and development workshops on governance topics and undertakes an annual self-review.

NZWAC BOARD



Chairman

John Forbes is Mayor of Opotiki District and Rural Sector Group Chair for Local Government New Zealand. He has a good understanding of the agricultural, horticultural, forestry and rural sectors. As a committee chairman of a rural

council for 18 years and a Mayor since 2001, John has had significant experience in governance processes, public consultation and representing rural communities. He was a member of the Walking Access Consultation Panel and the Walking Access Advisory Board.

Term of appointment: November 2015-April 2017.



Barbara Stuart is a Nelson-based farmer and outdoor enthusiast with a background of community involvement. The Stuart family has a long standing history of supporting outdoor access. Barbara, her husband Ian and his parents were among the first private landowners to

create a formal public walkway across their family farm, establishing the Cable Bay Walkway in 1984. In 2013, they received one of four Walking Access Awards for this and other outdoor access initiatives in their community.

Term of appointment: November 2015-April 2018.



Peter Brown is affiliated to a number of Tairāwhiti iwi and works as the Maori Health Manager at Tairāwhiti DHB. He is an owner of a whānau land block which provides free public access to East Cape Lighthouse. Peter is also the chairman of a tribal farming incorporation,

a director of a medicinal herb company and has his own orchard block. He holds qualifications in law, management and the environment and is certified in dispute resolution. Peter is also a former Waitangi Tribunal member.

Term of appointment: July 2013-April 2016.²



Penny Mudford is a Wellington based arbitrator and mediator and a Fellow of the Arbitrators' and Mediators' Institute of New Zealand. She is a professional director and has held directorships in both the public and private sectors. She is a Chartered Member of the

Institute of Directors and a member of Global Women New Zealand. Penny has a background in agriculture with 20 years' experience as a dairy farmer and rural property owner in Manawatu. She is a former provincial president of Federated Farmers. Her position as a rural arbitrator keeps her actively involved in the farming

¹ In the context of the *Walking Access Act 2008*, the term "maintenance" means retaining free, certain, practical and enduring walking access to the outdoors. The primary focus is on maintaining and improving legal access in the outdoors, rather than providing and maintaining physical infrastructure such as tracks and bridges.

² Section 32 of the *Crown Entities Act 2004* provides that the terms of appointment of board members whose terms have expired continue until either reappointment or replacement.

sector. Penny was a member of the Land Access Ministerial Reference Group in 2003.

Term of appointment: November 2015-April 2018.



Brian Stephenson is a barrister from Auckland with extensive experience in employment law and dispute resolution. He was an Adjudicator and Mediator Member of the Employment Tribunal for 10 years and has been a Tenancy Adjudicator since 2009. He is a trapper, climber and ski-mountaineer and a past President of the Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ. Brian is a former member of the Walking Access Advisory Board and of the New Zealand Conservation Authority.

Term of appointment: July 2013-April 2016.³

STAFF

The Commission has a team of seven staff (6.0 FTEs) and 11 regional field advisors. The staff are based in the Commission's head office in Thorndon, Wellington. The field advisors are located around the country and are engaged on a part-time contractual basis.

Our people have a range of backgrounds including law, policy, land surveying, geospatial information technology, finance and administration. Many of our regional field advisors are farmers or have a background in farming. The Commission's people have a keen interest in rural New Zealand and outdoor recreation.

FUNCTIONS

The Commission's functions are provided for in section 10 of the Walking Access Act 2008.

They are to:

- » provide national leadership on walking access by:
 - preparing and administering a national strategy; and
 - coordinating walking access among relevant stakeholders and central and local government organisations, including Sport and Recreation New Zealand;
- » provide local and regional leadership on, and coordination of, walking access in collaboration with local authorities;
- » compile, hold and publish maps and information about land over which members of the public have walking access;
- » provide advice on walking access to the Minister or any other person;
- » facilitate resolution of disputes about walking access, including initiating negotiations about disputed issues, mediating disputes and referring disputes to a court, tribunal, or other dispute resolution body;
- » negotiate with landholders to obtain walking access (including walkways, which are one form of walking access) over public or private land;
- » negotiate rights in addition to any walking access that is obtained, such as the right of access with firearms, dogs, bicycles, or motor vehicles;
- » administer a fund to finance the activities of the Commission, or any other person, in obtaining, developing, improving, maintaining, administering, and signposting walking access over any land;

³ Section 32 of the *Crown Entities Act 2004* provides that the terms of appointment of board members whose terms have expired continue until either reappointment or replacement.

- » receive and manage private funding, contributions, or sponsorship for the promotion of walking access;
- » research, educate the public about, and participate in topics and programmes related to walking access;
- » develop, promote, and maintain the code of responsible conduct;
- » administer walkways under this Act, with planning and supervision focused at a local level; and
- » monitor the compliance with, and enforcement of, this Act in relation to walkways.

PRINCIPLES

In carrying out its functions the Commission applies a set of principles including:

- » in exercising its leadership role, the Commission will be an independent, responsive, open and influential catalyst facilitating access;
- » the New Zealand economy is based on a strong and stable set of property rights and a legal system which values certainty and predictability;
- » New Zealand has a well-defined legal framework for the ownership of land, which spells out the property rights and responsibilities of those who control access to land, whether privately or publicly owned; and
- » a strong tradition has evolved whereby members of the public are generally given permission to access privately owned land, provided that they ask permission first and respect property, other people and the environment.

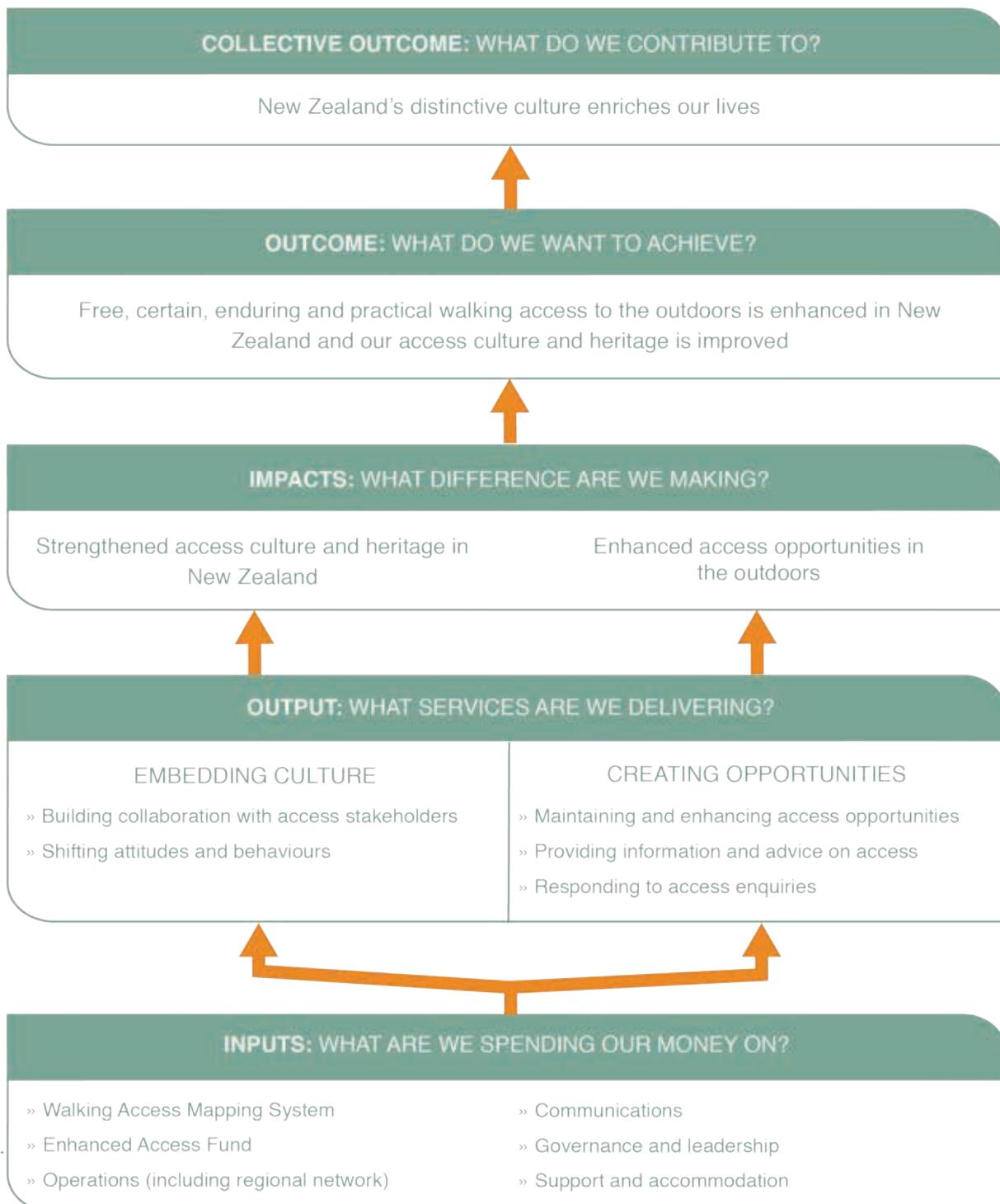


Part 4: Achieving the vision

THE COMMISSION'S VISION

The Commission's governing legislation, the *Walking Access Act 2008*, reflects the public interest in ensuring that New Zealanders are able to enjoy the outdoors and that to do so requires retaining and enhancing access to the countryside, beaches, lakes, rivers, natural areas and public resources. At its core this vision is about

"linking New Zealand". New Zealanders value actively participating in outdoor recreation as part of their heritage and their free, rugged and independent spirit. It is part of New Zealand's culture and identity and plays an important role in creating healthy communities and enabling tourism opportunities.



THIS SECTION OF THE REPORT DESCRIBES OUR WORK PROGRAMME IN MORE DETAIL.

Strengthening access culture and heritage

The New Zealand Walking Access Commission seeks to increase understanding of access responsibilities and to strengthen New Zealand’s access culture and heritage.

Strong understanding of access responsibilities reduces conflict over access to the outdoors and encourages voluntary management of outdoor access behavioural issues. A strengthened access culture helps to “link New Zealand” by improving understanding of the respective motivations and desires of access users and landholders, and greater respect for each other’s interests.

The Commission seeks to improve understanding of the value of access and the importance of responsible behaviour through a public education programme. This education programme builds trust between urban and rural New Zealand, raises awareness of the value of

outdoor access, and promotes the *New Zealand Outdoor Access Code*, which outlines responsible behaviour when accessing private land in rural environments. The Code, published in 2010, was developed collaboratively by organisations representing landholders, local government and users.

Public opinion research⁴ conducted in 2015 highlighted the value the public places on the Commission’s work to strengthen access culture and heritage. The research found that nearly all New Zealanders (95 per cent) believe free and easy access to the outdoors is important. It also found that the vast majority of respondents (94 per cent) believe New Zealanders and overseas visitors can access our country’s outdoors, and more than two thirds (68 per cent) agree that access is being strengthened and valued.

PROMOTING THE OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE

The *New Zealand Outdoor Access Code* is one of the Commission’s key tools for maintaining understanding between rural and urban New Zealand and building public awareness of access responsibilities. It outlines responsible behaviours such as asking permission before accessing private land, leaving gates as they are found, and respecting cultural values. This information

helps ensure understanding of responsible behaviour in the outdoors remains high (see Fig. 1)

However, just one in ten (11 per cent) of New Zealanders are aware of the *Outdoor Access Code*⁶ and the trend towards consumption of information in digital form has made it necessary for the Commission to present messaging from the *Outdoor Access Code* in new and more engaging formats.

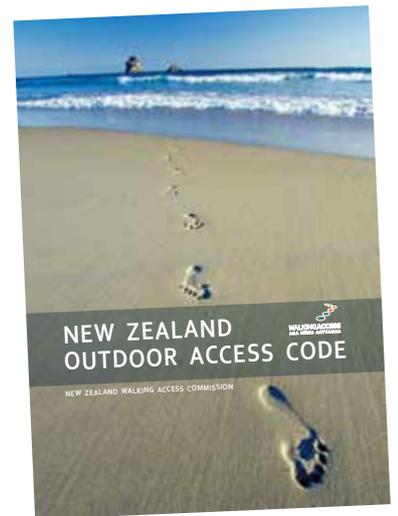
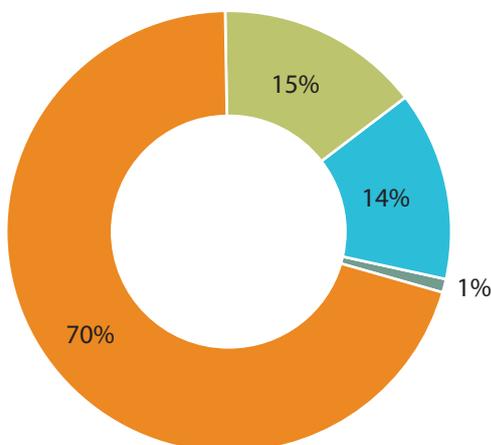


Fig 1: Proportion of the public that agree New Zealanders have a good understanding of how to behave in the outdoors⁵

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't know



One such initiative, launched in December 2015, is the Commission’s Follow the Kiwi Way website.⁷ This site presents key advice from the *Outdoor Access Code* in a conversational and visual way, alongside information on the locations of walkways, and guides for groups such as trampers, hunters, horse riders and mountain bikers.

Follow the Kiwi Way will serve as a portal for information about responsible behaviour in the outdoors, and the Commission intends to approach other organisations to explore opportunities for them to display their outdoor-related information to New Zealanders and overseas visitors.

4 Walking Access Survey 2015

5 Walking Access Survey 2015

6 Walking Access Survey 2015

7 Online at www.followthekiwiway.org.nz

The Commission also continued to enhance its Both Sides of the Fence education website⁸ to make the *Outdoor Access Code* and responsible behaviour messaging engaging for primary and intermediate school children.

These enhancements included the addition of six new video scenarios and accompanying teaching resources to help students explore responsible behaviour in the outdoors.

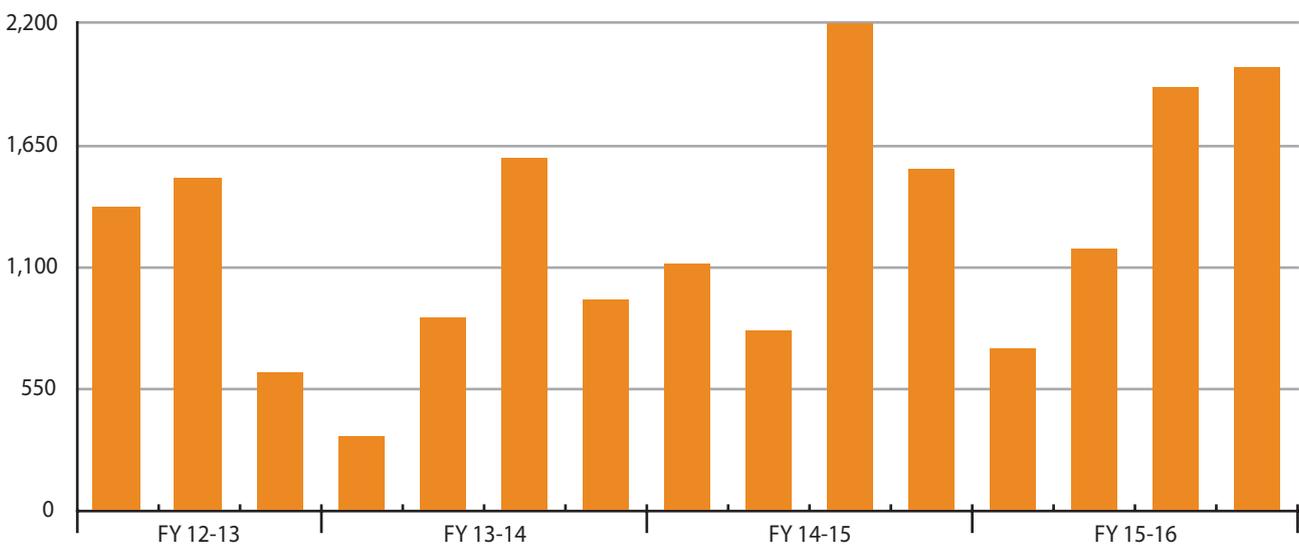
Two of the new scenarios explored access and the Queen's Chain and responsible behaviour in the outdoors when on a field trip. A third scenario, which was also translated into Te Reo Maori, promoted healthy families and the benefits of enjoying the outdoors. The Commission also partnered with the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council to present three scenarios covering outdoor safety – an important area that has not previously been covered in-depth on the website. These new jointly funded outdoor safety scenarios help students to explore trip planning and packing, river crossing and decision making when the weather changes, and basic firearms safety. They also present information about responsible behaviour when accessing the outdoors, such as asking permission before crossing private land.

There were 5,823 visits to the Both Sides of the Fence website during the reporting period, an increase of three per cent compared to the previous year (see Fig. 2). The majority of visits occur during the warmer months, when education about the outdoors is most relevant to school teachers and their students and activities such as field trips and school camps are being run.

Use of the website was also boosted by the Top Outdoor Spot competition, which was held for a fourth consecutive year. The competition invited students to contribute photos, drawings and descriptions of their favourite outdoor places for publication in the website's image gallery. This builds engagement with the website and encourages students to think critically about why they value the outdoors.

A record 234 entries were received from students at 25 schools across New Zealand, with winning students coming from Auckland, Gisborne, Napier, Havelock North, Kapiti Coast and Dunedin. Prizes were sponsored by Hunting & Fishing New Zealand, Skellerup, Macpac, Fence Detective, New Zealand Mountain Safety Council, Kiwi Sock Company and the Cancer Society of New Zealand. The number of entries received this year was higher than the 183 that were received from 21 schools the last time the competition ran.

Fig 2. Total visits to the Both Sides of the Fence website (2012-2016)



⁸ Online at www.bothsidesofthefence.org.nz

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Improving access and ensuring its cultural and heritage value is understood relies on regular and meaningful engagement with communities, from farmers to local government.

The Commission engages with these communities through a variety of channels, including media, conferences, regional forums, and face-to-face meetings with representatives from local authorities, recreation and landholder groups.

This year, the Commission continued to build relationships and engage with communities around the country. Regional field advisors played an active part in connecting with people in their areas to gain an understanding of local access matters and respond to queries and concerns. These efforts result in better outcomes when facilitating resolutions to access disputes, and inform the Commission's decision making process when deciding where to allocate resources to improve access opportunities.

The Commission's staff and regional field advisors attended 40 meetings with stakeholders and fielded 420 enquiries over the phone and by email.

Five regional forums were also held, three in Blenheim and two in Canterbury. The forums, typically attended by recreation representatives, landholder groups, representatives from the Maori community, business associations and government officials, help further inform the Commission on local access issues. Commission board meetings take place in the same regions as the forums.

Examples of community engagement activities the Commission took part in included attending the Southern Field Days at Waimumu, the COVI Motorhome Show in Auckland, the Central Districts Field Days in Feilding, the opening of the Rod Donald Hut in the Banks Peninsula area, the open day for the Ruru Walkway in the Matamata-Piako district, and Te Ara Ramaroa track opening at Whareroa Farm Park.

Other activities included access award presentations to the winners of the Commission's 2015 Walking Access Champion Awards, Top Outdoor Spot competition

THE WALKING ACCESS CHAMPION AWARDS

The Walking Access Champion Awards recognise those who have made significant and lasting contributions to public access to the outdoors in New Zealand, whether through securing new legal access, championing public rights of access, trail building, or contributing to understanding of access rights and responsibilities. The 2015 award winners were:

- » Peter Chandler, in recognition of his efforts to develop new tracks and trails in the Waitomo region.
- » Ann Irving, in recognition of her work to create a legally enduring track giving access to one of the few remaining flax wetlands in Southland.
- » Lynne Alexander, for her contribution towards developing some of Akaroa's most scenic walks.
- » Stratford District Council and employee Neil Cooper, for their contributions to improving walking access across tracks and pathways in Taranaki.
- » Sport Bay of Plenty, for its Virtually on Track website and City on its Feet programme. These encourage access and physical activity in the Bay of Plenty.
- » Dunedin City Council employee Andrew Lonie, for his contribution to improving mountain biking opportunities in the Dunedin region.
- » Whangarei District Council employee Hilton Ward, in recognition of his contribution to improving land access in the Whangarei area.
- » Geoff Chapple, known to many as the founder of Te Araroa pathway, was recognised for his contribution to public access. Te Araroa stretches 3,000km from Cape Reinga in the north to Bluff in the South.
- » Policy advisor Hunter Donaldson, for his contribution to public access policy and the framework under which the New Zealand Walking Access Commission operates.

prize-giving at schools, media activity and a bi-monthly e-newsletter.

These initiatives allow the Commission to connect with communities, provide advice and information where it's needed, as well as address and respond to access queries and concerns.

The Commission has also built on its Facebook and Twitter activities to extend its reach to a wider audience. The Commission's social media strategy aims to build a community of people who are invested in

New Zealand's access culture and heritage, and who understand its collective value for current and future generations.

In addition to building awareness of the Commission's role and activities and facilitating more immediate communication with the public, social media activity is also driving increased visits to the Commission's websites. Google Analytics data shows that hundreds of visitors to the Commission's web pages now come via social media.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Building trust between rural and urban New Zealand and educating the public about responsible behaviour in the outdoors requires a collaborative approach. Much more can be achieved when multiple parties work together.

At a national level, the Commission has worked with WorkSafe New Zealand and landholder and recreation groups to develop a frequently asked questions (FAQ) fact sheet about the health and safety responsibilities of farmers to people seeking access across their land for recreation. The fact sheet, due for publication in July 2016, will answer common questions about farmer's health and safety obligations towards recreational visitors. It also aims to dispel myths that have arisen following the introduction of the *Health and Safety at Work Act 2015*.

The Commission works closely with communities in regional New Zealand. In Marlborough, the Commission has assisted organisations that are proposing a new cycleway from Picton to the Clarence Bridge, potentially continuing on down to Kaikoura. The Commission's involvement is assisting the groups involved by clarifying public rights of access along the proposed route, and assisting them with information on how similar cycleways have been created in other parts of the country.

In Waikato, the Commission's work with other parties has helped to clarify and improve access to the Upper Awakino River. Some local land managers were concerned about anglers using public accessways to reach the river and the anglers were being asked

to leave. The Commission worked with landholders, Waitomo District Council and the Department of Conservation to clarify public rights of access to the river, and to ensure both landholders and

CASE STUDY: NEW ANIMATED SCENARIOS DESIGNED IN COLLABORATION WITH MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL

Young New Zealanders now have the opportunity to explore three new virtual adventures on the popular Both Sides of the Fence website, thanks to a collaboration between the New Zealand Walking Access Commission and the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council.

Partnering with the Mountain Safety Council gives the Commission a great avenue to connect the dots between outdoor safety and access culture in New Zealand, and the new scenarios incorporate messages from the *New Zealand Outdoor Safety Code* as well as the *New Zealand Outdoor Safety Code*.

As with the other scenarios on the Both Sides of the Fence website, these new scenarios raise awareness of New Zealand's outdoor access heritage. The new scenarios also tie in crucial safety messages, encouraging students to think about precautions they might need to take before heading outdoors.

recreationalists were aware of access conditions in this area. The Commission also facilitated presentation of accurate online information about the correct locations of public access to the river. Fish & Game New Zealand assisted by signposting access at sites agreed with local landholders.

A similar case in the Canterbury region near Lake Coleridge saw the Commission work with the Selwyn District Council to ensure access to the Harper River was unobstructed. The Commission had received

queries from several enquirers about access to the river across an unformed legal road, as public access had either been unclear or obstructed on several occasions. Following contact from the Commission and discussion between the council and the landholder, a padlock was voluntarily removed from the gate. The council also committed to install signage advising the conditions of public access to the unformed legal road and how to travel safely up the riverbed to ensure this was clear and understood by all parties, and the situation would not be repeated.

Enhancing access opportunities

New Zealanders love of the outdoors shapes our national culture. New Zealanders and international visitors value the many opportunities for free and enduring access to our forests, mountains, waterways, coasts and natural resources.

This access is one of the foundations of New Zealand's successful tourism industry, and is increasingly becoming recognised for its contribution towards the health and wellbeing of our communities.

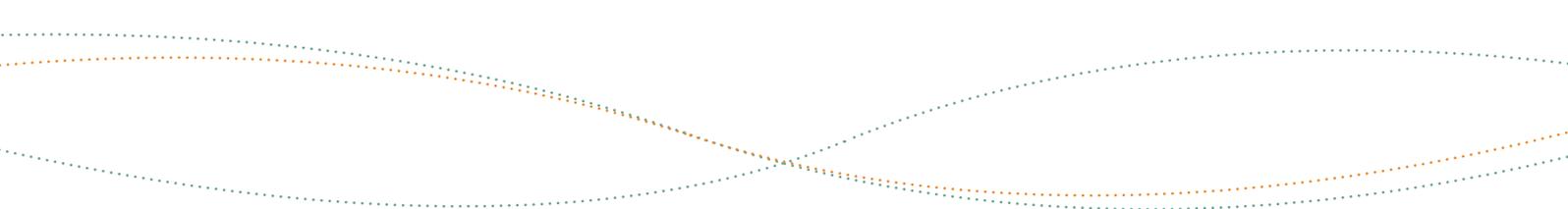
The Commission's 11 regional field advisors play a pivotal role in protecting existing access and facilitating entirely new access opportunities for New Zealanders. They help landholders, the public and statutory authorities to negotiate new tracks and access routes and to resolve access-related disputes. A large part of their work is providing information and advice to enable enquirers to make their own decisions about access. Rarely is this a simple process. Creating new access and resolving disputes usually requires significant background research and time for negotiation and mediation. The Commission's trust and credibility, combined with the independence and goodwill regional field advisors have created over time is often the key to ensuring a lasting resolution.

The Commission's caseload of access disputes has remained stable for the past year, which has allowed regional field advisors to focus their time on creating new access and strengthening links with other organisations with an interest in access to the outdoors.

Enhancing access opportunities requires both physical access and readily available information about where access exists. To this end, the Commission has continued to develop and promote its Walking Access Mapping System, which makes information about publicly accessible land easy to find and understand.

The Enhanced Access Fund provides funding to support community projects designed to create or improve access to New Zealand's outdoors. Since the fund was established in 2010, more than 80 such projects have been granted funding.

The Commission is the Crown entity responsible for the legal establishment of new walkways under the *Walking Access Act 2008*. The establishment of new walkways helps to create new access and make existing, but informal, access more enduring.



RETAINING ACCESS THROUGH DISPUTE RESOLUTION

One of the Commission’s principal statutory functions is to assist with dispute resolution to retain opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors. The Commission’s role in resolving disputes involves providing information and mediating during negotiations between relevant parties.

In 2015-2016, the Commission concluded 24 access disputes and received 26 new access dispute enquiries (see Fig. 3). This dispute resolution work contributed to a total of 43 access opportunities created or retained throughout the year with the Commission’s involvement.

Disputes resolved included obstructions to access on unformed legal roads, as well as disputes caused by misconceptions about landowner responsibilities towards visitors accessing their property. Some cases are easily resolved, while others can be complex and take time to address. Analysis carried out during the year found that 83 per cent of dispute enquiries received by the Commission were concluded within 12 months of the Commission’s involvement, and 88 per cent were concluded within 24 months.

There were 41 active disputes managed by the Commission at year-end. As the number of disputes declines, the Commission will be able to shift its focus

towards other areas, such as raising awareness of people’s rights and responsibilities in the outdoors.

Examples of the types of disputes resolved by the Commission in 2015-2016 are described on the following pages. They illustrate the diversity of issues, the types of parties involved and the Commission’s role and solutions.

DISPUTES OVER ACCESS TO LEGAL ROADS

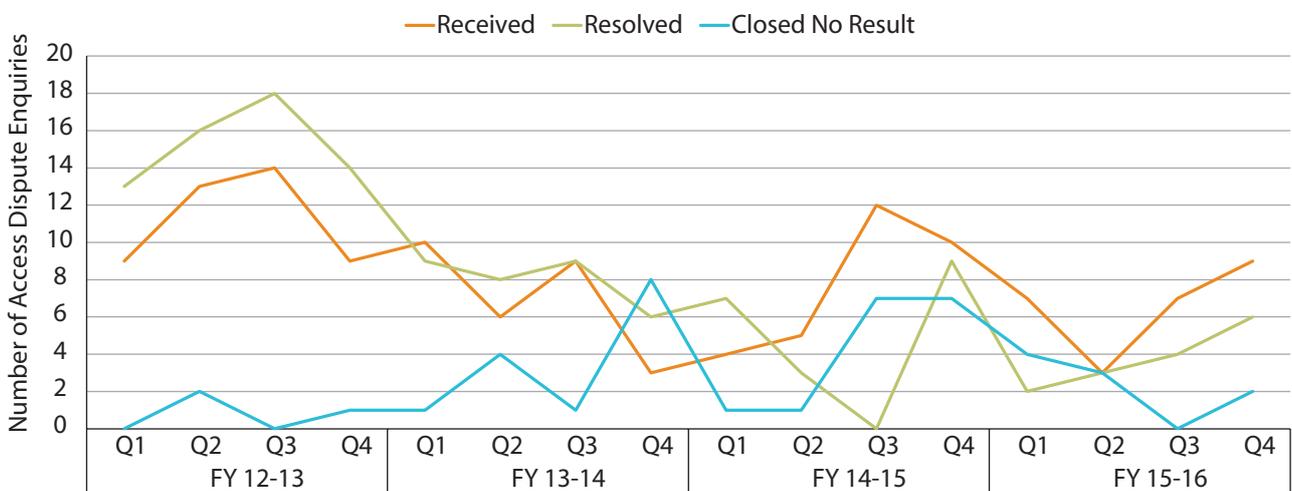
Uncertainties around rights of access to legal roads make up a large proportion of dispute enquiries received by the Commission. These cases often include locked gates, fences or earthworks that obstruct public access.

In addition to thousands of kilometres of formed roads there are an estimated 56,000km of unformed legal roads in New Zealand. Management of these roads is vested in territorial local authorities.

The public has the same rights of access to these roads as formed roads but common sense is advised as the topography and terrain found on some unformed legal roads makes some forms of use impractical.

Unformed legal roads are held in trust for the public by territorial local authorities and obstructing access by

Fig 3. Access disputes investigated by the Commission (2012-2016)



way of a fence, locked gate or any other means is not permitted. Stock grazing or growing crops on unformed legal roads is usually accepted by councils, so long as the activity does not obstruct access or cause undue risk to road users.

CASE STUDY: WORKING TO RESTORE RECREATIONAL ACCESS TO POKENO PATHWAY

The Commission collaborated with Waikato District Council and a recreational group to restore access to an unformed legal road near Pokeno that had previously been used by walkers and horse riders.

The Commission was contacted after two fences and a “no trespassing” sign had been installed on the unformed legal road, obstructing access to the road near its intersection with a local quarry.

The Council and Commission liaised with several landholders whose properties were bisected by the route, along with the quarry manager and a horse riding group to facilitate a solution.

The solution involved clarifying rights of access on the road to the landholders and quarry owner and working with them on a timeframe for removal of the “no trespassing sign” and realignment of the fences obstructing access to the road.

The sign and fences were removed by the landholders and public access along the track was restored.

DISPUTES CAUSED BY LAND USE

Public rights of access are shared by many different users, including trampers, anglers, cyclists, horse riders, four wheel drivers and farmers. The legal status of the access may affect the types of activities and uses. However, most legal forms of access allow use by many different users. This provides for enjoyment of the outdoors by many people, but can result in disputes between users and cause issues for organisations responsible for maintaining access. In some cases, these

disputes can put access in jeopardy for all, and the Commission may be asked to help facilitate a resolution.

CASE STUDY: COMMISSION PROVIDES ADVICE ON SHARED USE OF TRAILS

The Commission provided advice on a draft submission to the Palmerston North City Council’s proposed Manawatu River Framework.

An enquirer had sought support from the Commission due to a perception that a walkway was becoming less available to horse riders. While the draft framework clearly demonstrated an intention to make facilities multi-use for a wide range of recreational users and not to diminish existing use, the enquirer was concerned that some of the changes were being driven by increased use of the river walkway by other groups.

The Commission recommended the enquirer clearly identify in their submission how potential conflict between users could be managed and reduced, for example through use of dual tracks in tight segments or where different surfaces were required for different uses.

Other recommendations were for the enquirer to note areas where the track could be developed for horse riders to compensate for reduced activity in other areas, and to note areas where signage could be installed to clarify how the track was to be utilised for different activities.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT OWNERSHIP STATUS OF LAND

It is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether or not land is publicly accessible. In many cases the boundaries of public and private land are not signposted or marked, resulting in the public straying onto private land without knowing it. The problem may also be caused by longstanding use of private land by the public, some of whom may not realise that the access is across private land provided through the goodwill of a landholder. While there is a tradition in New Zealand for landholders

to grant access across their land to people who ask permission, landholders can decline this access if they wish to do so. Often there is a good reason, such as a history of bad behaviour by people using the land or work being undertaken on the property that might pose a danger to users.

CASE STUDY: ENHANCED ACCESS TO PUBLIC LAND VIA THE OARO RIVER

The Commission facilitated a meeting between police, landholders, the Department of Conservation and the Kaikoura District Council, resulting in the installation of signage clarifying the terms of access for hunters travelling to public land up the Oaro River south of Kaikoura.

The case involved a riverbed legally used by hunters for walking access to a popular hunting area on public land. Disputes had arisen due to hunters straying onto farmland and landholders becoming concerned for public safety, exacerbated when a goat wearing a collar was shot. This highlighted confusion about where hunting was and was not permitted.

An on-site meeting was arranged involving landholders from each side of the river, the district council as 'owner' of the unformed legal road used to reach the area, the Department of Conservation as manager of the hunting block and local police.

The negotiated agreement was favourable to all parties, and saw the creation of a carpark with input from the Commission and local iwi, in addition to the establishment of a clearly marked walking access route with detailed signage to inform users of the route to be followed and the law around trespass and use of firearms.

THE ROLE OF STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

Territorial local authorities and the Department of Conservation are the main statutory authorities responsible for managing public access on public land. Management of unformed legal roads is the responsibility of territorial local authorities, while access on conservation land and many marginal strips is managed by the Department of Conservation.

In most cases these organisations respond to access concerns promptly. When authorities are not responsive,

CASE STUDY: COLLABORATION TO RESTORE PUBLIC ACCESS TO UPPER AWAKINO RIVER

A combined effort between the Commission, Waitomo District Council and Department of Conservation opened up access to the Upper Awakino River.

Attempts were being made to restrict public access to a popular fishing spot on the river. However, a positive resolution was achieved through clear communication with landholders and recognition of statutory responsibilities by relevant authorities.

Public access rights were clarified at meetings organised between the parties, and the need for clear communication with recreational users wanting to use marginal strips, road reserves and unformed legal roads was also discussed.

The process was assisted by the willingness of the landholders to engage in discussion once the situation had been clarified for them. As a result, an outcome that recognised their needs in addition to accommodating public access was negotiated.

The Commission also worked with Fish & Game New Zealand to install signage illustrating both public access and suitable angling sites along the river. The resulting arrangement reinstates and enhances access to the river and adjoining conservation areas.

disputes can escalate and parties can become entrenched in their positions.

The Commission does not have coercive powers and relies on a collaborative and facilitative approach to

resolving disputes. In the vast majority of cases, an enduring solution requires information, patience, endurance, goodwill and acceptance of all parties, including, vitally, the statutory authorities.

CREATING NEW ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Commission continued creating new access through negotiations with landholders and the development of informal or legally enduring routes. These increase the outdoor recreation options available and offer benefits including increased tourism and healthier and more connected communities.

The Commission facilitated the creation of six entirely new formal or informal access routes, in addition to those created through walkway easements or Enhanced

Access Fund grants. These routes were created through the Commission’s work providing information and support to groups proposing new access, and to landholders who wished to create access across their properties. The information provided often takes the form of advice about the merits of different access arrangements, and which of these arrangements may be best suited to the case. The Commission also provided information and advice regarding a further 15 proposals for future new access.

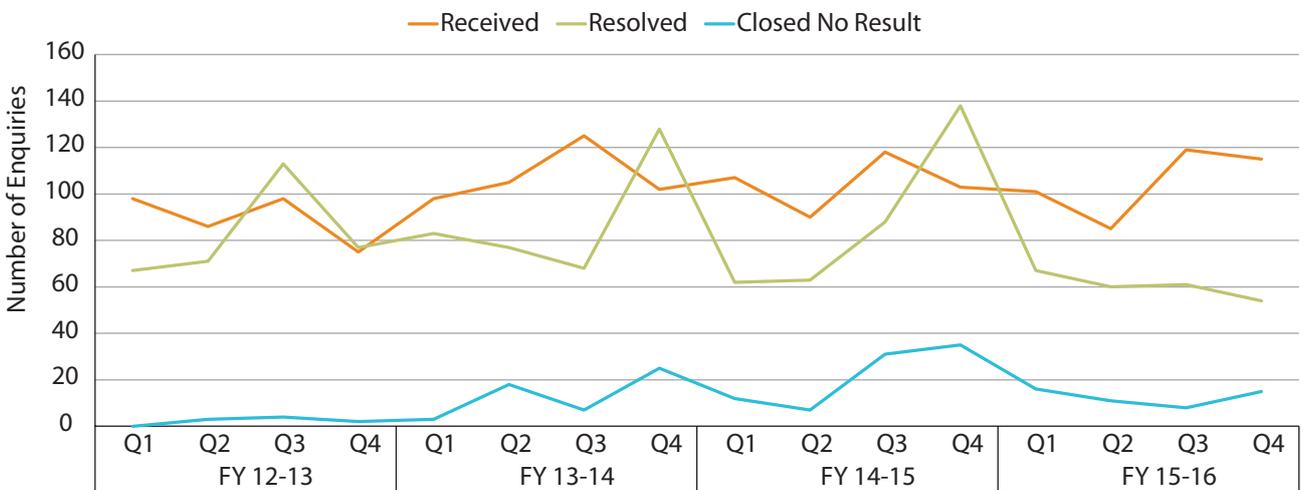
RESPONDING TO ACCESS ENQUIRIES

The Commission received 420 access enquiries (an average of 35 per month) and concluded 292 during the year. The region with the highest number of enquiries was Canterbury, with a total of 73 (21 per cent of the total enquiries received). Around the country, enquiries included questions about access rights and responsibilities, the Walking Access Mapping System, requests for assistance resolving access disputes and proposals for new access.

The number of enquiries received in 2015-2016 was similar to 2014-2015, when 418 enquiries were received (see Fig. 4). Just over a third of enquiries (34 per cent) received were submitted to the Commission using the Walking Access Mapping System’s built-in enquiry function.

At 30 June 2016, there were 351 active cases, compared to 248 active cases at the end of 2014-2015.

Fig. 4: Enquiries investigated by the Commission (2012-2016)⁹



⁹ NB: Cases are 'Closed no result' when resolution of the original enquiry has not been possible due to factors such as: landholders not agreeing to a proposal, responsible agencies declining to take action, or an enquirer withdrawing the original enquiry.

The most common enquiry types were general enquiries and Walking Access Mapping System queries, followed by access dispute enquiries and new access proposals (see Fig. 5). The number of new access proposals received has more than doubled, with 59 received in 2015-2016 compared to 28 the previous year.

The number of cases arising from conditions imposed as a result of approvals under the *Overseas Investment Act* is also high with 56 enquiries received, compared to 41 in 2014-2015. Northland received the highest number (11).

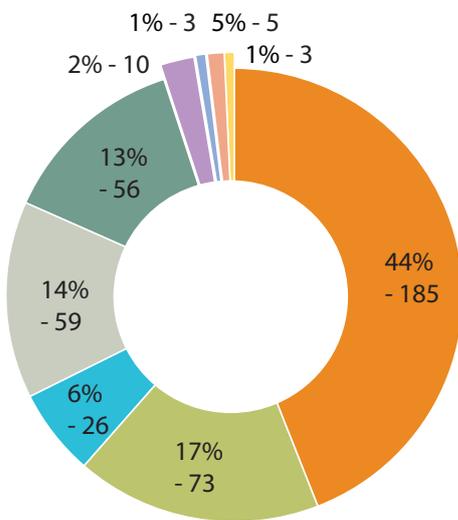
Most enquiries are managed by the Commission's Wellington-based staff, reflecting the dominance of general and Walking Access Mapping System type enquiries. Wellington staff also manage complex cases requiring significant research and investigation,

including tenure review cases and *Overseas Investment Act* applications.

The number of active access disputes on the Commission's books remains stable and sits at 41 at June 2016, compared to 39 at June 2015 (see Fig. 6). This has allowed the Commission's regional field advisor network to turn its attention towards community engagement, strengthening access culture and heritage, and creating entirely new access.

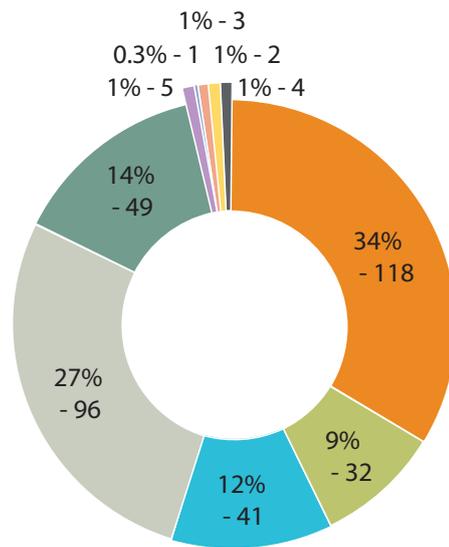
The regional field advisors continue to focus on dispute resolution, support for new access proposals, and assessment and negotiation of *Overseas Investment Act* conditions. Regional field advisors manage the bulk of the disputes and regional issues received by the Commission (see Fig. 7).

Fig 5. Types of enquiries received by the Commission in 2015-2016



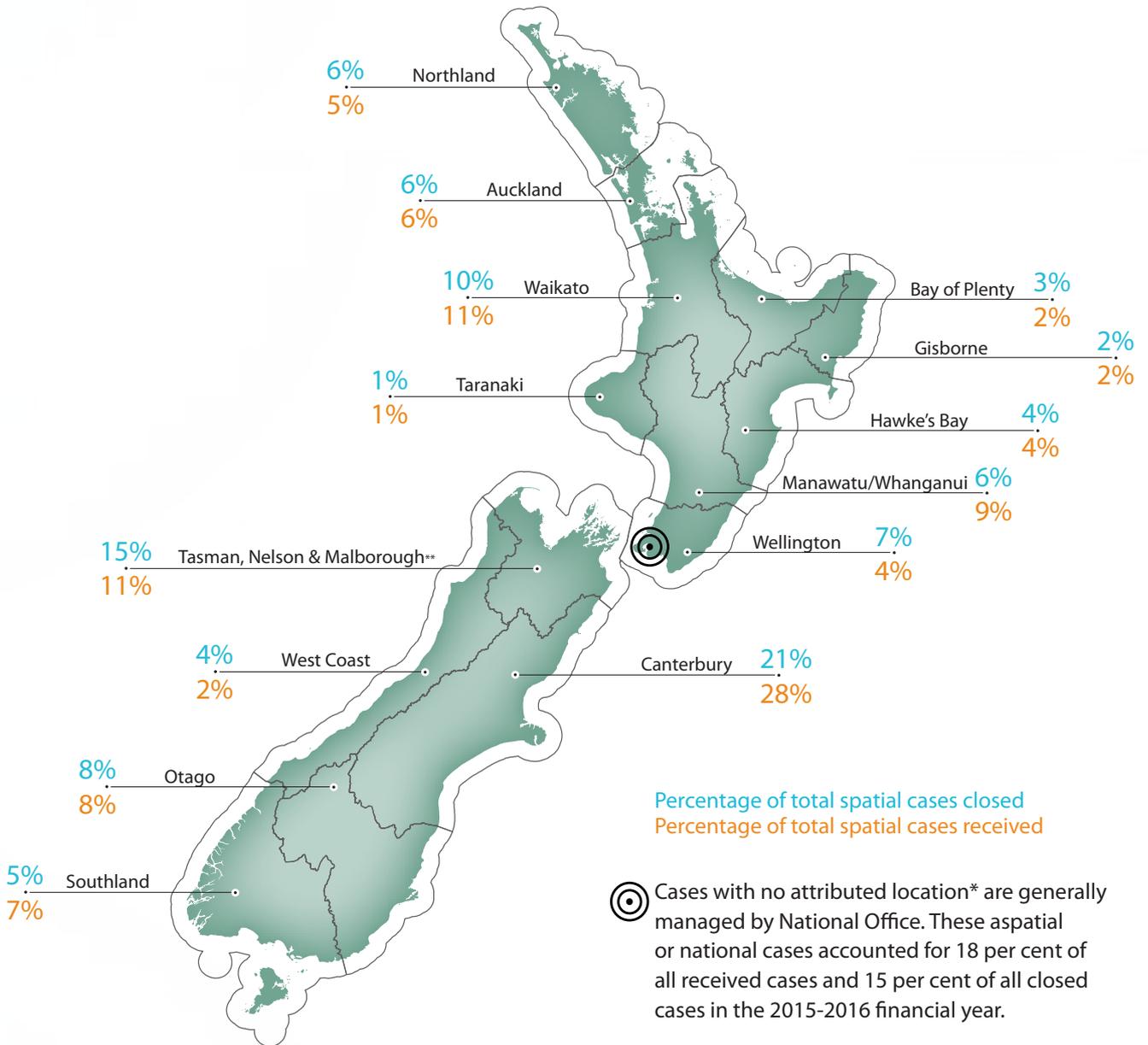
- General Enquiry
- Mapping System
- Access Dispute
- New Access Proposal
- Overseas Investment Office
- Road Stopping
- Tenure Review
- Expo/Presentation
- WAMS Data Error

Fig 6. Cases in progress at 30 June 2016



- General Enquiry
- Mapping System
- Access Dispute
- New Access Proposal
- Overseas Investment Office
- Road Stopping
- Tenure Review
- Expo/Presentation
- WAMS Data Error
- Office of Treaty Settlement

Fig 7. Cases received and closed by region in 2015-2016



CORPORATE RESPONSIVENESS SURVEY 2016

The Commission repeated its Corporate Responsiveness Survey in April 2016. This survey, last conducted in 2014, sought feedback on the satisfaction of people who have had contact with the Commission over the previous 12 month period. The most recent survey found that:

- » 90 per cent (91 per cent in 2014) of people who had been in contact with the Commission in the past 12 months would recommend its services to others
- » 85 per cent (76 per cent in 2014) were satisfied overall with the contact they received

- » 84 per cent (not surveyed in 2014) agreed the Commission was credible, trusted, reliable and responsive
- » 81 per cent (not surveyed in 2014) were satisfied with the timeliness and accuracy of information provided.

The survey found that the area of service most needing improvement was follow up and issue resolution. This suggests the Commission needs to ensure it provides ongoing, regular and proactive contact until issues and queries are fully resolved.

PROVIDING INFORMATION AND ADVICE ON ACCESS

The Commission provides information about outdoor access to central and local government authorities, in addition to the advice it provides to the public. This advice enables councils and central government agencies to take into account any implications for public access to the outdoors in their planning and policy decision making.

ADVICE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local authorities' awareness of the Commission and its role continues to increase and many authorities now seek out the Commission for advice on access topics. There are also many instances of authorities referring land professionals such as surveyors to the Commission for information and advice when new subdivisions are being created.

An example of the Commission's work with local government has been the advice provided to the Thames Coromandel District Council to help facilitate enduring access on sections of a proposed major regional project known as the Cathedral Cove Walk. The Commission has provided advice regarding the use of a walking access easement under the *Walking Access Act* to secure this access. If this kind of easement is adopted for the route, it is likely to be used on other routes planned by the council elsewhere in the Coromandel.

In another instance, the Commission provided advice to Tararua District Council regarding a proposed walkway that would provide access to a large recreational area

in the foothills of the Tararua Ranges. The potential walkway would link NaeNae Road in Tararua district to a loop track at Otangane Stream.

Nationwide, Commission representatives attended 40 meetings with local authority mayors, councillors, chief executives and staff during the year. There continues to be differing interpretations of the law regarding access, particularly on unformed legal roads, and these meetings are an important part in helping councils understand how best to manage access.

The Commission's *Guidelines on the Management of Unformed Legal Roads* is well used by local government staff for best practice management of access on unformed legal roads.

Since its establishment under the *Walking Access Act 2008*, the Commission has held forums with most local government authorities.

ADVICE TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Commission provides access-related information to agencies including the Overseas Investment Office, Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), the Department of Conservation (DOC) and the Office of Treaty Settlements, to help their policy and decision-making processes.

The Commission provided the Overseas Investment Office with 65 reports on recommended public access

provisions for properties being purchased by overseas buyers under the *Overseas Investment Act 2005*. These reports assist the Overseas Investment Office to set the purchase conditions for these properties, including any requirement for buyers to enhance public access to desirable locations as part of purchase agreements.

The Commission provided four reports on possible public access provisions to assist LINZ's assessments as part of tenure review processes. In Canterbury, regular meetings have been established between DOC's tenure review team and the Commission's regional field advisor for Canterbury. These meetings help to ensure access

WALKING ACCESS MAPPING SYSTEM

The Walking Access Mapping System (WAMS) is the Commission's most well used public resource. It includes topographic maps, aerial photography, and cadastral information that marks the boundaries of private titles. The system shows where the public has walking access by colour-coding parcels of land based on whether they are public or private.

There is also a built-in enquiry function that allows users to ask questions or submit access cases for investigation by the Commission. A majority of the access enquiries lodged with the Commission by members of the public are submitted using this function.

A recent upgrade to the mapping system, initiated in response to user feedback, has made it easier for people to identify public access in the outdoors. The improved version, launched in June, includes a new user-interface and added functionality that allows people with GPS devices to export data and upload route plans to view against the mapping system's public access information.

There have also been upgrades to the system's drawing and measuring tools, which will help people more accurately mark areas on the map and measure distances.

Visits to the mapping system have increased each year since its 2012 launch. In 2015-2016, an estimated 60,000¹⁰ people visited WAMS, which is 23 per cent more than the 48,759 who visited the previous year (See Fig. 8). The total number of visits (some people visited WAMS multiple times during the year) was 146,992.

is given appropriate consideration when DOC advises LINZ on the inherent values that should be taken into account when properties undergo tenure review.

ADVICE TO THE MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

The Commission provided nine briefings to the Minister for Primary Industries on access-related topics. These included advice on health and safety legislation reform and its potential impact on recreational access, and a briefing about the Commission's strategic intentions for 2016-2017.

WAMS USER SURVEY 2016

Since 2011, the Commission has conducted an annual survey of WAMS users. The most recent survey was undertaken in April 2016 (see Fig. 9). It found that:

- » 98 per cent of users agree the information provided by WAMS is useful (up from 93 per cent in the previous year)
- » 97 per cent of users said they would continue using the system (up from 95 per cent)
- » 96 per cent would recommend it to others (up from 91 per cent)
- » 77 per cent of users agreed WAMS was easy to use (down from 83 per cent)
- » 71 per cent agreed it was easy to find information on the status of land (down from 74 per cent)

Areas for improvement mentioned by survey respondents included the system's speed of loading and the limited functionality available via the mobile version of the system. The Commission expects the recent June upgrades to address some of these issues. Users also suggested the system should display a broader range of practical recreational information, such as specific detail about the suitability of tracks for different recreation activities, and current safety information.

The survey found that the most common reasons for using WAMS remain similar to previous years. Identifying land open to public access topped the list

¹⁰ The number of visitors is estimated due to a software upgrade that meant that the number of mobile users was unable to be recorded for four months.

Fig 8. Total unique visitors to the Walking Access Mapping System (2011-2016)

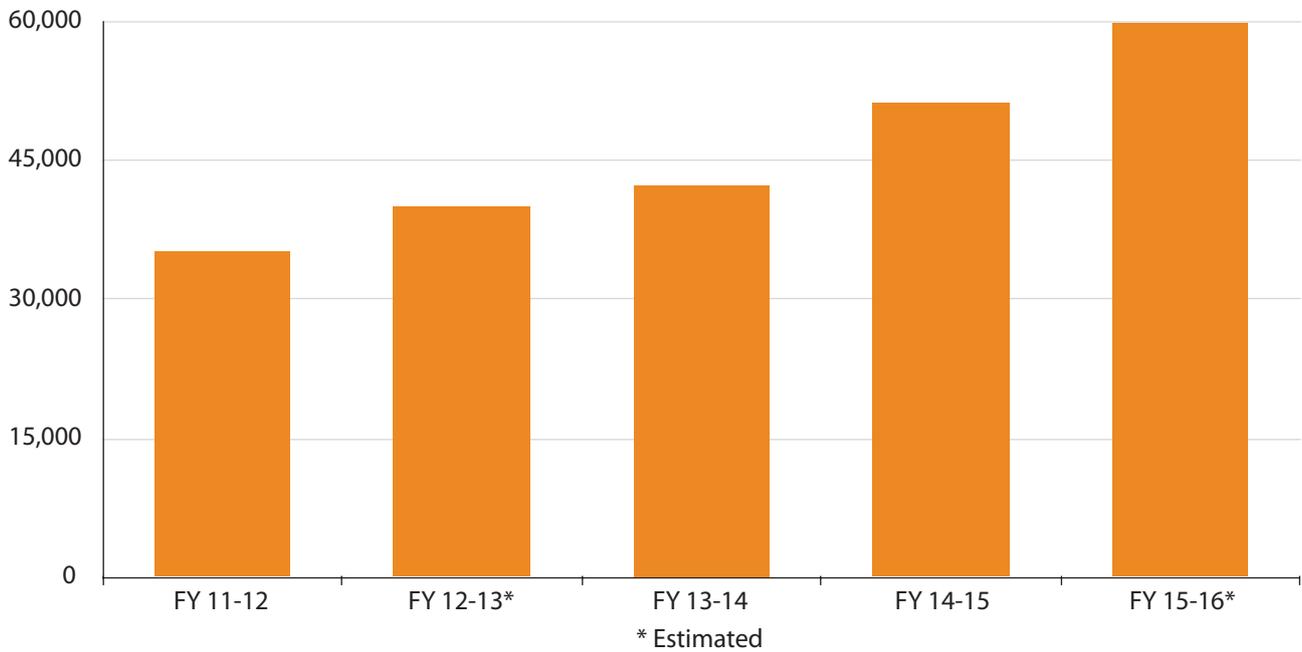
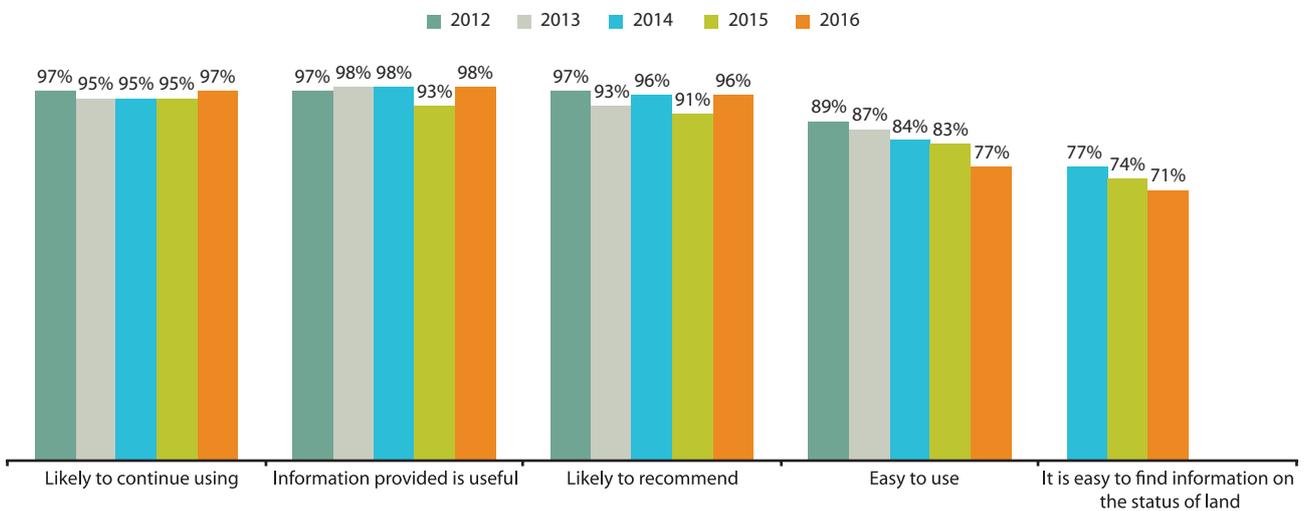


Fig 9. Walking Access Mapping System User Survey Results (2012-2016)¹¹



(84 per cent) followed by identifying walking access information (62 per cent) and viewing legal property boundaries (62 per cent).

The largest user group for WAMS is recreationists (75 per cent). The remaining 25 per cent is made up primarily of landholders, government and business users. Survey respondents seek more information on specific

activities, notably hunting, and also on areas of practical access and the location of services such as toilets, picnic areas, camps sites and car parks.

The Commission will investigate further opportunities to gather feedback from users in 2017 to explore how WAMS will continue to evolve.

¹¹ A question querying agreement with the statement "it is easy to find information on the status of land" was added in 2014. This question was not asked in the 2012 or 2013 surveys.

ENHANCED ACCESS FUND

The Commission administers a contestable fund to support projects that will enhance access to New Zealand's outdoors. This fund, known as the Enhanced Access Fund, is provided for in the *Walking Access Act 2008*.

The fund was established in 2009 and applications for grants are invited across two funding rounds throughout the year. Funding is prioritised towards projects that secure enduring access, and projects that clarify the locations of outdoor access opportunities (see Fig. 10). Funding for track materials is given lower priority as there are many other funding sources available for this purpose.

During 2015-2016, the Commission received 18 applications for funding and awarded \$31,660 (excluding GST) to 10 groups undertaking projects throughout New Zealand (see Fig. 11).

Since the fund began, \$794,000 (excluding GST) has

been allocated to 83 projects (see Fig. 12). The amount available and the principles and criteria used to assess applications are reviewed annually by the Board.

A review of the Enhanced Access Fund was undertaken in 2014-2015 and a number of recommendations for improvement were implemented during 2015-2016. They included clearly communicating the fund's priorities and providing examples of projects that had received grants through the fund, and maximising the exposure the Commission received from organisations that obtained funding.

The Commission generally allows up to two years for a project to be completed and funding claimed. This recognises the seasonal nature of many projects, the reliance on volunteers to undertake the work and, in many cases, the time required to obtain funding from other sources. Successful completion of these projects benefits individuals and communities, providing social and health benefits.

Fig 10: Approved Enhanced Access Fund projects by type

Funding Round	Pre-construction (e.g. negotiating or surveying)	Information (e.g. signs, brochures, research, maps)	Track materials (e.g. bridges, stiles)
2015	40%	50%	10%
2014	73%	18%	9%
2013	67%	22%	11%
2012	5%	14%	82%
2011	16%	26%	58%
2010	8%	17%	75%

Fig 11: Enhanced Access Fund applications, approvals and concluded projects

Funding round	Applications received	Grants approved	Projects concluded at year end
2015	18	10	2
2014	26	11	5
2013	33	9	7
2012	51	22	22
2011	45	19	19
2010	29	12	12
Total	202	83	64

CASE STUDY: THE WAIRERE TRAVERSE

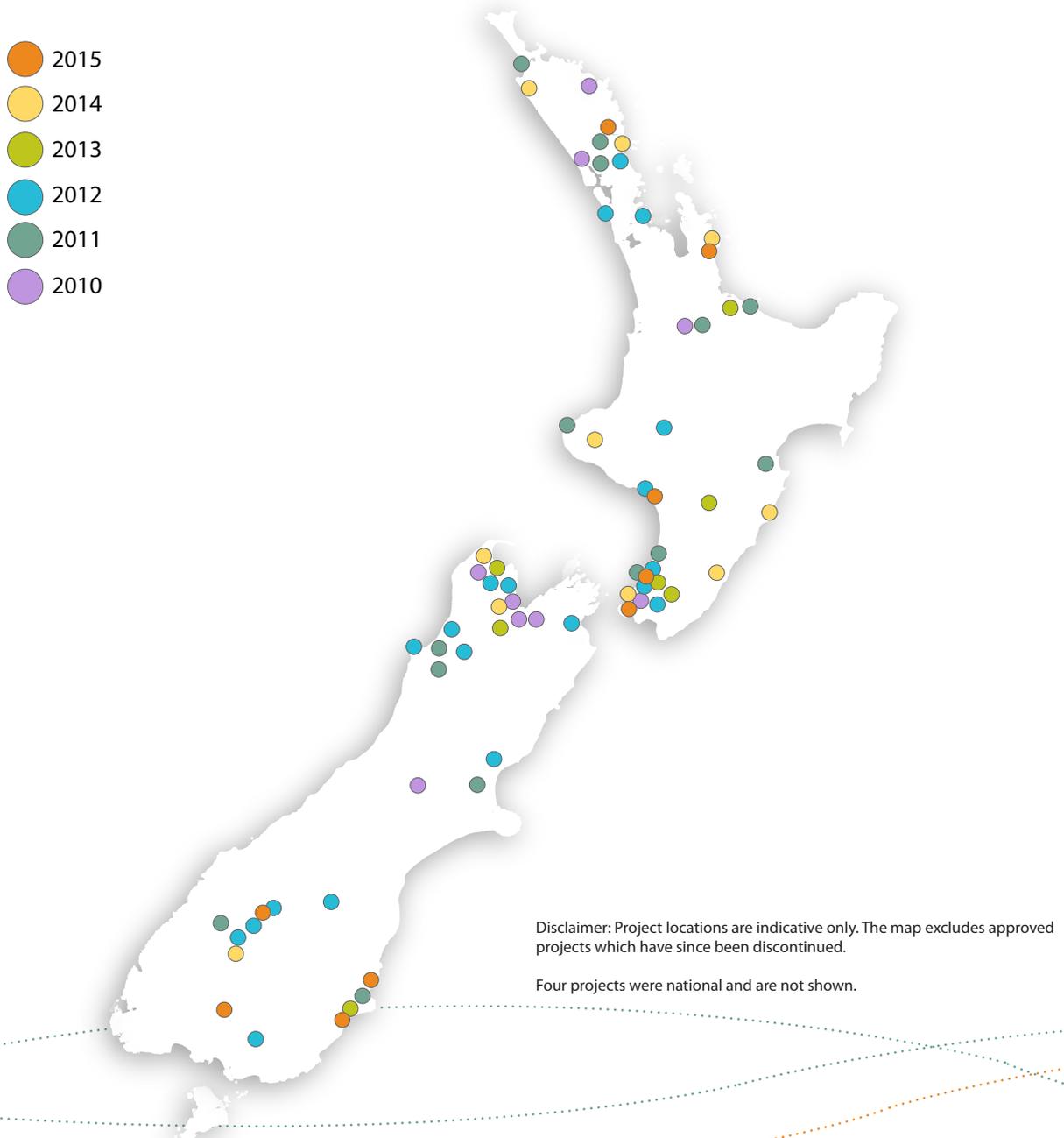
The Commission supported the completion of the final stage of the Wairere Traverse at Maungatautari Ecological Island near Cambridge in the Waikato region through a \$50,000 contribution from the Enhanced Access Fund.

The funding, awarded in 2010, helped enable completion of the 11km track, which includes five

bridges and 197 culverts. The work was labour intensive taking six years, and workers on the track mixed 550 25kg bags of ready mix concrete by hand.

The Wairere Traverse officially opened on 31 March 2016.

Fig 12: Enhanced Access Fund grants by region



WALKWAYS

The Commission is responsible for administering walkways under the *Walking Access Act 2008*. This includes appointing controlling authorities for each walkway (see Fig. 13). Controlling authorities are responsible for the day-to-day management, maintenance and enforcement of access provisions of walkways. Walkways within the scope of the *Walking Access Act* are created formally by notice in the *New Zealand Gazette*.

The Commission gazetted five walkways during the year, bringing the total number of walkways to 54.

The five gazetted walkways were Culling Walkway – Pohangina River Access in Pohangina, Te Wairere Walkway in Kerikeri, Carrington Walkway in Stratford, and Whareana Walkway and Ranginui Walkway, in the Waikato region. The Culling Walkway provides public access to the Pohangina River, while Te Wairere Walkway was established to provide public access over a small section of private land to complete a public access track to a waterfall. The Carrington Walkway formalised an existing river track, and Whareana Walkway and Ranginui Walkway created new formal access as required by the purchase conditions of a property put in place by the Overseas Investment Office.

Fig. 13: Walkway controlling authorities

Controlling authority	Number of walkways
Department of Conservation	45
Dunedin City Council	1
Greater Wellington Regional Council	1
Manawatu District Council	1
Nelson City Council	1
Northland Regional Council	1
Stratford District Council	2
Whanganui District Council	1
Waimate District Council	1

This year, there has been increasing interest among local groups in the establishment of new trails. Communities want to enhance local walking opportunities for themselves, and also attract outsiders to their regions to stimulate growth. Attractive and accessible trails may for example encourage visitors to stay overnight in the areas where they are located.

The past 12 months have also seen rising demand for cycleways and walkways through rural settings, including vineyards. It is important that landowners agreeing to provide access are provided with professional advice to assist them in understanding their obligations to any visitors and to ensure access being granted is provided in the best way for landholders and recreationalists.

CASE STUDY: CULLING WALKWAY – POHANGINA RIVER ACCESS FORMALLY GAZETTED

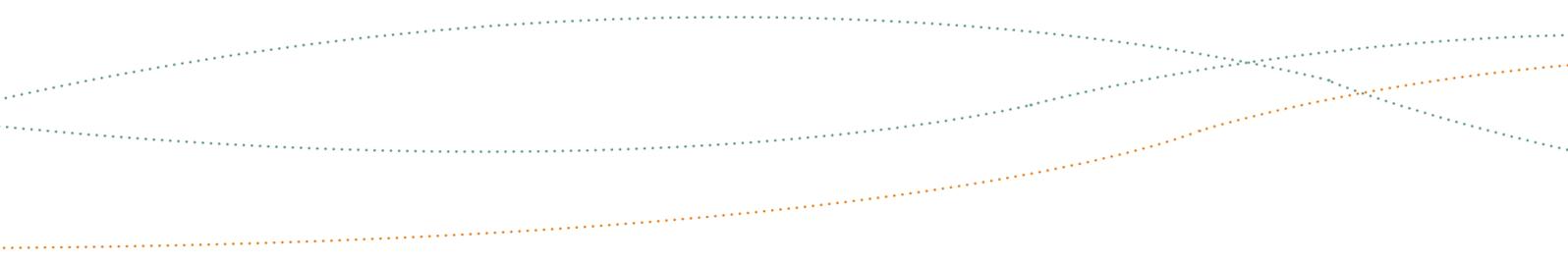
The Commission formally gazetted the Culling Walkway – Pohangina River Access following an Enhanced Access Fund application from a community group.

The length of the formally gazetted walkway is 230 metres, with the purpose of establishing a formally enduring river access pathway for the community for generations to come.

The work required from the Commission to gazette the land involved liaison with the community group, Manawatu District Council and several local landholders on the best route for the walkway, based on the needs of all stakeholders. A formal access easement was then created when all parties were satisfied with the outcome.

The walkway now provides official access to a picturesque section of the Pohangina River, in an area recognised by the Manawatu District Council as an 'Outstanding Landscape'.

Community groups are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of walking access legislation to establish enduring walking access. The legislation provides robust management structures and protection for landholders. The Commission's standard form of easement to formalise public access over private land involves the establishment of a gazetted walkway. This form of easement continues to grow in popularity, providing a transparent and manageable process to formalise long-term, enduring access.



Part 5: People, culture and capability

The Commission is committed to being a good employer (as defined in section 118 of the *Crown Entities Act 2004*) and actively promotes the principles of equal employment opportunities (EEO).

The Commission has personnel policies which guide its practices. These policies are reviewed regularly to comply with legislation and to reflect the needs of staff. The Commission manages a small team of employees and maintains a transparent environment, where people's needs and concerns are managed openly.

PEOPLE

As at 30 June 2016, the Commission had 6.0 full-time equivalent employees (unchanged from 2014-2015). The age profile of the employees is wide, with an average age of 47 years (also unchanged from the previous financial year). With the small number of employees there is little ethnic diversity – of the total of seven staff, 86 per cent are European and 14 per cent Asian; there are no Māori or Pacific Island staff. The Commission recognises the benefits that a more diverse workforce would bring. Staff members are all able bodied. The majority of staff (71 per cent) are male and all three managers are male.

The Commission has five Board members – three male and two female – and a kaumatua who provides advice on and assists with cultural matters, particularly at an operational level. Eleven regional field advisors (RFAs)

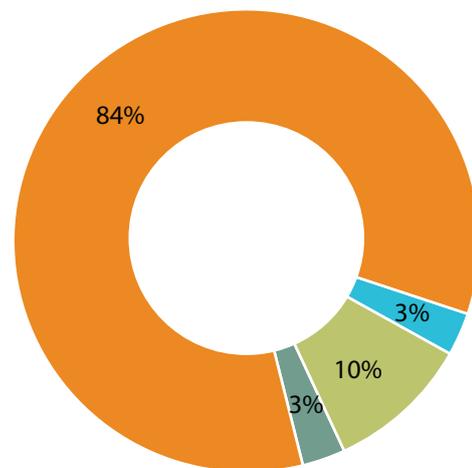
are employed by the Commission as independent contractors (two more than in 2014-2015). Five of the regional field advisors are male and six are female. EEO data is not held for them due to their contractual relationship with the Commission.

CORPORATE RESPONSIVENESS SURVEY

The *Corporate Responsiveness Survey 2016* conducted by the Commission during the year found that 84 per cent of people who have had contact with the Commission in the past year believe it is credible, trusted, reliable and responsive. Just three per cent of respondents disagreed, and 13 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know (see Fig. 14).

Fig. 14: Is the Commission credible, trusted and responsive?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't know



COMMITMENT TO STAFF

The following sections follow the reporting framework used by the Human Rights Commission to assess the "good employer" performance of Crown entities:

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND INDUCTION

The Commission demonstrates equal employment opportunity principles in its recruitment and selection practices. Vacancies are advertised and all individuals are employed on the basis of merit, according to skills, knowledge and relevant experience.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

The Commission has a positive, equitable approach to employee development. It encourages staff to identify development opportunities which reflect both work needs and their own longer term professional and personal objectives. Managers identify learning and development opportunities for staff aimed at ensuring

that organisational needs are met. There is an ongoing focus on developing and providing opportunities for staff. For example, during the year staff attended conferences and courses to develop technical and professional expertise on topics including governance, finance, records management, health and safety, and geospatial technology. Continued professional development is supported.

REMUNERATION AND RECOGNITION

The Commission uses job evaluation to set job bands and reviews salaries annually as part of its performance management process. Remuneration is adjusted using Statistics New Zealand Labour Cost Index data for the period ending June each year.

FLEXIBLE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The Commission recognises the value of flexible work arrangements. It supports and encourages staff to develop and maintain a work-life balance. Arrangements include offering part-time work (three staff are part-time) and providing for employees to work from home, as appropriate. The Commission takes into account the age of its employees, and how this might impact on their personal caring duties, whether they are looking after young children or elderly parents.

SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

The Commission promotes and actively invests in employee health, safety and wellbeing. All staff members are encouraged to attend first-aid courses. Staff members have access to an Employee Assistance Programme. Winter influenza vaccinations are offered to all staff members. The Wellington City Council deems the Commission's building not to be earthquake prone. All staff members have "grab and go" earthquake and disaster preparedness kits.

LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND CULTURE

The Commission has a conceptual framework which gives the organisation a clear sense of direction and outcomes. The Board and managers provide the supporting leadership at the governance and management levels. Managers have senior managerial and technical experience and provide informal coaching and mentoring for staff and RFAs. The Commission is a

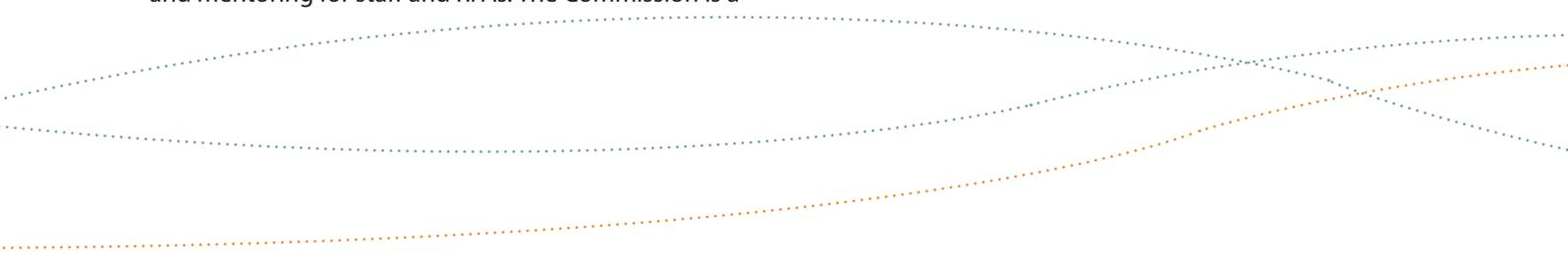
member of the public sector Leadership Development Centre. The Commission's work requires a high level of initiative, judgement and self-management which provide regular opportunities for staff to initiate and manage cases and projects. The Commission's size requires people to multi-task which places a high reliance on team work and operational skills. The nature of the Commission's work presents few opportunities for highly-structured leadership roles. Weekly staff meetings provide opportunities to share information, seek advice and discuss the office, its organisation and culture. The "Capability" section of the Commission's *National Strategy 2010-2035* aims for an organisational culture and environment that builds trust among stakeholders. This relies on an internal culture of transparency, objectivity, integrity and respect for others. The Commission seeks actively to be outward focused and to build constructive and collaborative relationships with stakeholders.

PREVENTING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

The Commission outlines acceptable behaviour in its Code of Conduct and Unacceptable Performance, Misconduct or Serious Misconduct Policy. Staff members have access to the Employee Assistance Programme. The Commission is committed to managing any complaints of bullying or harassment appropriately and in a timely manner.

ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

The Commission has a Business Continuity Plan to manage the business in the event of disaster (e.g. fire, water damage, earthquake).



MEASURING OUR INPUTS

Measure	Performance indicators	Target	Performance
1. Board members undertake an annual self-assessment exercise	Assessment completed	Board self-assessment completed and recommendations actioned by 30 June	2015-2016 – yes 2014-2015 – yes 2013-2014 – yes
2. The Commission has an effective health and safety policy	Workplace accidents	No workplace accidents	2015-2016 – nil 2014-2015 – nil 2013-2014 – nil
3. Provide advice to “the Minister or any other person on walking access”, including advice on Overseas Investment Act applications, Tenure Review proposals and the implementation of Treaty Settlements	Reports, briefings and advice provided annually	15-20	2015-2016 – 78 - Minister (9) - OIO (65) ¹² - Tenure Review (4) 2014-2015 – 76 2013-2014 – 23
	No negative feedback on advice given to Minister	Nil	2015-2016 – nil 2014-2015 – nil 2013-2014 – nil

¹² The application of additional resources in 2014-2015 to address a backlog of cases resulted in 55 OIO cases completed.

Part 6: Financial reports and performance

INTRODUCTION

This section contains the following statements:

- » Statement of responsibility
- » Statement of performance
- » Statement of comprehensive revenue and expense
- » Statement of financial position
- » Statement of changes in equity
- » Statement of cash flows
- » Notes to the financial statements.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Board is responsible for the preparation of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission's financial statements and statement of performance, and for the judgments made in them.

The Board of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission has the responsibility for establishing and maintaining a system of internal control designed to provide reasonable assurance as to the integrity and reliability of financial reporting.

The Board is responsible for any end-of-year performance information provided by the Commission under section 19A of the *Public Finance Act 1989*.

In the Board's opinion, the financial statements and the statement of performance fairly reflect the financial position and operations of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission for the year ended 30 June 2016.

Signed on behalf of the Board:

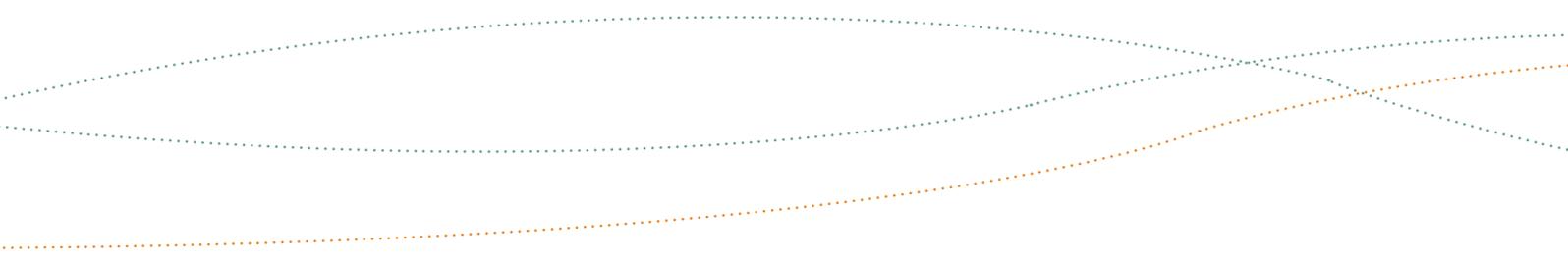


John Forbes, chairman



Penny Mudford, board member

31 October 2016



Statement of performance

The Commission is primarily funded through Vote Primary Industries – Non Departmental Appropriation – *Support for Walking Access*. The 2015-2016 Estimates of Appropriation contain the following with regard to the Commission's funding.

What is intended to be achieved with this Appropriation?

The appropriation is intended to achieve the effective management and operation of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission.

2014-2015 Actual \$000		2015-2016 Actual \$000
1,789	Total appropriation	1,789
1,789	The Commission's expenditure against appropriation	1,789

The Commission has only one output, therefore the figures presented in the Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expense represent the cost of service statement.

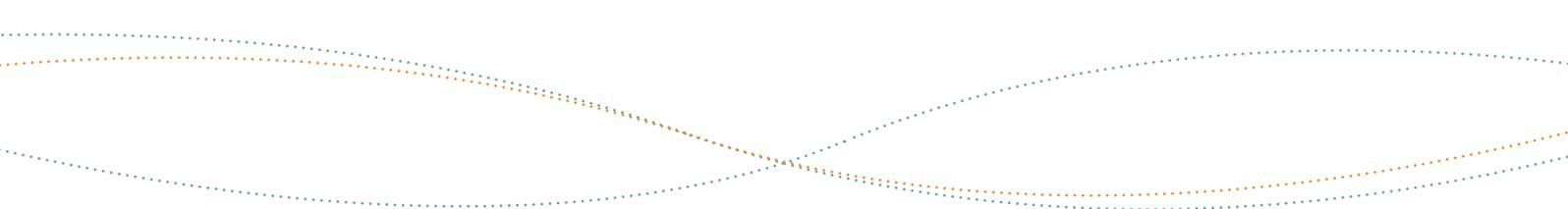
ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) rates the Commission's performance for the measure *Percentage of New Zealand Walking Access Commission deliverables identified in the annual letter of expectation are achieved* at 100% for the year ended 30 June 2016.

This rating is based on the Commission having successfully worked towards the following three expectations as set out in the Minister for Primary Industries' annual letter of expectation for 2015-16:

- » Timely resolution of access disputes and more visibility in the reporting on the resolution of these disputes, as distinct from general enquiries;
- » Increasing awareness, understanding and use of the Commission's services and products, including the online walking access mapping system; and
- » The creation of additional walking access for New Zealanders, including increasing the pace of completion of projects funded with the support of the Enhanced Access Fund.

The Commission has provided MPI with quarterly performance reports for the year ending 30 June 2016 which have successfully shown work undertaken to contribute to the achievement of the Minister's expectations (as above).



IMPACT MEASURES

Impact	Measure Quantity=QN Quality=QL	Target	Actual performance	Achieved? Yes/No
1.0 Strengthening access culture and heritage in New Zealand				
The New Zealand public agrees that New Zealanders and overseas visitors can easily access our country's outdoors	QL Percentage of respondents who agree ¹³	Higher than in 2015 (94%)	N/A ¹⁴	N/A
The New Zealand public agrees that access to New Zealand's outdoors is being strengthened and valued	QL Percentage of respondents who agree ¹⁵	Higher than in 2015 (68%)	N/A ¹⁶	N/A
2.0 Enhancing access opportunities in the outdoors				
Access opportunities created or retained with Commission involvement	QN Number of opportunities created or retained annually	Higher than previous year (83)	43	No ¹⁷
Access arrangements formalised and made enduring for future generations	QN Number of arrangements formalised annually	Higher than previous year (14)	4	No ¹⁸

¹³ This is measured in the Commission's biennial *Walking Access Survey*.

¹⁴ The *Walking Access Survey* is conducted every two years. The next survey is scheduled for early 2017.

¹⁵ This is measured in the Commission's biennial *Walking Access Survey*.

¹⁶ The *Walking Access Survey* is conducted every two years. The next survey is scheduled for early 2017.

¹⁷ A review of the raw data has not identified one single factor behind the lower numbers for the 2015-2016 year.

¹⁸ The number of formal access arrangements obtained can vary significantly from year to year. For example, some 18 are likely to be granted in one project in the coming year.

OUTPUT MEASURES

Impact	Measure Quantity=QN Quality=QL	Target	Actual performance	Achieved? Yes/No
1.1 Building collaboration with access stakeholders				
Most New Zealanders have a good understanding of how to behave responsibly in the outdoors	QL Percentage of respondents who agree ¹⁹	Higher than in 2015 (70%)	N/A ²⁰	N/A
1.2 Informing the public about access				
The school based education site is well used	QN 5% increase on previous years in number of visits to Both Sides of the Fence website ²¹	3,990	5,823 <i>Actual 2014-2015 5,656</i>	No ²² 3% increase on 2014-2015 'actual'
Raise public awareness of the Commission and access	QN Percentage of survey respondents who have heard of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission ²³	Higher than SPE target of 7%	N/A ²⁴	N/A

Impact	Measure Quantity=QN Quality=QL	Target	Actual performance	Achieved? Yes/No
2.1 Maintaining and enhancing access opportunities				
Effective management of dispute resolution processes	QN Disputes received	10	26	Yes ²⁵
	QN Disputes concluded	20	24	Yes
	QN Disputes carried over	30	41	No ²⁶
Investigations carried out on access disputes will be concluded as soon as practicable	TL Concluded within 12 months	55%	83%	Yes
	TL Concluded within 24 months	75%	88%	Yes

19 The *Walking Access Survey* is conducted every two years. The next survey is scheduled for early 2017.

20 The *Walking Access Survey* is conducted every two years. The next survey is scheduled for early 2017.

21 www.bothsidesofthefence.org.nz

22 The number of website visits exceeds the SPE target, but is less than a five per cent increase on 2014-2015. NZWAC is developing a promotion programme with Education Outdoors NZ, the organisation that represents teachers who have a focus on outdoor education.

23 The *Walking Access Survey* is conducted every two years. The next survey is scheduled for early 2017.

24 The *Walking Access Survey* is conducted every two years. The next survey is scheduled for early 2017.

25 An increase in the number of disputes received is considered favourable, recognising increased awareness of the Commission

26 The number of access disputes carried over has remained stable over the past two years. The nature of access disputes and the requirement for action by other agencies for their resolution means most disputes are relatively long term projects.

Impact	Measure Quantity=QN Quality=QL	Target	Actual performance	Achieved? Yes/No
2.2 Providing information and advice on access				
The NZ public agree that it is easy to find information on ownership/status of land	QL Percentage of respondents who agree ²⁷	Higher than 22% (2015)	N/A ²⁸	N/A
Public use of the Walking Access Mapping System (WAMS) is increased	QN 10% increase on previous year in unique visitors to the WAMS website ²⁹	52,800	52,771 ³⁰ <i>Actual</i> 2014-2015 51,298	No 3% increase on 2014-2015 'actual'
Public awareness of the Walking Access Mapping System (WAMS) is increased	QN Percentage of survey respondents who agree ³¹	New measure	39%	Yes
2.3 Responding to access enquiries				
People enquire about access to the Commission	QN Number of access enquiries received	360	420 <i>Actual</i> 2014-2015 418	Yes
Access enquiries are addressed satisfactorily	QL percentage of enquirers satisfied with the Commission's action	80%	85% <i>Actual</i> 2014-2015 93% ³²	Yes
	QN Number of enquiries/cases yet to be closed (based on current resourcing)	150	351 <i>Actual</i> 2014-2015 246	No ³³
Investigations carried out on access enquiries will be concluded as soon as practicable	TL Concluded within 12 months	80%	80%	Yes
	TL Concluded within 24 months	90%	89%	No ³⁴
People consider that the Commission is credible, trusted, reliable and responsive	QL Percentage of respondents who agree	Higher than 54% (2015) ³⁵	82% ³⁶	Yes

²⁷ This is measured in the Commission's biennial *Walking Access Survey*.

²⁸ The *Walking Access Survey* is conducted every two years. The next survey is scheduled for early 2017.

²⁹ www.wams.org.nz

³⁰ Due to a software upgrade the number of mobile users was unable to be recorded over the period from 12 August to 17 December 2015. Our estimate, based on previous month's mobile visits, is that this measure could exceed 60,000 if those mobile users were able to have been captured.

³¹ This was measured in the *Walking Access Mapping System User Survey 2016*. The survey asked users whether they agreed that awareness of the mapping system was increasing.

³² A *Corporate Responsiveness Survey* was not conducted in 2014-2015 so this was measured by the *Walking Access Survey 2015*. Of the respondents who had interacted with the Commission, 93 per cent said they found what they were looking for.

³³ Elements that keep this number high include larger than expected numbers of Overseas Investment Office cases and the relative inexperience of 66 per cent of the regional field advisor network. Given a stable workforce it is estimated the number of cases carried over each quarter will slowly decline in 2016-2017.

³⁴ The Commission does not have coercive powers and relies on a collaborative and facilitative approach to resolving disputes. In the majority of cases, an enduring solution requires patience, endurance, goodwill and acceptance of all parties, including, vitally, the statutory authorities.

³⁵ This was measured in the *Walking Access Survey 2015*, conducted in the 2014-2015 period.

³⁶ The *Walking Access Survey* was not conducted this year so this was measured by the *Corporate Responsiveness Survey 2016*. Note that the *Walking Access Survey 2015* surveyed the general public, while the *Corporate Responsiveness Survey* surveyed people who had interacted with the Commission.

Statement of financial performance

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE AND EXPENSE

For the year ended 30 June 2016

2015 Actual \$000	Note	2016 Actual \$000	2016 Budget \$000
Income			
1,789	2	1,789	1,789
130		119	99
4		8	0
1,923		1,916	1,888
Expenditure			
1,048	3	1,056	1,405
558	4	553	589
19		19	19
65	12	63	75
130		130	129
0		492	0
63		63	66
1,883		2,376	2,283
40		(460)	(395)
0		0	0
40		(460)	(395)
Total comprehensive revenue and expense is comprised of:			
186		(260)	4
(146)		(200)	(399)
40		(460)	(395)

Explanations of major variances against budget are provided in note 19.

Budget financial figures are not audited.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

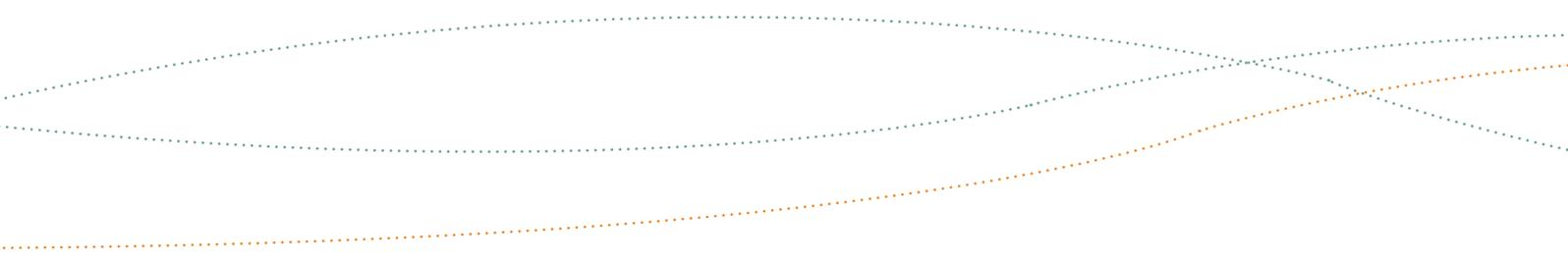
As at 30 June 2016

2015 Actual \$000	Note	2016 Actual \$000	2016 Budget \$000
Assets			
Current assets			
288	6	381	156
36		49	20
38		21	21
450	7	625	750
812		1,076	947
Non-current assets			
42	8	35	30
613	9	227	498
1,884	7	1,975	1,656
2,539		2,237	2,184
3,351		3,313	3,131
Current liabilities			
204		197	181
61	14	41	50
0		449	447
265		687	678
3,086		2,626	2,453
Equity			
1,557	5	1,297	1,404
1,529	5	1,329	1,049
3,086		2,626	2,453

Explanations of major variances against budget are provided in note 19.

Budget financial figures are not audited.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

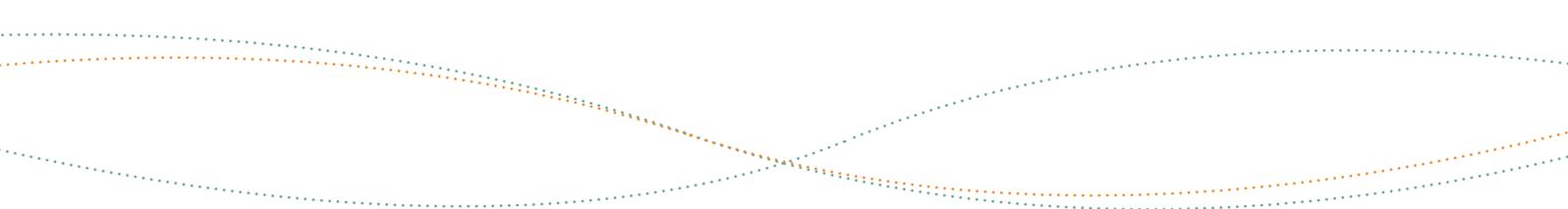
For the year ended 30 June 2016

2015 Actual \$000	Note	2016 Actual \$000	2016 Budget \$000
3,046	Balance at 1 July	3,086	2,848
Movements in total equity:			
40	Total comprehensive revenue and expense for the period	(460)	(395)
3,086	Total equity at 30 June	2,626	2,453

Explanations of major variances against budget are provided in note 19.

Budget financial figures are not audited.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 30 June 2016

2015 Actual \$000	Note	2016 Actual \$000	2016 Budget \$000
Cash flows from operating activities			
1,342		2,236	1,789
141		112	99
4		10	0
(72)		76	(1)
(566)		(573)	(588)
(1,154)		(1,273)	(1,527)
(305)		588	(228)
Cash flows from investing activities			
375		0	164
(2)		(4)	0
0		(225)	0
0		(266)	0
373		(495)	164
Cash flows from financing activities			
0		0	0
0		0	0
68		93	(64)
220		288	220
288	6	381	156

Explanations of major variances against budget are provided in note 19.

Budget financial figures are not audited.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements

1. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

REPORTING ENTITY

The New Zealand Walking Access Commission (the Commission) is a Crown entity as defined by the *Crown Entities Act 2004* and is domiciled and operates in New Zealand. The relevant legislation governing the Commission's operations includes the *Crown Entities Act 2004* and the *Walking Access Act 2008*. The Commission's ultimate parent is the New Zealand Crown.

The Commission's primary objective is to provide services to the New Zealand public. The Commission does not operate to make a financial return.

The Commission has one output: Walking Access Commission. The figures presented in these financial statements are for that one output.

The Commission has designated itself as a public benefit entity (PBE) for financial reporting purposes.

The financial statements for the Commission are for the year ended 30 June 2016, and were approved by the Board on 26 September 2016.

BASIS OF PREPARATION

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, and the accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the period.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements of the Commission have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Crown Entities Act 2004*, which includes the requirement to comply with generally accepted accounting practice New Zealand (NZ GAAP).

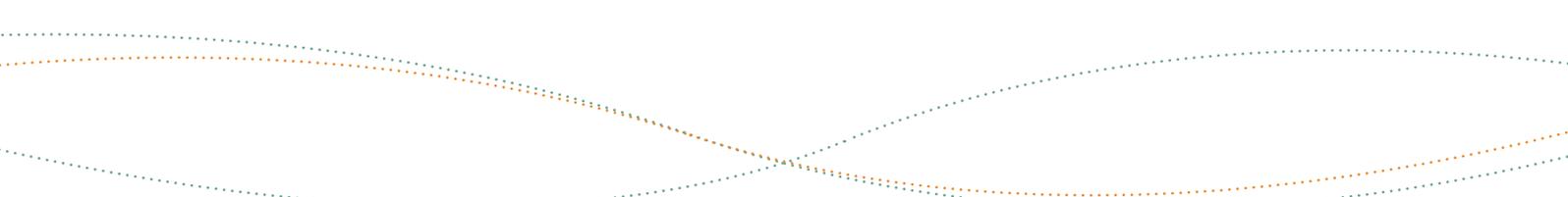
These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Tier 2 PBE accounting standards, and concessions under the reduced disclosure regime have been applied. The criteria under which the Commission is eligible to report in accordance with Tier 2 PBE accounting standards are:

- a) its debt or equity instruments are not traded in a public market nor is it in the process of issuing such instruments for trading in a public market (a domestic or foreign stock exchange or an over-the-counter market, including local and regional markets);
- b) it does not hold assets in a fiduciary capacity for a broad group of outsiders as one of its primary businesses; and
- c) its total expenses do not exceed \$30 million.

These financial statements comply with PBE standards.

Presentation currency and rounding

The financial statements are presented in New Zealand dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars (\$000) unless otherwise stated.



SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Revenue

The specific accounting policies for significant revenue items are explained below:

Funding from the Crown

The Commission is primarily funded through revenue received from the Crown that is restricted in its use for the purpose of the Commission meeting its objectives as specified in its founding legislation and the scope of the relevant appropriations of the funder.

The Commission considers there are no conditions attached to the funding and it is recognised as revenue at the point of entitlement. This is considered to be the start of the appropriation period to which the funding relates.

The fair value of revenue received from the Crown has been determined to be equivalent to the amounts due in the funding arrangement.

Interest revenue

Interest revenue is recognised by accruing on a time proportion basis the interest due for the investment.

Grant expenditure (Enhanced Access Fund)

Discretionary grants are those grants where the Commission has no obligation to award on receipt of the grant application. Discretionary grants with substantive conditions are recognised as expenditure when the approved applicant has met the criteria in the grant contract and the Commission has approved the expenditure.

The Commission has no non-discretionary grants.

Leases

Finance leases

A finance lease is a lease that transfers to the lessee substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an asset, whether or not title is eventually transferred.

The Commission does not have any finance leases.

Operating leases

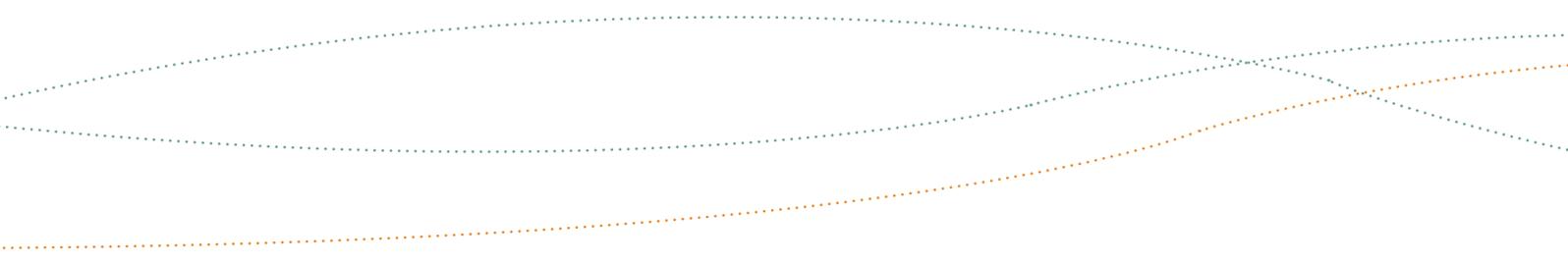
An operating lease is a lease that does not transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an asset.

Lease payments under an operating lease are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

Lease incentives received are recognised in the surplus or deficit as a reduction of rental expense over the lease term.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.



Receivables

Short-term receivables are measured at their face value, less any provision for uncollectability.

A receivable is considered uncollectable when there is evidence that the amount due will not be fully collected. The amount that is uncollectable is the difference between the amount due and the present value of the amount expected to be collected.

Investments

Bank term deposits

Bank term deposits are initially measured at the amount invested.

After initial recognition, investments in bank deposits are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any provision for impairment.

Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment consists of the following asset classes: computer hardware, leasehold improvements and office equipment.

Property, plant and equipment are measured at cost, less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

Additions

The cost of an item of property, plant and equipment is recognised as an asset only when it is probable that future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Commission and the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

In most instances, an item of property, plant and equipment is initially recognised at its cost. Where an asset is acquired through a non-exchange transaction, it is recognised at its fair value as at the date of acquisition.

Disposals

Gains and losses on disposal are determined by comparing the proceeds with the carrying amount of the asset. Gains and losses on disposals are reported net in the surplus or deficit.

Subsequent costs

Costs incurred subsequent to initial acquisition are capitalised only when it is probable that future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Commission and the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

The costs of day-to-day servicing of property, plant and equipment are recognised in the surplus or deficit as they are incurred.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on a straight line basis on all property, plant and equipment at rates that will write-off the cost (or valuation) of the assets to their estimated residual values over their useful lives. The useful lives and associated depreciation rates of major classes of property, plant and equipment have been estimated as follows:

» Office equipment	5 - 10 years	10% - 20%
» Leasehold improvements	9 years	11.1%
» Computer hardware	4 - 5 years	20% - 25%

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated remaining useful lives of improvements, whichever is the shorter.

The residual value and useful life of an asset is reviewed, and adjusted if applicable, at each financial year end.

Intangible assets

Software acquisition and development

Acquired computer software licenses are capitalised on the basis of the costs incurred to acquire and bring to use the specific software.

Costs that are directly associated with the development of software for internal use are recognised as an intangible asset. Direct costs include the software development employee costs and an appropriate portion of relevant overheads.

Staff training costs are recognised as an expense when incurred.

Costs associated with maintaining computer software are recognised as an expense when incurred.

Costs associated with development and maintenance of the Commission's web sites are recognised as an expense when incurred.

Amortisation

The carrying value of an intangible asset with a finite life is amortised on a straight line basis over its useful life. Amortisation begins when the asset is available for use and ceases at the date the asset is derecognised. The amortisation charge for each financial year is recognised in the surplus or deficit.

The useful lives and associated amortisation rates of major classes of intangible assets have been estimated as follows:

» Developed computer software (mapping system)	3 - 10 years	10% - 33%
» Acquired Computer software	3 - 5 years	20% - 33%

Impairment of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets

The Commission does not hold any cash-generating assets. Assets are considered cash-generating where their primary objective is to generate a commercial return.

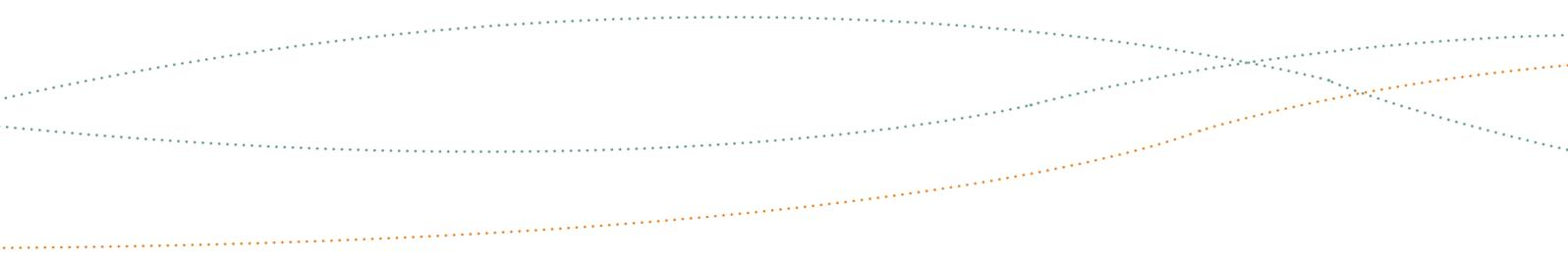
Non-cash-generating assets

Property, plant and equipment and intangible assets held at cost that have a finite useful life are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable service amount. The recoverable service amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use.

Value in use is determined using an approach based on either a depreciated replacement cost approach, restoration cost approach, or a service units approach. The most appropriate approach used to measure value in use depends on the nature of the impairment and availability of information.

If an asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable service amount, the asset is regarded as impaired and the carrying amount is written-down to the recoverable amount. The impairment loss is recognised in the surplus or deficit.

The reversal of an impairment loss is recognised in the surplus or deficit.



Creditors and other payables

Short-term creditors and other payables are recorded at the amount payable.

Employee entitlements

Short-term employee entitlements

Employee benefits that are due to be settled within 12 months after the end of the year in which the employee provides the related service are measured based on accrued entitlements at current rates of pay.

These include salaries and wages accrued up to balance date, annual leave earned to but not taken at balance date, and sick leave.

A liability and an expense are recognised for performance payments where there is a contractual obligation or where there is past practice that has created a constructive obligation and a reliable estimate of the obligation can be made.

Long-term employee entitlements

The Commission does not provide long service leave or retirement leave.

Presentation of employee entitlements

Annual leave and sick leave are classified as a current liability.

Superannuation schemes

Defined contribution schemes

Obligations for contributions to KiwiSaver and the Government Superannuation Fund are accounted for as defined contribution superannuation schemes and are expensed in the surplus or deficit as incurred.

Provisions

A provision is recognised for future expenditure of uncertain amount or timing when: there is a present obligation (either legal or constructive) as a result of a past event; it is probable that an outflow of future economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation, and; a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Equity

Equity is measured as the difference between total assets and total liabilities. Equity is disaggregated and classified into the following components.

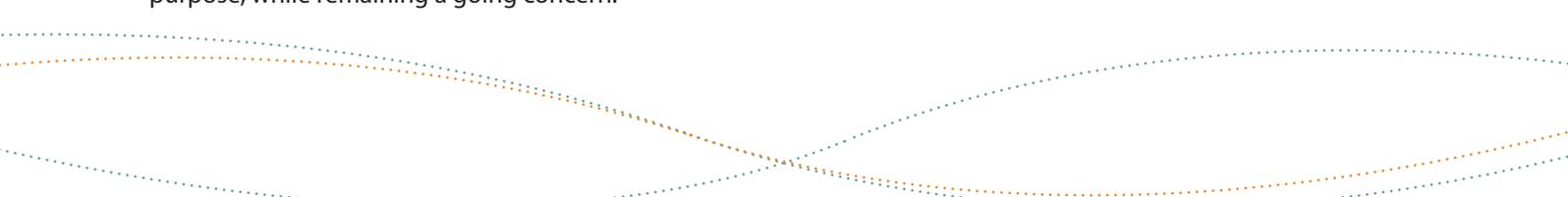
- » Accumulated surplus, and
- » Enhanced Access Fund.

Capital management

The Commission's capital is its equity, which comprises accumulated funds. The Commission is subject to financial management and accountability provisions of the *Crown Entities Act 2004* which imposes restrictions in relation to borrowings, acquisition of securities, issuing guarantees and indemnities, and the use of derivatives.

The Commission has complied with the financial management requirements of the *Crown Entities Act 2004* during the year.

The Commission manages its equity as a by-product of prudently managing revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments, and general financial dealings to ensure that the Commission effectively achieves its objectives and purpose, while remaining a going concern.



Goods and Services Tax (GST)

All items in the financial statements are presented exclusive of GST, except for receivables and payables, which are presented on a GST-inclusive basis. Where GST is not recoverable as input tax, then it is recognised as part of the related asset or expense.

The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the Inland Revenue Department is included as part of receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

The net GST paid to, or received from, the Inland Revenue Department, including the GST relating to investing and financing activities, is classified as an operating cash flow in the statement of cash flows.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed exclusive of GST.

Income tax

The Commission is a public authority and consequently is exempt from the payment of income tax. Accordingly, no provision has been made for income tax.

Budget figures

The budget figures are derived from the statement of performance expectations as approved by the Board at the beginning of the financial year. The budget figures have been prepared in accordance with NZ GAAP, using accounting policies that are consistent with those adopted by the Board in preparing these financial statements.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

In preparing these financial statements, the Commission has made estimates and assumptions concerning the future. These estimates and assumptions may differ from the subsequent actual results. Estimates and assumptions are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying value of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below:

Estimated useful lives and residual values of property, plant and equipment

At each balance date, the useful lives and residual values of property, plant and equipment are reviewed. Assessing the appropriateness of useful life and residual value estimates of property, plant and equipment requires a number of factors to be considered such as the physical condition of the asset, expected period of use of the asset by the Commission, and expected disposal proceeds from the future sale of the asset.

An incorrect estimate of the useful life or residual value will affect the depreciation expense recognised in the surplus or deficit, and carrying amount of the asset in the statement of financial position. The Commission minimises the risk of this estimation uncertainty by: physical inspection of assets; and asset replacement programmes.

The Commission has not made any significant changes to past assumptions concerning useful lives and residual values.

Estimated useful lives of software assets

The Commission's internally generated software largely comprises an interactive database provided to the public as part of the Commission's statutory functions. Internally generated software has a finite life, which requires the Commission to estimate the useful life of software assets.

In assessing the useful lives of software assets, a number of factors are considered, including: the period of time the software is intended to be in use; the effect of technological change on systems and platforms; and the expected timeframe for the development of replacement systems and platforms.

An incorrect estimate of the useful lives of software assets will affect the amortisation expense recognised in the surplus or deficit, and carrying amount of the software assets in the statement of financial position.

Critical judgements in applying accounting policies

Management has exercised the following critical judgements in applying accounting policies:

- » Crown funding will remain unchanged in the next financial period;
- » The Walking Access Mapping System had a useful life of 10 years (commencing from 2010). New investment in the mapping system has an assessed useful life of three years;
- » Enhanced Access Fund grants will be made available each year, to the estimated amount of interest revenue generated by the fund for that year;
- » Employee entitlements and other costs are budgeted to increase by about the expected rate of inflation.

2. NON EXCHANGE REVENUE

Revenue from non-exchange transactions are transactions where an entity will receive revenue and provide no or a nominal consideration directly in return.

The Commission has been provided with funding from the Crown for the specific purposes of the Commission. Apart from these general restrictions, there are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attached to Crown funding.

3. OPERATING COSTS

	Actual 2016 \$000	Actual 2015 \$000
Contractors	264	297
Travel and accommodation	106	103
Publications and publicity	76	38
Consultants	15	47
Service contracts	252	253
Enhanced Access Fund - Grants and Other expenses	230	217
Enhanced Access Fund - Software development expenses	46	0
Performance measurement	13	24
Other	54	69
Total operating costs	1,056	1,048

4. PERSONNEL COSTS

	Actual 2016 \$000	Actual 2015 \$000
Salaries, wages and allowances	533	514
Increase (decrease) in employee entitlements	(12)	6
Recruitment	35	0
Employer contributions to defined contribution plans	20	27
Employer costs	17	11
Adjustment for Capitalised remuneration	(40)	0
Total personnel costs	553	558

5. EQUITY

	Actual 2016 \$000	Actual 2015 \$000
General Funds		
Balance 1 July	1,557	1,372
Surplus (deficit) for the year	(460)	40
Transferred from Enhanced Access Fund	200	145
Balance at 30 June	1,297	1,557

Enhanced Access Fund

(A contestable fund designed to support projects that will enhance access to New Zealand's outdoors)

Balance 1 July	1,529	1,674
Transfers from General funds		
- Income from Walkway symbol	5	4
- Interest earned	71	82
- Grants paid	(24)	(21)
- Other EAF funded projects	(252)	(210)
Balance at 30 June	1,329	1,529

Total equity at 30 June

2,626 **3,086**

The Enhanced Access Fund has decreased by \$0.200m during the year. Income received was from interest earned on investments and a licence fee for the use of the Commission's Walkway symbol. Expenditure on grants amounted to \$0.024m (budget \$0.063m), as these expenses are not directly controlled by the Commission – we are reliant on third parties completing approved projects.

In the *Statement of Performance Expectations 2015-2016*, in addition to its grant programme, the Board approved Enhanced Access Fund expenditure on the following activities to enhance the Commission's performance and increase awareness: communications programmes \$0.077m (budget \$0.155m); improve the Commission's information technology infrastructure, including the walking access mapping system \$0.096m (budget \$0.124m); and to improve operational effectiveness, including expansion of the regional field advisor programme to Auckland, Waikato and Wellington and resources required to respond to an increase in Overseas Investment Office applications \$0.079m (budget \$0.120m).

6. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	Actual 2016 \$000	Actual 2015 \$000
Cash at bank	231	288
Deposits with a term of three months or less	150	0
Total cash and cash equivalents	381	288

7. INVESTMENTS

	Actual 2016 \$000	Actual 2015 \$000
Current Investments	625	450
Term investments	1,975	1,884

Term investments are mainly comprised of funds retained for the Enhanced Access Fund.



8. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

The Commission has a vested interest in some easements and a lease on gazetted walkways. These represent an interest in private land and have not been valued. They are held for the benefit of the public. The Commission has compiled a register of known gazetted walkways.

	Computer hardware \$000	Leasehold improvement \$000	Office equipment \$000	Total \$000
Cost				
Balance at 1 July 2014	34	47	72	153
Additions	1	0	1	2
Disposals	0	0	0	0
Balance at 30 June 2015	35	47	73	155
Balance at 1 July 2015	35	47	73	155
Additions	3	0	1	4
Disposals	0	0	0	0
Balance at 30 June 2016	38	47	74	159
Accumulated depreciation				
Balance at 1 July 2014	31	25	43	99
Depreciation expense	2	5	7	14
Elimination on disposal	0	0	0	0
Balance at 30 June 2015	33	30	50	113
Balance at 1 July 2015	33	30	50	113
Depreciation expense	1	5	5	11
Elimination on disposal	0	0	0	0
Balance at 30 June 2016	34	35	55	124
Carrying amounts				
At 1 July 2014	3	22	29	54
At 30 June and 1 July 2015	2	17	23	42
At 30 June 2016	4	12	19	35

9. INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Movements for intangibles are as follows:

	Acquired Software \$000	Internally generated Software \$000	Total \$000
Cost			
Balance at 1 July 2014	23	989	1012
Additions	0	0	0
Transfers	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0
Balance at 30 June 2015	23	989	1012
Balance at 1 July 2015	23	989	1012
Additions	15	210	225
Transfers	0	0	0
Disposals	0	(989)	(989)
Balance at 30 June 2016	38	210	248
Accumulated amortisation			
Balance at 1 July 2014	9	274	283
Amortisation expense	5	111	116
Disposals	0	0	0
Balance at 30 June 2015	14	385	399
Balance at 1 July 2015	14	385	399
Amortisation expense	7	111	118
Disposals	0	(496)	(496)
Balance at 30 June 2016	21	0	21
Carrying amounts			
At 1 July 2014	14	715	729
At 30 June and 1 July 2015	9	604	613
At 30 June 2016	17	210	227

Additions to internally generated software (Walking Access Mapping System) during the year to 30 June 2016 included \$40,000 transferred from Personnel Costs – refer Note 4.

10. COMMITMENTS

	Actual 2016 \$000	Actual 2015 \$000
Grant commitments – Enhanced Access Fund		
Not later than one year	71	67
Total Grant commitments	71	67
Operating leases as lessee		
The future aggregate minimum lease payments to be paid under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:		
Not later than one year	64	65
Later than one year and not later than five years	78	137
Total operating lease commitments	142	202
Total commitments	213	269

Grant commitments:

Contracts are entered into with applicants of projects approved for funding by the Board. Amounts granted under these contracts are disclosed in the statement of comprehensive income and expense when the approved applicant (grantee) has met the criteria in the grant contract and the Commission has approved the expenditure.

Operating lease commitments:

The Commission's lease for its office accommodation expires on 31 August 2018. The Commission does not have the option to purchase the asset at the end of the lease term. There are no restrictions placed on the Commission by this leasing arrangement.

11. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS AND KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

Related party transactions

The Commission is a wholly-owned entity of the Crown. The Commission has been provided with funding from the Crown of \$1.789m (2014 \$1.789m) for specific purposes as set out in the *Walking Access Act 2008* and the scope of the Vote Primary Industries appropriation.

Related party disclosures have not been made for transactions with related parties that are: within a normal supplier or client / recipient relationship; and on terms and conditions no more or less favourable than those that it is reasonable to expect the Commission would have adopted in dealing with the party at arm's length in the same circumstances. Further, transactions with other government agencies (for example, government departments and Crown entities) are not disclosed as related party transactions when they are on normal terms and conditions consistent with the normal operating arrangements between government agencies.

Key management personnel

There were no transactions entered into during the year (2015 none) with key management personnel.

Key management personnel compensation

Key management personnel includes all Board members, the chief executive and two members of the management team.

	Actual 2016	Actual 2015
Board members		
Remuneration	\$63,241	\$65,367
Full-time equivalent members	0.3	0.2
Leadership team		
Remuneration	\$384,429	\$357,010
Full-time equivalent members	2.7	2.7
Total key management personnel compensation	\$447,671	\$422,377
Total full time equivalent personnel	3.0	2.9

The full time equivalent for Board members has been determined based on the frequency and length of Board meetings (including workshops and stakeholder forums) and the estimated time for Board members to prepare for meetings.

12. BOARD MEMBER REMUNERATION

Remuneration paid or payable to each Board member during the year was:

	Actual 2016	Actual 2015
	\$	\$
Maurice W Barnett	0	1,867
Margaret A Bayfield	3,733	11,200
Peter P Brown	11,200	11,200
John H Forbes (Chairman)	18,700	18,700
Penny Mudford	11,200	11,200
Brian W Stephenson	11,200	11,200
Barbara Stuart	7,208	0
Total board member remuneration	63,241	65,367

There have been no payments made to committee members appointed by the Board who are not Board members during the financial year.

The Commission has taken out Directors' and Officers' Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance cover during the financial year in respect of the liability or costs of Board members and employees.

No Board member received compensation or other benefits in relation to cessation (2015 \$nil).

13. EMPLOYEE REMUNERATION

	Actual 2016 \$000	Actual 2015 \$000
Total remuneration paid or payable*		
\$100,000 - \$109,000	1	1
\$140,000 - \$149,000	1	0
\$170,000 - \$179,000	0	1

* No employee received compensation or other benefits in relation to cessation (2015 \$nil).

14. EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS

	Actual 2016 \$000	Actual 2015 \$000
Accrued salaries	6	14
Annual leave	35	47
Total employee entitlements	41	61

15. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The carrying amounts of financial assets and liabilities in each of the financial instrument categories are as follows:

	Actual 2016 \$000	Actual 2015 \$000
Loans and receivables		
Cash and cash equivalents	381	288
Receivables (excluding tax)	21	14
Investments	2,600	2,334
Total loans and receivables	3,002	2,636
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Payables (excluding income in advance and taxes payable)	186	265
Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	186	265

16. CONTINGENCIES

There were no contingent liabilities as at balance date (2015 \$nil).

The Commission has no contingent assets at balance date (2015 \$nil)

17. EVENTS AFTER THE BALANCE DATE

There were no significant events after the balance date.

18. EXPENDITURE BY NATURE

Actual 2015 \$000		Actual 2016 \$000	Budget 2016 \$000
469	Walking Access Mapping System	941	544
493	Operations	531	634
21	Enhanced Access Fund Grants	24	63
505	Governance and Leadership	456	512
136	Communications	154	231
173	Support	187	210
86	Accommodation	83	89
1,883		2,376	2,283

19. EXPLANATION OF MAJOR VARIANCES

Explanations for major variations from the Commission's budgeted figures in the statement of performance expectations are as follows:

Statement of comprehensive revenue and expense

Total income was \$0.028m ahead of budget (\$1.916m actual vs \$1.888m budget).

The major contributor to this improved result was with interest income arising from higher than anticipated interest rates. The Commission also received a licence fee for the use of its Walkway logo and sponsorship for the Aspinall Scholarship.

Total expenditure was \$0.093m greater than budget (\$2.376m actual vs \$2.283m budget).

During the year, the Commission's Board approved a project to upgrade the Walking Access Mapping System software. This investment has a four year pay back due to lower ongoing maintenance costs. However, as result of this upgrade, which was completed in the June 2016, the old mapping system was completely overwritten resulting in a loss on disposal of \$492,000.

Against this significant one-off expense, cost savings were achieved against a number of cost categories. Operating costs were \$0.349m less than budget (\$1.056m actual vs \$1.405m budget) significantly due to mapping system maintenance not required prior to the upgrade; resignations and replacements within the regional field advisor network resulting in lost productivity; less than anticipated enhanced access fund grants arising from the non-receipt of claims for approved grants; and the deferral of the re-launch of the *Outdoor Access Code*, a video to promote awareness, and an awareness programme and corporate support as these initiatives are reviewed.

Personnel costs were \$0.036m under budget (\$0.553m actual vs \$0.589m budget) significantly due to the capitalisation of personnel costs associated with the Walking Access Mapping System project. The Commission had budgeted for six board members, but only five were appointed for the year (\$0.063m actual vs \$0.075m budget) resulting in a saving against budget of \$0.012m.

Statement of financial position

Although the total comprehensive revenue and expense deficit for the year exceeded budget by \$0.065m (\$0.460 actual deficit vs \$0.395 budget deficit), that result included depreciation and amortisation costs of \$0.130m and the loss on the disposal of mapping software of \$0.492m, both non-cash items. Other expenses were significantly less

than budget. This has resulted in an increase in cash and cash equivalents of \$0.225m (\$0.381m actual vs \$0.156m budget), and investments of \$0.194m (\$2.600m actual vs \$2.406m budget).

The carrying value of software had diminished by \$0.271m (\$0.227m actual vs \$0.498m budget) recognising the write off and reinvestment in the Walking Access Mapping System.

Statement of cash flows

Receipts from the Crown exceeded budget as the Commission anticipated that funding for the first quarter of the 2016-2017 financial period would be receipted after 30 June 2016 - payment was actually received on 3 June 2016. Payments to suppliers were significantly less than budget (see comment regarding comprehensive income and expense, above, resulting in higher cash and investments than budgeted). The statement of cash flows also reflects the reallocation of surplus monies into longer term investments (particularly for the enhanced access fund) as the Commission anticipated further falls in short term interest rates.

Expenditure by nature

Walking Access Mapping System costs exceeded budget by \$0.397m (\$0.941m actual vs \$0.544m budget) reflecting the loss on disposal (\$0.492m) of the old mapping system with associated savings during the year for cancelled maintenance, and capitalised personnel costs for the new mapping system. Operations costs were \$0.103m (\$0.531m actual vs \$0.634m budget) under budget reflecting a reduction in activity due to changes (resignations and subsequent replacement) within the regional field advisor network, less requirement for legal services and the processing of overseas investment office applications using internal as opposed to contract resources. Enhanced Access Fund grant payments were \$0.039m (\$0.024m actual vs \$0.063m budget) under budget as these payments are determined by the project milestones managed by various grantee organisations. Governance costs were \$0.056m (\$0.456m actual vs \$0.512m budget) under budget due to having one less board member than anticipated, and, with the appointment of a new chief executive, and the deferral of a number of initiatives pending the development of a new National Strategy. Communications costs were \$0.077m (\$0.154m actual vs \$0.231m budget) under budget, due to the deferral of the re-launch of the Commission's *Outdoor Access Code* and development a corporate video, and lower than anticipated spend on marketing support. Further savings were recorded for Support (\$0.023m) (\$0.187m actual vs \$0.210m budget) and Accommodation (\$0.006m) (\$0.083m actual vs \$0.089m budget).

Audit report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

AUDIT NEW ZEALAND
Mana Arotake Aotearoa

TO THE READERS OF THE NEW ZEALAND WALKING ACCESS COMMISSION'S FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

The Auditor-General is the auditor of New Zealand Walking Access Commission (the Commission). The Auditor-General has appointed me, Chrissie Murray, using the staff and resources of Audit New Zealand, to carry out the audit of the financial statements and the performance information, including the performance information for an appropriation, of the Commission on her behalf.

OPINION ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND THE PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

We have audited:

- » the financial statements of the Commission on pages 37 to 56, that comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016, the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date and the notes to the financial statements that include accounting policies and other explanatory information; and
- » the performance information of the Commission on pages 33 to 36.

In our opinion:

- » the financial statements of the Commission:
 - present fairly, in all material respects:
 - › its financial position as at 30 June 2016; and
 - › its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended; and
 - » comply with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand and have been prepared in accordance with Public Benefit Entity Standards Reduced Disclosure Regime.
- » the performance information:
 - » presents fairly, in all material respects, the Commission's performance for the year ended 30 June 2016, including:
 - › for each class of reportable outputs:
 - its standards of performance achieved as compared with forecasts included in the statement of performance expectations for the financial year;
 - its actual revenue and output expenses as compared with the forecasts included in the statement of performance expectations for the financial year;
 - › what has been achieved with the appropriation; and
 - the actual expenses or capital expenditure incurred compared with the appropriated or forecast expenses or capital expenditure.

- › complies with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand.

Our audit was completed on 31 October 2016. This is the date at which our opinion is expressed.

The basis of our opinion is explained below. In addition, we outline the responsibilities of the Board and our responsibilities, and explain our independence.

BASIS OF OPINION

We carried out our audit in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards, which incorporate the International Standards on Auditing (New Zealand). Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and carry out our audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements and the performance information are free from material misstatement.

Material misstatements are differences or omissions of amounts and disclosures that, in our judgement, are likely to influence readers' overall understanding of the financial statements and the performance information. If we had found material misstatements that were not corrected, we would have referred to them in our opinion.

An audit involves carrying out procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements and the performance information. The procedures selected depend on our judgement, including our assessment of risks of material misstatement of the financial statements and the performance information, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, we consider internal control relevant to the preparation of the Commission's financial statements and performance information in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Commission's internal control.

An audit also involves evaluating:

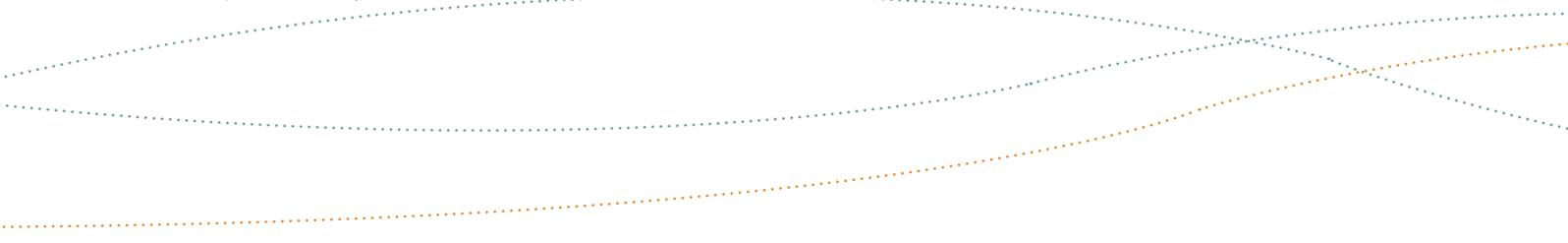
- » the appropriateness of accounting policies used and whether they have been consistently applied;
- » the reasonableness of the significant accounting estimates and judgements made by the Board;
- » the appropriateness of the reported performance information within the Commission's framework for reporting performance;
- » the adequacy of the disclosures in the financial statements and the performance information; and
- » the overall presentation of the financial statements and the performance information.

We did not examine every transaction, nor do we guarantee complete accuracy of the financial statements and the performance information. Also, we did not evaluate the security and controls over the electronic publication of the financial statements and the performance information.

We believe we have obtained sufficient and appropriate audit evidence to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

The Board is responsible for preparing financial statements and performance information that:

- » comply with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand;
 - » present fairly the Commission's financial position, financial performance and cash flows; and
 - » present fairly the Commission's performance.
- 

The Board's responsibilities arise from the *Crown Entities Act 2004* and the *Public Finance Act 1989*.

The Board is responsible for such internal control as it determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements and performance information that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. The Board is also responsible for the publication of the financial statements and the performance information, whether in printed or electronic form.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AUDITOR

We are responsible for expressing an independent opinion on the financial statements and the performance information and reporting that opinion to you based on our audit. Our responsibility arises from the *Public Audit Act 2001*.

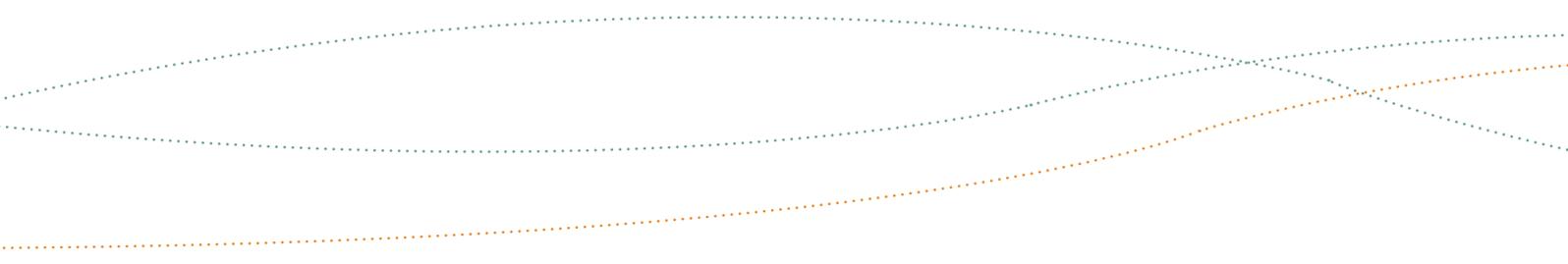
INDEPENDENCE

When carrying out the audit, we followed the independence requirements of the Auditor-General, which incorporate the independence requirements of the External Reporting Board.

Other than the audit, we have no relationship with or interests in the Commission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Murray' with a large flourish underneath. A small number '16' is written below the signature.

Chrissie Murray
Audit New Zealand
On behalf of the Auditor-General
Wellington, New Zealand



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New Zealand Government