

# AAG Annual report for 2015

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## Reporting Structure

This report covers the period April 2015 to December 2015, as per the letter of Agreement. It should be noted that this period is shorter than previous reporting periods, and as such the full measure of AAG's contributions for the 2015 year are not captured.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Accessibility Advisory (AAG) is to:

- Advise Council on how to help grow a great and accessible City where barriers to people with impairments

are minimised.

- Bring lived experience and knowledge to Council around accessibility issues in the context of Council's roles and priorities.

The AAG will not be seen as representing all views on accessibility in the city.

## Membership

The AAG has eight members and one vacancy which will be advertised on the completion of a WCC internal restructuring. The names of current AAG members and of ex-members who have left the AAG since the 2014 Annual Report are provided in Appendix One.

## Contribution to Council activities

The Accessibility Advisory Group (AAG) has made a clear and tangible contribution to the activities of Wellington City Council in the year from April 2015 – December 2015. The Group provided advice and recommendations across a wide range of topics including urban development projects, transport improvements, social housing investments, accessible documentation and Council strategies policies and processes.

- Accessibility Forum planning took place.
- Comments were submitted on Social Housing Service Policy Review to Council officers.
- AAG gave feedback on the pictorial emergency response information to the Community Services team.
- AAG met with Charles and Orencio (WCC Network Traffic Engineers) to discuss mobility parking. AAG noted there is not a strategy or programme to proactively identify the need for mobility parking (AAG discussed this in the April 2016 meeting).

- □ The Active Activists presented their proposals for improving the intersection of Abel Smith and Cuba Streets to the Transport and Urban Development Committee on 21 May. Officers were directed to work with the Active Activists to develop advice for the Committee.
- □ Accessibility Forum took place.
- □ AAG highlighted accessibility issues in the Parks, Sports and Recreation space.
- □ Masons Lane session was held with WCC Urban Design.
- □ Social Strategy development was discussed – AAG identified as a key stakeholder.
- □ Cr. Foster met with AAG to discuss transport strategy and direction.
- □ Hydrotherapy pool was discussed.
- □ Jenny Rains gave overview of accessibility actions within the Council including:
  - ○ The City Housing upgrade project.
  - ○ The Accessible Wellington Map.
  - ○ Reconfiguring of the Otari Wilton Bush Curator's house to become the Leonard Cockayne Centre - The centre now has accessibility built into all the facilities.
  - ○ Embedding accessibility into strategic planning – more detail in full minutes.
  - ○ Installation of accessible water fountains.
  - ○ More mobility parks installed.
  - ○ Inter-Islander Ferries have partnered with WCC and have put City Mobility signage in all of their ferries.

- ○ Partnered with the Halberg Trust to provide a beach wheelchair.
- ○ WCC & Barrier Free have developed a web guide to assist in integrating accessibility into building upgrades and maintenance.
- □ Johnsonville Library development – AAG consulted on what expectations they have for the development. Australian design standards to be used (superior to NZ code?).
- □ Street Audits - Councillor Foster confirmed that Council would look at the recommendations from the audit and would explain any reasons for not being able to undertake the work.
- □ AAG submission on Island Bay cycleway.
- □ Introduction of Emerge internship programme; Emerge has been having conversation with the Council HR.
- □ Introduced the forward work programme.
- □ Terms of reference between City Housing and the AAG with regards to barrier free access.
- □ Tammy Mullins, City Housing and her team, presented to the group regarding city Housing and how AAG can work together on upcoming projects.
- □ Tristram tabled the Health Passport document.
- □ Wellington Railway Station Community Street Review tabled.

AAG would like to see development in the Council's consideration of AAG advice. As per the 2014 terms of reference, officers are required to report back on how "advice was considered, and whether or not officers and Councillors chose to act on that advice". This would reduce the instances of

token engagement, and highlight the importance of accessibility in policy and planning matters.

Doing so would further strengthen the relationship between AAG and Council, and help to develop a more accessible city that all can benefit from.

## Accessibility of “The Attic” at the Wellington Museum

During the Report year the AAG provided input on the design, accessibility and development of The Attic at the Wellington Museum. The Museum project team incorporated as many accessible features as possible. Their attitude, accessibility awareness and openness to suggestions was exemplary, and stood out as the best interaction we experienced during the year. Recently we toured the final project. The AAG was extremely pleased with the level of accessibility in the final outcome and nominated the project for an accessibility award.

## Mobility Parking

Mobility parking was a key focus of the group this year. The availability, location and design of mobility parking impacts a wide range of people. The accessibility and availability of mobility parking is often crucial in determining whether people living with an impairment can participate in the community. The AAG is conscious that the Council’s mobility parking policy is due for review. We have therefore been engaging with a wide range of Council staff to ensure that, when the review takes place the outcome represents a tangible improvement. Currently some mobility parks are not consistent with the council design specifications, which limit their accessibility (e.g. no ramps or dysfunctional ramps). The AAG has been working with Council staff to raise awareness about the need for

accessible design in mobility parking.

The Statistics NZ National Disability Survey 2013 has highlighted the growing number of Wellington people with mobility impairments is increasing and the Council will need a proactive strategy.

The current WCC mobility parking process involves consulting AAG on proposals and considering their advice. Adoption of strict best practice guidelines that have been agreed to by the community would result in a more efficient and effective long-term mobility parking strategy.

AAG have highlighted to council that cross-department collaboration would go a long way to addressing present accessibility issues in the transport sphere. A non-silo approach to these issues would go a long way toward achieving the universal design standards recommended by AAG.

## Accessibility Action Plan

The AAG notes that the Accessibility Action Plan has expired. We are passionate about seeing a new action plan being developed. We have been reassured that this will take place in 2016. We look forward to being closely involved in the development of the new action plan. We see the Action Plan as the cornerstone of the Council's commitment to improve accessibility for all in our vision of "the coolest little *accessible* capital".

Over 25% of the Wellington population has an accessibility issue. This number grows as we experience an ever growing ageing population. A renewed, and fit for purpose accessible action plan is vital for Wellington's population to experience an inclusive city.

The Accessible Wellington Action Plan is currently being redeveloped, and AAG's work programme should align and be focused through this living document.

## Challenges of Council restructuring

2015 was not without some challenges. Ongoing staff restructuring caused a number of delays in our activities. In some cases, this limited our effectiveness and ability to have a positive impact on the Council's activities. AAG are pleased that permanent staff are now employed to facilitate and support the contribution of the AAG to Council.

AAG would like to reiterate their support for the employment of a full time Senior Accessibility Advisor.

## Cycleways

The AAG would also like its advice on the installation of cycle ways to be considered more carefully. The ultimate outcome of the Island Bay Cycleway has diminished accessibility of the area. We support the aim of improving cycle safety and believe that with more mindful design, both accessibility and cycle safety can be enhanced. In particular, positioning parking against the kerb with adequate ramp and shared cycle and pedestrian paths is our preferred option for improving cycle safety and accessibility.

## Accessible documentation

Despite AAG's continuing efforts and inputs, accessible documentation continues to be an issue within Council. Comprehensive guides on accessible documentation & accessible events, presentations and venues have been made available to Council officers. It is the recommendation of AAG that these guidelines become standard within Council culture to enable public engagement and participation. Retrofitting documents for accessibility purposes is ineffective, and can cause frustration for both users and producers. Documents (and all distributable Council information) should be built to be accessible from the ground up for all to benefit.

AAG would like to note that this document follows best practice guidelines.

## The Accessibility Forum

Council and AAG partnered together to provide an annual platform for people with disabilities to be able to make recommendations to the Council on how to improve accessibility issues.

Planning for the Forum took place in April and the event took place on 19 June. The theme was “Engaging with the Council: Modes and Mechanisms”. Items on the programme included: an update on the Council’s accessibility work and the provision of information about how to get problems fixed and how to influence decisions; the implications for Wellington of the findings from the 2013 Disability Survey; and a presentation about the AAG and its work.

About 50 people attended and raised items for discussion including mobility parking and parking fees, and being able to access information on the Council website.

The Forum was reviewed later in the month. It was assessed as a success because it helped the AAG and Council connect with the wider community and provided the WCC with some focus on accessibility issues.

Members want to progress the suggestion that the Council adopt the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities when the Accessible Wellington Action Plan is revised.

## Thanks

We would like to thank Councillor David Lee, Councillor Malcom Sparrow, the Mayor and Council staff for their effort and support throughout the year.



## Activities related to the agreed work programme

The following list outlines our activities related to the Council's agreed work programme attached as Appendix Two

- Urban Landscape & Open Spaces Projects:

The Council is undertaking a number of landscape projects as part of its Urban Growth Plan for the benefit of residents and visitors. In keeping with past practice, the Council would like to work with AAG to ensure the projects take into account the needs of people with impairments.

Related AAG activities:

- Masons Lane session was held with WCC Urban Design.
- AAG highlighted accessibility issues in the Parks, Sports and Recreation space.

- Transport:

The Council working on a range of transport projects this year. The Council is also looking at how it can ensure better compliance around the use of mobility parking in the city.

Related AAG activities:

- AAG met with WCC Network Traffic Engineers to discuss mobility parking.
- Supported The Active Activists to present their proposals for improving the intersection of Abel Smith and Cuba Streets to the Transport and Urban Development Committee.
- Cr Foster met with AAG to discuss transport strategy and direction.

- Worked with Cr Foster to co-ordinate a street audit with members of the community.
- Policies and Plans:

The Council will be developing and reviewing key policies and plans over the course of the year. It will work with AAG members to develop, communicate and elicit feedback from the accessibility community.

Related AAG activities:

- Social Housing Service Policy Review.
- Pictorial Emergency Response.
- AAG identified as a key stakeholder Social Strategy development.
- Johnsonville Library development.
- Terms of reference between City Housing and the AAG with regards to barrier free access.
- AAG and City Housing identified ways to work together on upcoming projects.
- Submissions on notable matters:

Central and local government will be seeking submissions on various issues throughout the year. AAG may choose to write submissions on these matters.

  - AAG submission on the Long Term Plan (LTP).
  - AAG submission on Island Bay cycleway.

## Appendix 1: Membership

### Membership as of December 2015:

- Alan Royal.
- Amanda Cameron (since resigned as of 26/04/2016).
- Christine O'Sullivan.
- Christine Richardson.
- Julia Aguilar.
- Lee Rutene (Co-Chair as of end of reporting period).
- Michael Bealing (Co-Chair as of end of reporting period).
- Tim Pate.
- Tristram Ingham.

### Members resigned since 2014 Annual Report:

- Paula Booth.

### Attendance Statistics:

- Alan Royal 2/2 (100%).
- Amanda Cameron 2/2 (100%).
- Christine O'Sullivan 7/8 (87.5%).
- Christine Richardson 7/8 (87.5%).
- Julia Aguilar 7/8 (87.5%).
- Lee Rutene 6/8 (75%).
- Michael Bealing 8/8 (100%).
- Tim Pate 7/8 (87.5%).
- Tristram Ingham 7/8 (87.5%).



## Appendix 2: Work Programme Confirmation

27 October 2015

File ref:

### **Michael Bealing**

Chair – Accessibility Advisory Group

Wellington City Council

101 Wakefield Street, PO Box 2199

WELLINGTON 6140

Dear Michael

### **Re: Letter proposing the 2016 Work Programme for the Accessibility Advisory Group (AAG)**

#### **Purpose of this letter**

I am writing to you as the Chair of the AAG to clarify the Council's priorities and outline Council's expectations for the AAG for the period January – December 2016. The AAG is part of Council and I know that your group wants to contribute in the best possible way to our City. This letter will help focus the work of the group so that Council officers can engage with AAG at an early stage and in an effective way.

#### **AAG's work over the next 12 months**

Council recently finalised its 2015-25 Long Term Plan (LTP). It is important that the work of your advisory group aligns with the priorities of the LTP.

We want you to bring your experience as a group to help solve problems and find solutions for the work streams below. This is consistent with your

group having deeper and more-ongoing involvement with the work-streams of greatest priority to the City.

The following table reflects how we think the AAG can add greatest value to the Council's forward work programme and takes account of feedback made during the AAG meeting held on 25 August 2015, where the Council forward work programme was discussed. The specific programme and meeting agendas will be set separately.

<b>Work Programme priorities</b>	<b>AAG input</b>
<p><b>Urban Landscape &amp; Open Spaces Projects:</b></p> <p>The Council is undertaking a number of landscape projects as part of its Urban Growth Plan for the benefit of residents and visitors. In keeping with past practice, the Council would like to work with AAG to ensure the projects take into account the needs of people with impairments</p>	<p>Work with officers to provide input into projects including, but not limited to the Alex Moore Park Multisport Facility based on members' experience of living in Wellington</p>
<p><b>Transport:</b></p> <p>The Council working on a range of transport projects this year. The Council is also looking at how it can ensure better compliance around the use of mobility parking in the city</p>	<p>Work with officers to provide input into transport projects such as the review of the on street parking policy and support the Council to ensure compliance around the use of on street parking, including mobility parks</p>
<p><b>Policies and Plans:</b></p> <p>The Council will be developing and reviewing key policies and plans over the course of the year. It will work with AAG members to develop, communicate and elicit feedback from the accessibility community</p>	<p>Work with officers to develop, communicate and elicit feedback on key policies and plans including (but not limited to) Accessibility Action Plan, playgrounds policy, social strategy, resilience strategy, earthquake prone strategy and economic development strategy</p>
<p><b>Submissions on notable matters:</b></p> <p>Central and local government will be seeking submissions on various issues throughout the year. AAG may choose to write submissions on these matters</p>	<p>AAG to develop and write their own submissions on matters of interest, including the 2016/17 Annual Plan</p>

As part of Council's wider engagement, the Council will also consult with other groups on the issues that we bring to AAG. Furthermore, the above list does not preclude the AAG from having input into other Council projects and policies as these become apparent during the year. Such items can be considered by AAG with the agreement of the Chair and the Council Liaison Officer.

In addition I note that local government elections will occur in the 2016 calendar year. I would encourage AAG to use its channels to promote its network members to vote in the upcoming local government elections.

### **Meeting to discuss and agree the work programme**

I will attend your meeting of 27 October to discuss the content of this draft work programme. At that meeting we can discuss your priorities and the suggested work-streams outlined in this letter, with an aim of being able to finalise the letter at your meeting of 24 November 2015.

### **Work Programme Reporting**

The AAG reported to the Governance, Finance and Planning Committee on 30 April 2015. The report covered the period January 2014 to March 2015. So that we can move to a position where the annual reports for all advisory groups cover a calendar year, I propose that this year's report covers the period April 2015 to December 2015. That report should be presented to the Committee by 30 June 2016. In subsequent years the AAG annual report will cover the period January to December.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

**Gunther Wild**

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