

## Gisborne Hui - 28 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.**

- Ric Cullinane [Chief Executive of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission]: The Commission's role is to develop and enhance outdoor access: hunters, anglers, dogs. We don't build tracks, we provide information and advice. We work with local councils and DOC, NZTA. We are a small Crown agency. Have our own Act. Very poorly resourced, punches well above its weight.
- MPI Staff member: What's your interest?
- Want to understand more what's out there.
- MPI staff member: There are about 12 people around the motu who can help with getting access over private land (non-Māori land). Can help people join things up. Help with conversations between the various parties.
- Ric Cullinane: There is an opportunity to submit on changes to the Act. Surprisingly the Act doesn't contain a Treaty partnership clause. I would like to see that. We don't have a good tool or instrument to enable iwi/hapū to have a strong partnership with tracks and trails on land they have an interest in. Our Act has narrow priorities – would like to see exclusive access to iwi, access to wāhi tapu sites. So we can be a bit more practical on the ground.
- We are located in Tauranga Moana – Katikati out to Maketu.
- MPI staff member: What's your feeling about access for your people re: getting access to outdoors, hunting?
- Pretty good. Good to know what's there on offer if issues do come up. Just being aware of how we can help whānau if things do arise.
- MPI staff member: We have found that a lot of people don't know about the Walking Access Commission. Should it be called that?
- Quite surprised that the Commission covers dog access – considering the name which says walking.
- MPI staff member: Do you have any problem with people doing the wrong thing on your lands?
- We haven't heard anything as such. Not to our knowledge. We haven't had those issues. Port of Tauranga/Mt Maunganui – kai moana have been in place for a long time.
- MPI staff member: Commission can help when gates are locked. Anything like that happening in your area?
- No. Always talking with DOC.
- MPI staff member: The Commission has a code for behaviour in the outdoors – and it covers behaving well from a Māori point of view. Might be useful for you to know.
- Yes, will look at the site. Might want to look at a different name.
- MPI staff member: Some groups can develop access and then set up a business alongside. We can send you the name for the RFA [Regional Field Advisor] in your area.
- Another MPI staff member: Any issues with your iwi accessing wāhi tapu on private land?
- Not that I'm aware of that, hasn't come to the Board.
- Good to have this understanding and this kōrero.
- MPI staff member: Do you have dealings with Bowentown, Waihi area?
- Ric Cullinane: Yes, we do. Certainly in the past there were some issues about that corner of the Bay of Plenty.

- Another MPI staff member: There's a Field Adviser in Bay of Plenty too.
- Ric Cullinane: At the moment don't have opportunity to have a to and fro, in the dark when it comes to mana whenua. Needs to be at the top end but also on the ground.
- MPI staff member: Walking Access Act is in some Treaty settlements but there are all these ones above.
- Ric Cullinane: Need some good people on the ground.
- See a suggestion of it being one of the priorities in the Public Feedback Paper. And that's great as it can show some commitment from the organisation in terms of resource priorities. I think one of the successes for the Commission has it's been light on its feet. The capacity issue that the Commission has with a small budget – will need more resourcing to be able to work successfully with iwi – otherwise you are a toothless tiger. The Commission has been the intermediary to create sustained relationships. What was the relationship kaupapa that someone talked about?
- Some of the mahi that is required, it takes a long time to get a run on the board. Takes a long time for people to change. Looking for goodwill on all sides.
- MPI staff member: Just like we talk about the ability to improve mental health, there's also that ability to build social cohesion.
- Ric Cullinane: Issue raised at Auckland hui about [place]: grumpy locals that had always been allowed down that road. We're happy to explain why not.
- Another MPI staff member: Are you talking about an access way that led down to a beach with ownership being transferred into Māori ownership and then public access not allowed there?
- Ric Cullinane: Yes.
- [Place name]: the Trust wanted to create revenue. When the Trust looked to stop informal access, this ricocheted around the country. Everyone around the country started saying: We can't even walk up [place name] anymore. That idea of trespassing on Māori land was not understood. Mentioned people camping on land up the coast, and then when they couldn't anymore getting upset – the land had already been owned by someone.
- [Place name] being handed back to [iwi]: have been volatile situations there. That's around young aggrieved [iwi name]. Information needs to be managed where you have young dissidents.
- MPI staff member: So are you saying that kaumātua need to help the young people understand?
- [An iwi leader] would ring up Ric [Cullinane] or John Forbes [Chair of New Zealand Walking Access Commission's Board] and say we want you here. Fortunately we have Peho (New Zealand Walking Access Commission's Kaumātua) who lives nearby.
- Ric Cullinane: We need something that works well on the ground – a trusted relationship. We don't want to be tied to too many formal structures. If we can gain the trust of individuals, we want to stay perceived as honest brokers.
- Getting back onto health. About 2 years ago, with Eric Pyle [Former Chief Executive of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission] and the Commission's Kaumātua, we met with the Healthy Families programme people at [place name]. For that project there was an informal tribal entity – and agreed on outcomes and outputs. We explained what the Access Commission does and heard what they were doing. You have the tribes and they get settlements – properties for cultural redress – and the other side is incorporations – which

can be set up through the Māori Land Court. There is a national body called FOMA [Federation of Māori Authorities] which calls itself the authority over them all. It operates in the political sphere. Sometimes you have a large landowning group here, an iwi group there. At [place name] we talked about the mapping system, funding, easements – and looked to see how we could work further. No tension – a clarification session. They were trying to develop something on land oriented around hapū. They wanted their own resource for their own people, not for the public. They weren't closed to public access, but wanted to get their own access sorted first. Then they deviated into flying drones ... and the provider got switched and now it's back in [another place name]. Working with Māori land and outcomes for Māori. They got into a relationship with Google - and that took them into another direction.

- We took the Board and staff to a block on the East Cape: [Place name?] Track. There's a range of these trails around. At a community hui there were some landowners that turned up representing particular land blocks. They were looking for funding. There were some keen proponents.
- Ric Cullinane: [Name of iwi] are looking at a trail from [place name] down to [place name]. There's a lot of these that are quite big, and they don't know where to start. When there's lots of different land types involved it's hard for one iwi to connect with all the different landowners – DOC etc...
- Ministry of Health – Minister now has an emphasis on equity. Now have a greater chance of influencing – talking about connecting health with access.
- MPI staff member: There's a lot of potential for schools.
  
- MPI staff member: The Walking Access Act set up the Commission.
- So the Commission obviously wasn't contacted about Te Mata Peak?
- Ric Cullinane: We did come in a bit later on – but stayed out largely as there was a bit of heat.
- The disputes part is usually down to a councillor and landowner. There are disputes but they don't usually get to a public form. We haven't had that – we've chosen to take time.
- I remember the predecessor to DOC under Internal Affairs – went up to somewhere and did slashing. [Talking about Whinray Reserve]
- Ric Cullinane: Your approach of taking your time is strongly supported. Better than bulldozing your way through.
- A sand dune area – being grazed and it getting hammered. Got to a point where we couldn't get around some Māori land – urupā. Then this was resolved for us – as the old gentleman passed away. The others came to the table and talked – and a good thing has come out: the concept of telling a story, carved pou. Then when visitors come through they understand they are there by the good will of people. That took a few years to get to that point. You want there to be agreements as you go along, otherwise you'll have continual issues.
- MPI staff member: Have you known about the Commission?
- No.
- Knew [Name of person] (a former NZWAC Regional Field Adviser) – I taught his son. I do quite a bit of hunting – there's always access issues. Mentioned an area: Ruakituri Valley - with an access issue on a track – Rua's Track. Farmer blocked access – as people weren't keeping to the paper road access.

- We have a land locked Māori lease in the back of our property. Had a guy and his mate wanted access to it. Process is for Te Tumu Paeroa to be contacted re: access, and then they contact you – but he contacted us directly. We lease this block and live at [place name].
- MPI staff member: Have your iwi got any issues with accessing wāhi tapu?
- No, not that I'm aware of.
- MPI staff member: There's a lot more strategic work now done by the Commission – e.g. around Taranaki. And some more urban work.
- With the cycleways being developed - they developed because it was a top-down directive. That worked well. Just thinking that should have been linked in (e.g. cycleways and walking) – e.g. Nga Haerenga.
- MPI staff member: What difference has your trail made for the community?
- Get slightly more international people using the [name] trails than nationals. As it grows people are becoming more responsive to coming on board as an operator e.g. bed and breakfast. We are getting cyclists all year round.
- What's your annual volume?
- Can't remember the last meter count. About 4,500 to 5,000 users a year – but would have to check the counter.
- MPI staff member: Electric bikes?
- They're growing. The last guy that stayed had one. Electric bike development is moving more into mountain bikes. We've said no electric bikes on the [name] track – as it's downhill – and there's a 30 metre straight drop to the river below. We are working with DOC on a safety barrier system.
- Ric Cullinane: Sometimes the more you try to mitigate health and safety problems, the more trouble you get into. Better to provide information [on the risks?].
- We get funding. Because it's in DOC estate, there's an element of responsibility on their part.
- Does MPI have any funding to help out with that?
- MPI staff member: No. We just administer the Act.
- MPI staff member: Why did you set it [the trails] up? Was it an economic thing?
- Yes. Not many opportunities for women in the area [for work] – the trails provide bed and breakfast and cleaning opportunities.
- The [name] trail is basically public highway. Had our issue where we ran it on sand dunes – and working through some access issues now so you can get off the road and stay off it. Way back in the day [place name] was a happening place – you had to go through it to go North. People are re-visiting that nostalgia.
- MPI staff member: The purpose of the Act is for public enjoyment, but people are wondering if the Act should mention the economic benefits.
- Are you guys involved in the fencing off of the waterways?
- MPI staff member: Farmers are trying to do as much as they can, sometimes they are not that good.
- MPI staff member: Do people want to go through your land?
- No, just those two. We're quite protective – as a lessee Te Tumu Paeroa have to check others accessing with us. There's not a lot of hunting – and it's the kids' kai cupboard. So don't want too many people there – not inclined to let people have access. The big thing with visitors is their rubbish. You see rubbish by the sides of the roads.
- MPI staff member: How are behaviours on the track? Do people do the right thing?

- We have a public toilet set up now with a rubbish bin. That's also a freedom camping site. The only time there's been any rubbish issues – is a bag left by a bin – and then weka spread it around. I think by and large the public are lot more litter conscious than they used to be.
- What about fishing on the [river name]?
- The fishing went into recess about 5 years ago. Something killed them. The fish are just building up again now.
- No access issues along the water margins?
- Not that I'm aware of. We have a community house where people can stay.
- Most of the fishermen up there are polite.
- They know exactly where they are going.
- We have some fishers come and park near our property. An elderly guy .... and went to see if he was okay.
- Changing attitudes to the outdoors? Drones are an issue with people cruising the roads and then accessing people's properties – looking for whatever they are after – and then head off when they find what they want. There are Civil Aviation rules about where to fly these, but no one really follows them. It's not a major at the moment.
- A drone filming turned out to be Country Calendar.
- MPI staff member: There's a survey you can fill in.
- Are you regional or national?
- MPI Staff member: We (MPI) are national.
- Ric Cullinane: Commission has an office in Wellington and RFAs also.
- Great that there's an entity out there protecting everyone's rights. Don't want the wild west where the richest, strongest guy controls the access.
- How did you get the message out about the hui?
- MPI staff member: Phoned and emailed organisations.
- Ric Cullinane: Thanks for your time and for all your work on your trail.
- Another MPI staff member: Do you have any walkers as well?
- Yes.