

Christchurch Public Meeting - 19 June 2019

NB: These meeting notes record the verbal comments of meeting attendees. The comments were not fact-checked before being recorded here. The comments do not represent the views of the review team or the Ministry for Primary Industries.

- The walking access maps are fantastic.
 - Maps – we put in a new route for DOC. How long does it take for a route to be recognised and appear on a map?
 - Hugh Logan [Review Panel Chair]: We'll respond to that later. These mapping databases are not cheap to maintain.
 - What is shown on the maps? Just formed tracks? Or paper roads?
 - NZWAC's Strategic Communications and Partnerships Manager: Database is updated very frequently. Legal public access is shown including paper roads. Data from maps come from the cadastre, councils through LINZ, DOC, Fish & Game. Database is only as good as the data that goes in, depends on other agencies e.g. DOC updating their access information. We know that we don't have all the possible data that could be out there. The property boundaries are accurate to within a few metres.
 - Are hydro waters still on the mapping system?
 - Hugh Logan: How are the braided rivers shown?
 - Ric Cullinane [New Zealand Walking Access Commission Chief Executive]: River bed is determined as hydro.
 - Hugh Logan: A significant issue to understand for Canterbury and Otago: access and braided rivers.
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- Paper roads are not always practical. If you want to make a change and alter a paper road you have to go through the council. Does the Commission have an appetite for looking at better alternative access to paper roads? Tenure review helped this situation.
 - Ric Cullinane: We do have an appetite for that. Woolsheds, houses, yards etc... are on paper roads. Our approach is if it's a simple case – we'll provide signage (e.g. for someone to get to a river) – where more complex we'll look at whether the landowner wants to put in a more practical easement.
 - Hugh Logan: That easement has to be absolutely secure.
 - You guys don't have any teeth to get an outcome, do you? We do have stakeholders who insist on like for like. In many cases we won't insist on that.
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- A recreational user: Before the upgrade there was something he liked in the maps, but now have to go through two or three layers. Retain the ones for the simple users, but also one with everything on it again.
 - Ric Cullinane: The issue is the volume of data.
 - Can you have a pc version and a separate app version?
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- We want to ensure there is access for eternity. We don't expect vehicle access everywhere, but sometimes would like more of a push for vehicle access.

- Ric Cullinane: We deal with a lot of vehicle access. It's just that a lot of landowners aren't keen to provide vehicle access. We understand the desire of people to have vehicle access – for older kaumātua etc... Access that is a means to an end – that's often harder to establish because it does involve dogs, and vehicles.
- Clear that you've sorted out priority locations for access – coastal areas etc... Is it clear enough what the priorities are in terms of forms of access? The legislation could clarify the forms of access it covers. How does the Commission resolve a situation where one group says they want 4 wheel drive access to an area, but another group says they want walking access?
- I feel we should dispense with the word walking and just call it public [access].
- Support the Walking Access Commission staying as the *Walking* Access Commission.

- Am interested in the Commission's stance on tenure review.
- Ric Cullinane: The Commission's submission on tenure review is on our website. Want to elevate the provision of access to an outcome, don't think that will happen – think it will become a benefit. Want farm management plans to include provision of access.
- If the property remains under lease access might not be possible. Tenure review was good for access.

Sandra Faulkner [Review Panel Member]: Increase in tourism numbers, including domestic tourists, and pressure on infrastructure. Thoughts on that?

- Now ride horses. Need to work into the review that there are a lot of us baby boomers that want to access the high country, but can't carry a pack anymore. This group should be recognised as a significant user group. A horse trail trust has been formed – opening up old gold mine tracks. We'd like to have better rules re: access through the braided river system. We have created about 50-60 km of horse treks and mountain bike tracks. Hopefully other groups will do the same thing and we will join up.
- Growing divide between rural and urban, lack of understanding of seeking permission, leaving things as you find them. Challenges with the increase in tourists.
- I want to apologise on behalf of my generation.

Sandra Faulkner: How do we get those who haven't had the opportunity to discover the outdoors?

- Am from a farming background. Understand from the landowners' side, but also the other side. Has young kids. Breakdown from looking at a WAMS [Walking Access Mapping System] site and then going there and being turned down or finding trespass signs there. Had experience of trying to find access on a road, and had aggressiveness back at me. 10 and 12 year old children. Love to take them to back country, but demoralising if go and get turned down.
- Ric Cullinane: Keen to hear what's working and what we need to improve. Resourcing is an issue. We work with cycleways a lot.
- Have been an outdoor person all my life. Best way to get young people and others into the outdoors is get some certainty about access.
- Sandra Faulkner: Do you want to mention total budget?

- Ric Cullinane: We run on 1.78 million. A third on WAMS, third on RFAs. Spending down.
- We're reviewing the Act – how does this cover talking about resourcing?
- Hugh Logan: Yes, it does cover talking about resourcing.
- Who should administer the Act?
- Yes. What answers have you had about that?
- We need to give some legal teeth to an organisation. Need a government agency to be able to handle all access issues.
- You do a fantastic job. The budget should be tripled. Maybe MPI doesn't want to see the budget bigger. No basis for saying that. Don't see anything open ended or flexible in legislation that enables administrative bodies to be set up.

Hugh Logan: In 60s, 70s and 80s there was a walkway system—some gazetted, some weren't. There was a process for setting up an administrative authority. This process has gone. The Commission has inherited this. What are the issues involved for administering authorities for walkways?

- MPI staff member: The Public Feedback Paper asks if Māori groups, NGOs [Non-governmental organizations] could take on administering authority roles, and if there is risk in that.
- A walkway can be gazetted across a range of forms but not on an unformed legal road – change needed.
- One body overviewing the thing potentially provides better synergy.
- You've said you're not into right to roam. What about considering a right to access publicly owned land as opposed to a right to roam?
- Hugh Logan: This review probably hasn't got a mandate to go as far as that.
- Ric Cullinane: The reason we have done so well is that we haven't had any coercive power.
- Hugh Logan: There has been feedback about a stronger power of mediation.
- Hugh Logan: A degree of flexibility in survey standards has been raised. It would be nice to have an easement that could move (to suit landowner).
- The right to access the marked track instead of the survey line is more flexible.
- You need us to push more money for you.
- Ric Cullinane: The maintenance of all these tracks is an issue. The usual organisations to pay have been DOC and councils. What works well for a lot of trails is local maintenance and management. Access provides a whole bunch of wellbeing. Local funds, local government funds and central government funds all need to contribute to maintenance costs.
- How to engage with young people? I work with [an accommodation organisation]. In their early twenties people aren't used to ringing up and asking for access. They are not used to ringing up. They use the internet. Need certainty of access to get young people out there. Relationship with Te Araroa Trust and Cycleways Trust: one employee from Te Araroa – not sustainable.

- Signs should indicate if access is courtesy of the landowner. In the UK trails are marked as a footpath or a bridle path. No need to pester anyone for access if access is marked with markers as in England.
- Am involved with a trust. Suggest that Commission find through Government funding for individual groups interested in maintaining local access points – apply for funding. What we are doing with the Trust was seen as impractical, but it is working.
- Ric Cullinane: Spending scarce money on volunteers is probably by far the most efficient way of leveraging those dollars. \$11 million spent on managing volunteers by Appalachian Trust.
- Hugh Logan: The [New Zealand trust mentioned by the meeting attendee who just spoke prior to Ric Cullinane] is a form of using volunteers.
- What is the view on user pays for these tracks? Talked about an honesty box and never any money in it.
- Ric Cullinane: Our Act is clear about free access at the moment. We want to clear up the ability of landowners to clip the ticket under the Act.
- Like some of the ideas mentioned. 18 months ago worked in forest industry for 12-14 years. Started working when no forest gates, all of a sudden easements come in. Wanted to video birds in the trees. Big pockets of trees and a locked gate with a security camera. Phoned up and said I wanted to access a bit of DOC land back there, and the lady said there is an easement, but you need to get a walking access permit from the forestry company. Then she backed down on that.
- I'd rue the day that we had to pay for access into the back country.
- What about the tourists?
- If you go into more diverse back country areas: it's generally kiwis there.
- No, it's not.
- We want to do the right thing by landowners. We always ensure we have the relevant access permissions and pay DOC.
- Hugh Logan: Managing overseas tourist numbers is a big issue. It's about charging, social media....
- What happens overseas? Why do we need to reinvent the wheel?
- Hugh Logan: Overseas they are much tougher in management, creating alternatives. There are lots of different systems overseas.
- Ric Cullinane: For a lot of overseas tourists Tongariro Crossing, Roy's Peak are not crowded.
- Walking brings healthy lifestyles, social value. I am a landscape architect. How do we structure the long term value that connectivity can give us? In 1990 I bought some land in Dunedin and it had paper roads on it.

Sandra Faulkner: Going to do a 'round the room' re: necessity for the Act and the Commission, and one or two priorities:

- Long history of hunting. Look at access – not just walking. The name should be Access Commission. If have enduring and certain access, who's responsibility is it to manage that and manage the effects of that? Have seen terrible occurrences that happen when open up in an uncontrolled manner.
- Has worked in tourism and a DOC concession holder: a desperate need for the Commission. Keep it as Walking. Certainty of access is really important. Access limits is a big thing in hot spots too.

- Need legislation to provide clarity on how this to be done. Need a commission or some kind of agency. Need certain and sustainable access.
- Live in Tai Tap[u]. Unformed legal road – ECAN has stopped us maintaining that unformed legal road as a farmer.
- Support a Commission as a stand-alone entity. Support inclusion of cycling.
- Certainty of access. Clear signposting.
- Agree to see a separate organisation for walking and biking.
- WAMS is helpful. Important that public know where to go in river beds. More work on ULRs [unformed legal roads]. District councils are unresponsive over ULRs. Full time field officers needed – and several more. WAC should concentrate on opening up ULRs before moving on to walkways over private land. NZ Access Commission as name.
- Support Public Access Commission. So many interest groups in NZ. Need to think of disabled, all sort of users. Support a Public Access Commission with a lot more teeth and better funding.
- Access means a lot and something different to each of us. The Act's purpose is to provide public access. Name is probably fine. Great to have the Commission. More resourcing required.
- WAC needs to be independent and have funding. We have situations where there are large tracts of public land. Access is sometimes held hostage due to actions of one person. Need the carrot and the stick.
- Don't think the Commission should be abolished. It's more and more important.
- Think where you are at is great.
- We have large areas of land without practical access in Canterbury. Had an issue with ToR [Terms of Reference for the Review]. MPI isn't the right organisation to administer the Act.
- NZWAC's Regional Field Advisor for Canterbury/Waitaha: Support the Commission getting better resourcing. An Act should continue. We need some sort of stick – time limit for responding.
- Support keeping the Commission – a well-resourced commission. Public Access Commission should be the name. Stand alone. Not under DOC. Keep WAMS. Keep national management agency. Local volunteer groups very practical for maintaining. Appropriate access e.g. Hopkins Valley should have 4 wheel drive access.
- Support an independent body as a Commission. Yes, to including horses, 4 wheel driving. All user groups included.
- Independent body. Some places have appeal for hunters but no appeal for walkers. Facilitate more contact with owners of land around the public estate – entails some vehicle access. Some areas should just be walking access – case-by-case basis.
- Hilary Allison [New Zealand Walking Access Commission Board Member]: Here to listen to you and think about what you've said.
- A walker and mountain biker: want publicity re: if you carry it in, you carry it out.
- Support independent body. Key thing is resourcing and ability to negotiate further access. More education. People don't respect properties like they used to.
- Wanaka person: Support the Commission. As a landowner like to look at other people's areas. How to manage this going forward: crowding. Toilets need to be addressed. Have seen a few tracks get overloaded overnight due to social media.
- Have an interest in horse trekking. Supports independence for commission. Should be able to negotiate access over private land but also respecting rights of owners to restrict access at certain types of year.

- Flexibility on administering bodies. Enabling groups to be established that can take responsibility. Flexibility for moving easements supported. Independence is very important – maybe independently reporting to Parliament. QEII [National Trust] is a good example of a body with clear independence.
- Am an advocate for learning in outdoors, work with schools. The back country is a taonga. Haven't talked about Māori relationship with back country. They are an important part of the conversation. Are all the stakeholders here in the room? The Commission has educational resources. Maybe we can talk about collaborating on other resources for our young people to teach them respect for the outdoors.
- Support a one stop shop for access. Will need a lot more resources. In the past some tenure review decisions were made with no input from back country people. Has an issue up the Hoki [spelling?] River. No one can drive to Lake Sumner Forest Park.
- Support continuation of Commission. Negotiation is a tool but perhaps some broader powers. Commission to be central point tying all agencies together. Independent. Work on funding.
- Love work of Commission. Not focussed on name. It deals with all kinds of access. Wish you had more funding. Identification of access points. Stand alone.
- Free and enduring access for our grandchildren. Wouldn't support the moving of tracks too much – if move to a worse area. Acknowledge all user groups.
- Commission is really important. Good to see it independent rather than under MPI. Commission tends to be a bit reactive rather than proactive – but that is a function of the funding. Proactive approach to ULRs would be good. Access in urban areas is really important. Non-motorised access should be the priority, but there should be motorised access up some long valleys though. Provide pamphlets for landowners re: liability under Health and Safety at Work Act. Don't think the risks that farmers have are as great as they believe.
- Changed my view, shouldn't be just for walking. WAMS is fantastic. We want to contribute a lot of tracks to it but don't have funding to tidy up our GPS mapping.

- Is the 2 July date a hard one?
- MPI staff member: Yes, so we can write up useful recommendations.

- Sandra Faulkner: Thank you for your time.
- Hugh Logan: Thank you. This has been a very rich session and well-run. Everyone has had their say so that's great. Impressed by resounding support for the work of the Commission. Impressed by your feedback too. Thanks for travelling to get here and making your time available. Our job to synthesise now.