

Environmental Reference Group

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Summary

The Environmental Reference Group (ERG) is pleased to present this report on its activities in the 2015 calendar year to the Environment Committee.

The purpose of the ERG is to:

- Advise Council on the best ways to improve Wellingtonians' quality of life environmentally, socially, culturally and economically by protecting and enhancing the local environment
- Bring knowledge and insight into Council around the environment, including water, energy, waste, biodiversity, urban design and transport management, in the context of Council's roles and priorities.

2015 was a year of change for the ERG. Firstly, it was the first full year that the group met monthly instead of 6 times a year. It was also the first full year its terms of references extended beyond the WCC biodiversity team to include transport, urban design, urban growth and climate change. Finally it was also a year with a large change-over of both the ERG membership and the council officer facilitating the work of ERG. These led to changes in the way the ERG group is operating.

In 2015, the ERG worked with various WCC officers and submitted on a number of WCC consultations:

- The biodiversity strategy and action plan ("our natural capital")
- The long term plan, in particular the water, waste, and transport parts of the plan
- The urban growth plan and 30-year infrastructure strategy
- The climate change action plan
- Engagement of WCC both within council and with stakeholders, with also participations of some members to the workshop organised by Councilor Woolf.

We reiterate the need for early engagement of ERG rather than immediately prior to consultation. This was clearly demonstrated with the Biodiversity action plan, which ERG commented on an earlier version, with very positive results and uptake of our contributions in the final plan. We are pleased to report that such collaborations are slowly building between ERG and WCC officers, with for example excellent relationship and that our new internal structure will facilitate such further improvements. We however find ourselves spending too much time preparing submissions to consultations and appearing in front of Council, which might often be too little too late.

Changes in membership

During 2015, four members retired after either one or two three-year terms (in reverse order of seniority at ERG): Bev Abbott, Peter Gilbert, Phil Hancock and Howard Markland. We acknowledge their outstanding contribution over their years with ERG. Two members resigned during the year due to personal commitments: Nick Crocker, and Janet Young. Six new members were appointed in November 2015 following a recruitment round which included public advertising and interviews. The new members brought in new capabilities to ERG, particularly in the built environment field to name only one.

The following table shows the members as at 30 November 2015 in alphabetical order. Short profiles and appointment dates are provided in Appendix 2.

- Daniela Biaggio
- Lyn Cadenhead
- Stu Farrant
- Mark Fenwick (Co-chair)
- Shenagh Gleisner
- Mark Higham
- Kate Mitcalfe (Co-chair)
- Hamish McGillivray
- Sophie Mormede (Co-chair)
- Martin Payne
- Graeme Sawyer
- Paula Warren
- Chris Watson

Changes in operation of the group

With the retirement of the four above-mentioned members, the ERG was bereft of both its chairs and experienced members willing to take on that role. A rotating chair was briefly investigated but not found to be a successful solution to ensure continuity in the work.

With the increase in the number of portfolios the group is involved in, and the breadth of information the chairs were faced with having to deal with, the ERG developed a portfolio-based approach to its work. Individual ERG members would be responsible for individual portfolios, including developing relationships with the appropriate Council officers and bringing items to the group at appropriate times for consultation / review within the Council framework, thereby lightening the load on the chairs. Three co-chairs were also appointed to ensure coverage of all meeting dates (see above).

The portfolios are a work in progress. For example ERG has a very good working relationship with the biodiversity team and in particular Myfanwy Emeny, and has been developing a good relationship with Moana Mackey and Tom Petit who are dealing with climate change. However, our relationship with the transport group is still developing. Moreover, more portfolios have developed in 2016 following our work, namely Urban Design Agency, and Maori Relations.

Portfolios as they stood in November 2015

Working group	ERG lead	Council officer
Transport	Paula Warren	Jane Black, Peter Whiting (transport engagement)
Climate Change	Yvonne Legarth	Moana Mackey, Programme Manager Sustainability
Waste	Martin Payne	Adrian Mitchell, Waste Operations Manager
Urban Growth	Graeme Sawyer	Trudy Whitlow , Urban Design & Heritage Manager
Water	Paula Warren (interim)	Yon Cheong Manager, Regional Strategy and Policy Wgtn Water
Biodiversity	Stu Farrant	Myfanwy Emeny, Team Leader Biodiversity & Urban Ecology
Resilience		Mike Mendonca, Chief Resilience Officer

Feedback on ERG performance

On several occasions in recent years, the ERG has signalled that it would like some formal feedback from Council regarding the value of its contribution. This request has been recognised in the 2014 ToR. Council officers are expected to report back to the ERG on how its advice was considered, and whether or not officers and councillors chose to act on that advice (and why). ERG has received positive feedback from officers on its contribution to the Climate Change Action plan for example, and it is expected that feedback will be more readily available with the full implementation of the portfolio model.

Advice

The following is a non-exhaustive list of advice that was given by ERG, showing the breadth of its portfolio and potential usefulness for Council. We are pleased to see some of those recommendations were implemented, and would like to bring your attention to those who would benefit action.

Our Natural Capital

ERG had been consulted twice during the development of Our Natural Capital (covered in the 2014 report). ERG made a formal submission and oral presentation to the draft plan in support of this plan, while raising a number of additional points including the need to align all Council's actions with this document and have it actively implemented throughout the Council.

Long term plan

ERG lodged and spoke to a formal submission as part of the public consultation process, covering a number of subjects. The advice was as follows:

Water: Stormwater quality is not deemed of acceptable quality as tabled, capital investment in improvement works is required; Stormwater management needs to be integrated better into urban renewal and key projects.

Transport: Airport extension should show a proven business case and will have significant negative environmental impact. There is a need to improve other long distance travel choices. Inner city streets should be attractive public open spaces and not prioritise car movement. Johnsonville needs improved walking networks, public transport and open space.

Waste: reduce waste to landfill and divert's sewage sludge from landfill.

Urban growth plan

ERG made a formal submission on this subject. It supported the guiding principles, but noted that a further guiding principle was required: "the re-establishment of Wellington's original biodiversity". Further recommendations were to accelerate MDRA rollout, and increase protection of greenspace within MDRA. ERG noted it would like to participate in the development of the performance measure indicators.

Climate Change Action Plan

ERG made a formal submission. It recommended funding in the LTP for adaptation to climate change effects in order to build Wellington's resilience, the implementation of the climate change action plan at the same time as data collection, and that Council carry out a carbon analysis for all new major investments and significant events in the city.

Acknowledgements

The ERG has appreciated the involvement of Councillors Pannett and Ritchie in several ERG meetings. ERG sees participation of Councillors in ERG meetings as a key communication channel with Council and its committees.

Throughout 2015, ERG has valued the services and support provided by a succession of liaison officers, Simon Wright was followed by Helen Walker and Kate Irvine as temporary chairs before the permanent appointment of James Mather in January 2016, as the liaison officer for all Reference Groups. We were impressed by their professionalism, good humour, and ability to manage the increasing work load associated with the breadth of the terms of reference. We have no doubt that stability in this position will help the support of these reference groups.

ERG members also wish to record their thanks to all the council officers who sought ERG's advice on specific projects through presentations and discussions. We appreciated their willingness to listen, and their responsiveness and appreciation of our feedback. We hope these relationships will blossom and that new relationships can be forged.

Appendix 1: Approved Work Plan

Bev Abbott and Howard Markland

Environmental Reference Group

Wellington City Council

101 Wakefield Street, PO Box 2199

WELLINGTON 6140

Dear Bev and Howard

Re: Work Programme for the Environmental Reference Group (ERG)

The Council sets out letters of expectations for its advisory groups. This process aims to ensure the work of the groups is aligned to the Council's priorities and therefore can have an impact.

We want to draw on the experience and expertise of the group to help solve problems and find solutions for the key issues that we face. The aim is to ensure the group has a deeper and more-ongoing involvement with the work-streams of greatest priority to the city.

The areas of focus for the coming year are noted below. The specific programme and meeting agendas will be set separately.

Key AP and LTP priorities	ERG input
2015-25 Long-term Plan: The Council is developing its plan for the next ten years. As part of this work it is reviewing its performance management framework. The ERG recognises the importance of the framework in helping Council monitor the impact of its work and has identified this as a priority area where it can add value.	Work with officers throughout the development of the new framework by providing feedback on the structure of the revised framework, and working with officers to develop measures for the 'environment' activity areas as a model for the development of measures for the rest of the framework.
Biodiversity Action Plan: The Council is reviewing its Biodiversity Action Plan. The review will look at ways of improving Council's monitoring regime to ensure the effectiveness of its investment.	Work with officers throughout the review of the Action Plan and provide input on how Council can better leverage partnerships with research providers and other external entities.
Urban Growth Plan: The Urban Growth Plan (UGP) informs the Council's focus and investment in the areas of urban development and transport and relates closely to the LTP. The Plan links strategic approaches and key projects in those areas.	One of the key choices facing cities is how to manage growth and the negative effects of it. The key choice is around containment or urban sprawl. There are also localised interventions that can be done to reduce the environmental impact of development. We would welcome the group's discussion of the growth plan and issues it poses.
Infrastructure Strategy: Our 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy (30IS) will help the City achieve the best possible use of our existing networks and facilities, primarily to enable higher economic development. The infrastructure strategy focuses on the big 5 core	Many of the Council's services are enabled through assets and infrastructure. They represent a large proportion of the Council's expenditure. The 30IS sets out how when plan to manage these. We would welcome the group's review of the 30IS with a particular focus on demand

infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater, storm water, wastewater, flood protection and the provision of roads and footpaths.	management solutions and advice on potential solutions for technological uptake.
Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD): The Council approved the Introduction to WSUD guide in June 2014. Officers are now working on an implementation plan, which will consider how best to directly implement WSUD, where there may be opportunities through asset management plans and asset upgrades, how it relates to catchment management planning, and where we can work with developers to see where they can include WSUD in their developments.	Identify potential solutions to overcome barriers to WSUD implementation.
Flagship environment projects: As part of its LTP, Council will focus on two key initiatives in the 3 waters area. These are: (a) a project to monitor the quality of wastewater and stormwater entering the harbour in order to address any issues and, (b) the development of a hydraulic model of the city to better understand the impact of Climate Change on the city and its infrastructure.	Work with officers and Wellington Water (formerly Capacity) to progress the development of these initiatives.

We would also welcome the group's ongoing involvement with the implementation of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, Council's efforts to reduce solid waste and significant transport projects.

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

The programme is fulsome and I look forward to the group's consideration of these matters.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Yours sincerely

Brian Hannah

Director, Strategy and External Relations

Appendix 2: ERG profiles

Wellington City Council Environmental Reference Group

Profile of members as at September 2015

Dr Sophie Mormede | Joined 2012

Sophie is a fisheries scientist with the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, providing some of the science which informs the quota management system. She previously worked as a consultant in the water industry (drinking and wastewater) and as a process engineer in that field. In her spare time, she is a board member of the Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve, a committee member of the Wellington Underwater Club and active scuba-diver, with strong involvement in community clean ups and advocacy for the marine environment. She is also a volunteer at Zealandia, although not as much as she would like.

Paula Warren | Joined 2013

Paula is an ecologist who works as a policy advisor for the Department of Conservation. Her work over the last 26 years has covered a wide range of legislation and systems reforms, including development of the Resource Management Act, foreshore and seabed legislation, development of an outcomes approach for conservation management and prioritising, and reform of protected areas legislation. She was New Zealand's lead technical delegate for the Convention on Biological Diversity for 6 years, including being a member of the technical bureau for the Convention, and being the NZ Clearing House Mechanism and Global Taxonomy Initiative focal point. She has done voluntary and paid work in countries in Latin America, focused on biodiversity and biosecurity systems reforms and is Secretary of the Friends of Galapagos NZ. She manages or is involved with a number of restoration projects in the region, including chairing the Growing Places Trust that has been set up to implement place-making initiatives in transport corridors. She is also a walking and public transport users' advocate, and has been a member of the Regional Transport Committee.

Kate Mitcalfe | Joined 2014

Kate is an environmental lawyer. She has a broad range of legal experience having worked for the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of NZ as well as Russell McVeagh. Kate has lectured in environmental and local government law at Auckland University's School of Planning and worked as an academic adviser for the Open Polytechnic of NZ. Kate was a member of the Ministerial Reference Group on proposed changes to the Resource Management Act in 2004. Kate was also a member of the Environmental Legal Assistance Panel, making recommendations on environmental legal aid, for over six years. Kate has a keen interest in the environment and conservation. As the mother of three, Kate spends many weekends exploring Wellington's natural environment.

Mark Fenwick | Joined 2014

For the last six years Mark has been employed by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research Ltd (NIWA) as a marine ecology technician. He has a varied role, working on the environmental impacts of fishing on marine habitats and fisheries stock assessments for hoki, oreo, orange roughy, blue cod and crayfish. He also works on environmental impact studies for major developments including roading and sea floor mining. Mark is a beneficiary member of the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, the Wellington Tenths Trust and the Palmerston North Maori Reserves Trust and he affiliates to Te Atiawa and Taranaki Iwi and is a descendant of Te Whiti O Rongomai. His marae is Te Tatau o te Po in Petone and he currently sits on Te Atiawa ki Te Upoko o te Ika a Maui Potiki Trust (the marae fisheries trust). Mark has an MSc from Victoria University, Wellington where he studied the genetic relationships of the New Zealand freshwater mussels (Kakahi) in conjunction with DoC, Iwi and Te Papa. While studying he worked in various roles at the National Museum, Te Papa Tongarewa in the Natural Environment department - the highlight of which was his involvement with the defrost and preservation of the colossal squid where he had a high profile role as the lead technician. Outside of work Mark is a keen fisherman and diver and a part-time dive instructor helping other people discover our fantastic coast and underwater world. He spends time tramping in the Tararua Ranges chasing trout and just generally enjoying the great outdoors. Mark is passionate about our natural environment and believe that tangata whenua have a key role to play in ensuring that our environment is used in cautious, sustainable ways.

Stu Farrant | Joined 2014

Stu is an Ecological Engineer who specialises in the water aspects of ecologically sustainable development, particularly integrated urban water cycle management and water sensitive urban design (WSUD). In this capacity he works closely with ecologists, urban designers, landscape architects and engineers to deliver design solutions which respond to site specific constraints and opportunities to enhance project outcome for both stakeholders and the environment. Stu has recently returned to Wellington following a recent 5 year stint in Melbourne working alongside some of the global leaders in urban water management. Stu also brings a strong personal interest in community driven restoration ecology and has been involved in a number of large scale projects in Wellington and elsewhere. He is currently involved in the formation of a group to participate in restoration activities across Matakairangi/Mt Victoria and assists with the Clyde Quay School's environmental group activities. As a keen diver he is an avid fan of Wellington's blue belt and the benefits of a healthy and diverse marine environment. Other personal interests include tramping, travel, photography and anything to do with plants.

Martin Payne | Joined 2014

Martin, as a professional qualified engineer, runs a design and consultancy company focussed on sustainable water and energy management systems. His particular interest in Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles recognises the impacts of stormwater, transport, waste management and land development on aquatic environments. He has currently completed several

papers towards a Masters in Public Health (Environmental Health) with a focus on residential rainwater harvesting. As a long time environmental advocate, urban water researcher and resident in Wellington City, Martin firmly believes that the natural environment makes an essential contribution to the prosperity and liveability of Wellington City and that protecting this taonga can be achieved by an engaged community. As co-ordinator of Friends of Owhiro Stream, he has been involved in the physical restoration of this urban stream and as well as acting as a strong advocate for the protection of these sensitive environments at local and regional government levels.

Graeme Sawyer | Joined 2014

Graeme comes from a background in the water industry, and latterly has gained experience in public policy development in waste, science commercialisation and environmental monitoring. He is currently self-employed as a stakeholder engagement consultant. Graeme is active in his local Johnsonville Community, where he presides over the local residents group, the JCA. With a degree in Zoology and a strong interest in native trees and ecology, he recently began a project to construct new walking tracks and re-vegetation of endemic canopy species in the parks & reserves of northern Wellington. Graeme has a particular interest in how the city may ensure that higher density suburban development is complimented by improved “livability”, particularly with regard to quality and quality of public greenspace, and endemic biodiversity.

Hamish McGillivray | Joined 2015

Hamish has a background in resource management and has a range of experience in the development, implementation and monitoring of urban and environmental policy, planning frameworks and planning documents. This spans roles in both the central and local government sector in New Zealand and the UK.

Hamish’s current role is with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment working on housing and construction policy, and follows six years at the Ministry of the Environment working on a range of implementation and practice matters under the Resource Management Act.

Hamish has a keen interest in how places work, evolve and are shaped by communities that live in them. Outside of work Hamish enjoys football, running and fishing and spending time at Wellington’s many recreational facilities with his young family.

Lynn Cadenhead | Joined 2015

Lynn Cadenhead is a registered landscape architect with a zoology honours degree and an environmental science background. She has recently relocated to Wellington from Nelson where she was a particularly active member in Heritage Nelson and the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects branch. This included chairing both groups and active involvement in submission writing. She has been involved in a wide range of environmental and community projects both as a professional landscape architect and as a volunteer. These included landscape assessments, revegetation reports and projects, reserve and playground design and involvement in roading and transport issues.

Shenagh Gleisner | Joined 2015

Shenagh Gleisner is an independent consultant specialising in governance, executive management and strategic reviews. She was a Chief Executive in the public service, a Director of KPMG and a senior manager in the health sector. She now serves on a number of Boards in different sectors and has undertaken a range of acting management positions in the public and NGO sectors. She is a volunteer at Zealandia, a keen cyclist and supporter of the cultural events in Wellington.

Daniela Biaggio

A Newtown Resident with a passion for conservation. Daniella spends time monitoring penguin nest boxes on the south coast, doing walks through Otari, Zealandia, red rocks and many other open spaces, participating in restoration work in the town belt, enjoying the harbour in a sunny day. Daniela is employed as Wellington Zoo's conservation manager, and has worked in over 5 continents.

Chris Watson

Registered architect number 2033, with >25 years professional experience in NZ, Australia, Europe working from studio in the Cuba Street precinct. Member of Wellington's sustainable transport forum: suswelltrans. On many occasions Chris has addressed WCC and GW on transport decisions, with submissions in favour of environment, health, urban design, economy and climate stabilisation. As transport co-ordinator with the Wellington Civic Trust, Chris ran the "Round About the Basin" public forum in 2009. Presentations addressed urban and environmental issues about urban development in the Basin Reserve area. Chris has assembled internationally leading thinkers on sustainable long distance travel to published a book on the topic (ISBN: 0857842099) in Cambridge UK.