

## DISABILITY REFERENCE GROUP

### MINUTES

5.30 P.M. – Tuesday 10 February, 2009

Committee Room 2

#### Members Present

Sara Pivac Alexander (Co-Chair)  
Rosie Macleod (Co-Chair)  
Alan Royal  
Philippa MacDonald  
James Tait  
Jules Taniwha  
Sandie Waddell  
Lisette Wesseling  
Thomas Bryan  
Wendy Walker (WCC)  
Councillor Pannett  
Sinéad Roe (WCC)

#### Also Present

#### **1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed the group

#### **2. Apologies**

There were no apologies

#### **3. Wendy Walker, Director, Citizen Engagement.**

Wendy wished the members of DRG a happy new year, and thanked them for their input to council. She outlined the importance of the information and viewpoints the DRG provides Council directly from the communities which they represent. She explained that the role of the Councillor in relation to the group was as a conduit for the DRG, both formal and informal into the Council's decision-making processes. It was hoped that Councillor Pannett's first-hand knowledge of the group's opinions and advice should enable her to represent the views of the DRG at other Council meetings. Wendy hopes to attend a number of the DRG meetings during the year.

The Chair reminded members of the 'orange hand' system which allows each member to be heard and insures that people do not speak across each other. The group was reminded to remember to wait until they were invited to speak by the Chair.

#### 4. Confirmation of the Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed. Alan confirmed and Rosie seconded.

#### 5. Report from the Co-Chair (Rosie Mcleod)

Sinéad's help with the interview process for the new DRG member was acknowledged. James Tait was introduced; the Chair explained that James was chosen because of his background in mental health advocacy and involvement with youth.

Members were reminded of the DRG's LTCCP Workshop on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February

#### 6. Report from the Council Officer

##### Accessible Wellington Forum:

Forum planning is being guided by Rosie Macleod and James Tait. One meeting has taken place and an agenda for the Forum has been drafted. There is a proposal to hold an architectural design competition in advance of the Forum. The competition would be based on designing an accessible upgrade to a City Housing unit as part of the Housing Upgrade project. It is hoped such a competition will raise awareness in the building industry around accessible design. The proposal is to run the competition for 4 weeks in March and hold judging in the first 2 weeks in April. Cllr Pannett asked if students could enter the architecture competition. Sinéad explained that because the winning project was going to be built the competition could only be opened up to registered architects.

The judging panel for the architectural design competition will consist of Ron Pynenburg, Bill Wrightson, John LeHarivel (Housing Upgrade Project Design Manager) and members of the DRG.

Cllr Pannett noted Council has targets for attendance at Forums which are not at present being met and stressed the need for the Accessible Wellington Forum to be widely advertised through DRG and Council networks.

##### **During the first six months of 2009, the DRG will be asked to provide feedback and input on:-**

- **LTCCP:**

Sinéad explained that the DRG will be asked to give feedback to the Council on strategic priorities with reference to the LTCCP. During March and April, it is expected the group will prepare a submission to Council around the LTCCP, to be presented in mid-April.

<b>ACTION</b> Sinead to supply info. to DRG about LTCCP workshop
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- **Review of District Plan Rules:**

Management and development of suburban centres. The group will feed back on specific areas to be guided by the relevant WCC policy advisor. The DRG are likely to have a presentation on this review at the March DRG meeting.

- **Community Facilities Review:**

This is an ongoing process of determining how existing facilities are fulfilling the needs of the community. Accessibility is an important component of this. During the first six months of 2009, City Communities will be working on a needs assessment of community facilities city-wide. The DRG will be invited to advise officers on the needs of people with disabilities with regard to community facilities.

<b>ACTION</b> Sinead to supply programme for next 6 months. Sinead to report back to group on the outcome of Infrastructure consultation with contractors.
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**Additional items:**

The report from Opus on the design of pedestrian kerb ramps has been delivered to Infrastructure. Council officers from Infrastructure are working with contractors to establish how practicability of the draft designs in the report. It is expected that the minimum gradient on kerb ramps will be revised from 1:8 to 1:12.

Cllr Pannett noted that papers on Dog Control and Recycling were on the Forward Programme for the Strategy and Policy Committee during the coming months and invited the DRG to review these.

It was noted that DRG members should be alerted to upcoming Committee papers of interest by Sinéad.

The DRG Terms of Reference require a report to be made to the Council twice yearly via the Strategy and Policy Committee. The Co-Chairs will be working on this report which at present is scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup>.

## **7. Sub-Group Reports**

### **ICT Sub – Group – Alan**

The group produced ICT-related recommendations as part of the DRG's Annual Plan submission in 2009. These pointed out issues with ICT and specifically with the accessibility of the City Council's website. This led to a meeting in December between the ICT subgroup and the Web Centre and members have all had a copy of this report. The Web Centre have assured the DRG representatives that they will consult with DRG regularly but stress that due to limited resources things might not happen overnight. Major issues in this area are the use of New Zealand Sign Language videos for the Deaf community and the ease with which the website can be navigated using screen readers such as Jaws.

The Web Centre appeared to have a good feel for the problems facing disabled people. Alan, Thomas, Lisette and Sara are to follow up with website managers as to what progress has been made in March.

## **Housing Sub-Group – Rosie**

### Issues:

- clear understanding of the Housing Upgrade Project and its timeframes
- Accessibility of social and private housing for people with disabilities including seniors.

### Work:

- Subgroup involved in HUP Pre-Upgrade Evaluation (PUE) exercises.
- Three Pre-Upgrade Evaluations done so far: Central Park Tower Block on Nairn Street, Newtown Park Flats and the Kotuku Flats at Kilbirnie.
- Submissions will be prepared by the subgroup if the Council is planning on making any policy changes relating to housing in 2009.

### Goals:

- To ensure we are "in the loop" as significant milestones are planned and completed.
- Add value - not be obstructive and also be clear about what our role is and boundaries around that.
- By staying on track with the goals we have set out to achieve.

### Other:

- The subgroup will meet each month a week before the normal DRG meeting.
- The subgroup will make a report to the DRG at meetings bi-monthly.

## **Accessible Art Sub-Group – Lisette**

### Issues for the subgroup to work on:

Making sure the arts in Wellington are accessible. The arts include, but are not limited to: theatre, galleries, exhibitions, concerts, performances.

The main issues are including NZSL interpreting, audio-description, and physical access to the buildings and venues where these events take place. This includes making sure the journey to the event or performance is accessible, incorporating accessible parking and access to public transport.

### Goals:

- 10 Arts events in Wellington are NZSL interpreted by the end of the year
- Workshop takes place to train audio describers by the end of the year
- International Day of People with Disabilities is celebrated with Arts events in the city that are both high-profile and well attended. This will be achieved in collaboration with Te Papa and Wellington City Council with a possibility for other external agencies to become involved.

The Arts subgroup will prepare submissions to WCC where policy changes are proposed that affect access to the arts.

The Arts subgroup will meet regularly (every three months at least) and will report back to the DRG on developments as they take place.

It was explained that there are equipment costs involved as audio description is transmitted via an FM system. Describers need to be properly trained; they can make a huge difference to a blind person's enjoyment and understanding of a performance. NZ needs to learn from best practice in the UK, US and Australia where barriers to this have been overcome. Thomas has offered to bring along a copy of an audio described DVD so that DRG members can experience this first hand. On the question of how it would be best to disseminate information about accessible performances or events, several people suggested that whilst their own networks were important that such information should be available universally not just for the communities whom it serves. It was hoped that theatres would take the initiative and advertise themselves.

<b>ACTION</b> Thomas to bring audio- described DVD to next DRG meeting
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### **Transport & Urban Design Sub-Group – Thomas**

Sub-group of Thomas, Rosie and Sandie have communicated by email. This group have a focus on transport, urban design and accessibility. They want to make submissions, and already looking at the Manners mall upgrade. They hope to have an impact on accessible transport and planned initiatives. Their goal is that all changes should meet the codes around accessibility for example bus-stop upgrades. The group asked if a designated Council officer could work with the subgroup help inform them. Sinead replied that she had already set this up with an officer in Urban Design and another in Infrastructure. Group will also need to liaise with GWRC as there is a considerable amount of overlap between providers. Thomas has contact with Peter Glenn in GWRC, and also mentioned need to liaise with Snapper.

Jules commented that there are lots of areas in Wellington where there are problems with kerbs and pavements. She is pleased that DRG are being proactive and making a difference but worried about other areas.

Cllr. Pannett reminded DRG that everyone has access to their Ward Councillors who are their paid representatives.

### **Other business:**

The group was reminded that Professor Gerard Quinn will be speaking at the Human Rights Commission on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Professor Quinn is an international expert in anti-discrimination law, and will speak about implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. DRG members were encouraged to attend this public meeting.

The group noted that the proposed Indoor Sports Stadium at Kilbirnie was likely to put increased pressure on transport in the surrounding suburbs. Cllr. Pannett observed that an appeal has been lodged against the resource consent for the Stadium and that no planning will take place on the proposed development until the appeal has been heard.

The group commented that increased investment in transport infrastructure was needed along the Ngaraunga to Airport route, and stressed the need for the Council to collaborate with GWRC and Central Government on this where appropriate.

The meeting closed at 6:50 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for: Tuesday, March 10, 2009 at 5:30 pm.