

Environmental Reference Group

Annual Report for the period 1st August 2021 to 22 August 2022

Written by Michelle Rush (Co-Chair)

Purpose

The Environmental Reference Group's (ERG) purpose is to:

- Advise Council on the best ways to improve Wellingtonian's 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, heritage, resilience, climate change, urban design and transport management, in the context of Council's roles and priorities.

About

ERG has a diverse mix of well qualified and experienced members from a range of backgrounds across a wide range of disciplines. Selection of members is usually carried out by the chair of the ERG, with support from Democracy Services. There was no new intake in 2020 and only a couple of people in 2021. Diversity within the group is affected by who applies, and currently the group has more males than females, and no non-Pākehā members, but a range of ages and experience.

Portfolios

The principal areas of interest to the ERG are split into portfolios with portfolio leads as of August 2022 as in the table below:

Portfolio Group	2021	ERG Lead 2022
Transport	Michelle Rush	Arran Whiteford
Climate Change	Chris Watson, Isla Day, Steven Almond	Sally Faisandier, Arran Whiteford
Waste and Circular Economy	Steven Almond	Spencer Clubb
Water	Arron Cox / Lynn Cadenhead	Michelle Rush
Resilience	Lynn Cadenhead	Sally Faisandier
Urban Design Agency/Urban Growth	Eleanor West / Sally Faisandier	Ben Zwartz
Biodiversity/Open Space	Mike Britton / George Hobson	George Hobson / Mike Britton
Heritage	Lynn Cadenhead / Clare Stringer	Clare Stringer

For each portfolio ERG has have written a set of principles to guide submissions and advice. These principles have been attached in an appendix to this report.

Oral Feedback to Officers; Policies, Strategies and Presentations

During the period of this report, the council officers consulted with ERG on a number of plans and strategies, including:

DATE	Meeting Topics
August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting work programme
September 13 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pōneke Promise safety initiative
12 October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greta Point Connection
November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green Network Plan and Fossil-Fuel free city

DATE	Meeting Topics
December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft District Plan - workshop
14 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Plan • Bike Network Plan & Let's Get Wellington Moving
14 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Economic Wellbeing Strategy, • 10 Year Māori Strategy
11 April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residual Waste Disposal Options and Waste Minimisation • City Housing funding options
9 May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Capital Spaces Review – Open Space and Recreation Strategy - feedback
13 June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Capital Spaces Review – Open Space and Recreation Strategy - workshop
11 July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Para Kai trial, Miramar
8 August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellington City Council Community Facilities Plan Project Plan • Proposed District Plan

Submissions

- Water Services Entities Bill
- Newtown to City cycleway
- ERG comments on the Climate and Sustainability Fund Criteria, 26th October 2021
- Waste Management and Minimisation Plan Action Plan including landfill extension June 2022 submission and oral presentation
- Draft economic wellbeing strategy May 2022 submission and oral presentation
- WCC Annual Plan 2022/23 submission and oral presentation
- Paneke Pōneke Bike network plan proposal submission and oral presentation
- Let's Get Wellington Moving: Mass Rapid Transit
- WCC Draft District Plan submissions and oral presentation
- MFE Legislation phasing out hard-to-recycle and single-use plastics
- Residual waste disposal options 2021/2022
- Trading in Public Spaces - Clare
- LGWM Greta Point to Cobham Drive
- LGWM Mass Rapid Transit, Mt Vic and Basin Reserve upgrade

Issues

- Three waters issues continue to be of concern to the group, particularly the continued failure of infrastructure (waste and stormwater) causing pollution events, the 'leaky' nature of our drinking water network wasting energy and precious water resources, and the slow uptake of measures to reduce pollution from stormwater, e.g. widespread adoption of water sensitive design.
- Whilst the support WCC has given to numerous biodiversity initiatives is very pleasing, e.g. Predator Free Wellington and Zealandia to name just a few of many, the exclusion of significant natural area provisions in residential areas from the notified district plan is disappointing and likely in breach of regional and national rules and policies
- Likewise whilst the approval of the Bike Network Plan was a great step forward, the removal of the Johnsonville Rail line as a 'rapid transit' route is most concerning and likely in breach of the NPS Urban Development: this decision sits uneasily with Council's pledge under Te Atakura to mitigate climate change impacts, as well as social and economic matters such as housing affordability and economic development.
- We seek that Council focus on developing good performance indicators and targets that will encourage work towards priority outcomes: as we have said before, all strategies and implementation plans need clear priorities and goals with dates.
- There is a now urgent need to invest in bringing about a change in beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, not just infrastructure change, to address some of the long-term issues facing the city. Of particular concern are climate change, population growth and resilience. The concerns expressed by residents over the implementation of the

Bike Network changes is just one example of why effort is needed on these matters: people need help to build their understanding of why these changes are so necessary for the long term.

Changes

- In 2021 Arran Whitehead and David Batchelor joined us, and have both made great contributions. Unfortunately, David Batchelor resigned this year, because he has now moved overseas.
- In June this year we welcomed Shannon Wallace, Spencer Clubb, Sam Satterthwaite and Ben Zwartz to our ranks: they bring to ERG some great skills, experience and perspectives that will complement those of other members.
- We farewelled Lynn Cadenhead and Chris Watson whose time on the ERG had come to an end. Earlier in the year, Arron Cox, Eleanor West and Isla Day all left for work reasons. We wish to acknowledge the significant efforts of these people, and especially Lynn, who was a dedicated and energetic Chair and Co-Chair for ERG.

Wellington City Council ERG - Profile of members, 1 August 2021 – August 2022

Lynn Cadenhead (started in 2015, and finished out her term in May 2022)

Lynn Cadenhead is a registered landscape architect with a zoology honours degree and an environmental science background. She has now lived in Wellington for six years. While living in Nelson Lynn was an active member of Heritage Nelson and the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Nelson branch, chairing both groups. Lynn has been involved in a wide range of environmental and community projects, both as a professional landscape architect and as a volunteer. These have included landscape assessments, revegetation reports and projects, reserve and playground designs, and involvement in roading and transport issues.

Chris Watson (Joined 2016, finished out his term in May 2022)

Chris is an architect and author. He has promoted low/zero carbon cities and countries, to local authorities, public forums, select committees and the environment court. His main interests are zero carbon buildings, cities and travel. His architectural practice includes world-leading work evaluating quality of buildings and building programs, to feed forward lessons learned. He has been commissioned to undertake numerous projects in Australia and Europe as well as NZ. His books on building quality and climate safe travel were published in Oxford and Cambridge, UK.

Mike Britton (Joined in 2016)

Mike has a background in protected area management with a special interest in national parks and nature protection. He is a former General Manager of Forest & Bird and also Assistant Director of Fish & Game New Zealand. More recently, Mike has become involved in fundraising, primarily for nature protection. Over the last three years he has helped raise money with BirdLife International for island restoration, predator control and the development of sustainable livelihoods in the Pacific. Mike is a member of the Tongaririo Taupo Conservation and the Taupo-nui-a-Tia Management Boards.

Steven Almond (Joined in December 2019)

Steven's background is in industrial design, previously working in the UK before moving to New Zealand in 2012. Steven has increasingly focussed his work on sustainable design and sustainability issues, recently completing a Master's degree in design at Victoria University of Wellington, researching design for a 'Circular Economy'. For the past two years Steven has worked at Garage Project as their Sustainability Ambassador. In addition, Steven works on design projects with a sustainability focus.

Sally Faisandier (Joined in December 2019)

Sally Faisandier (MA (Psych), Dip Tchg, Dip Eval) has worked as a research and evaluation advisor for central government agencies for the past twenty years (ten as a Principal Advisor), which included Health, Education, Social Development, Justice, Māori Development and Land Information. She has written a number of papers on resilience issues, and has a passion for supporting the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. Sally joined the ERG as a generalist, providing expertise in understanding and interpreting research reports over a wide range of topics, to inform policy within a political context.

George Hobson (Joined in December 2019)

George is a passionate 18-year-old advocate for the environment. He has been involved in many on-the-ground conservation projects over the last four years, from reptile monitoring on Mana Island, to Black Petrel research on Great Barrier Island. He is a Coordinator of Forest & Bird Youth, where he works to empower young people across Aotearoa New Zealand to make environmental change. He was also one of the first ZEALANDIA Youth Ambassadors, where he worked with young people from all over Wellington. George is fascinated by politics and environmental policy, and is passionate about ensuring that youth voices are not overlooked in these areas.

Michelle Rush (Joined in December 2019)

Michelle Rush is a facilitator, trainer and consultant specialising in collaborative processes and effective stakeholder engagement. She has a background in natural resource management policy and social research, with particular expertise in sustainable land and water policy and sustainable agriculture. She has more than 25 years' experience as a professional facilitator working with businesses, science, industry and government organisations, councils and community groups. She is currently a member of the Onslow College Board.

Clare Stringer (Joined in December 2019)

Clare's career has been focused on biodiversity conservation and invasive species management. She has worked in policy development as well as project implementation in New Zealand and around the world.

Arron Cox (Joined December 2019, resigned September 2021)

Arron works in environmental policy focusing on how we protect and enhance water in our urban areas. He has a background in the three waters (drinking water, wastewater and stormwater) and has worked as both an engineer and resource consents planner. Outside of water he is passionate about how Wellington can undertake a just transition to become zero carbon by 2050 or earlier. He is particularly focused on how this can be achieved through the way the city grows and the way its residents get around. He is keen to ensure youth continue to become more engaged in Council's decisions and that their concerns are reflected in Council policy.

Isla Day (Joined December 2019, resigned late 2021)

Isla is studying Physical Geography and Biomedical Science at Victoria University. She was a founding member of School Strike 4 Climate in New Zealand, a national youth led movement that mobilised 170,000 people in the 2020 September 27th strike. Both her interest in science and love of the outdoors (through mountain biking) have influenced her passion for protecting the natural environment and in the future she has ambitions in scientific research and policy advice.

Eleanor West (Joined December 2019, resigned August 2021)

Eleanor has a background in Environmental Science and Geography, with a focus on urban issues. She currently works for the New Zealand Green Building Council on the technical team. In her free time, Eleanor volunteers for Generation Zero where she works predominately on local transport and urban design issues.

David Batchelor (Joined 2021, resigned March 2022)

David Batchelor is a practising urban planner, festival director for Wellington Heritage Week, and an academic researcher. He specialises in residential development and heritage resource management, and transportation policy. His academic research is on heritage, smart cities, and local government strategic documents and operations. David holds a PhD in Architecture (graduand), a Master in Urban Planning, and tertiary qualifications in history, public management, geography, and sociology.

Arran Whiteford (joined in September 2021)

Arran Whiteford loves the natural world, and exploring its wild places — the mountains, the sea, and forests. With an interest in climate change, this led him to complete a masters degree in glaciology, and a PhD looking at ice-ocean interaction in Antarctica. Now, Arran works as a renewable energy engineer, prospecting for potential wind farms. Arran is a keen climate advocate and a proud member of Wellington's trail running, orienteering and bike communities.

Shannon Wallace (joined in June 2022)

Shannon is a registered planner with a master's degree in environmental planning and currently working as a Principal Analyst at the Ministry for the Environment. Shannon has spent over 11 years working in environmental policy in New Zealand and the UK and has particular expertise in freshwater management, RMA plan implementation and the role of Māori in the planning system. Shannon is member of the Southern Environmental Association, and keen 're-wilder' and urban composter.

Ben Zwartz (joined in June 2022)

Ben is a land surveyor with more than twenty years' experience in resource management, civil infrastructure and infill development. He is active in his community of Vogelmorn and in cycling advocacy. He also helps at KaiCycle urban farm.

Sam Satterthwaite (joined in June 2022)

Sam is an ambitious young student with a passion for sustainable development and smart climate solutions. They come from a strong background of environmental advocacy and leadership including the 2021 School Strike for Climate team, Forest and Bird Youth, Mountains to Sea and local political engagement. Alongside a passion for wildlife and ecology promoted through global travel and exploring Wellington's nature reserves on land and sea. Currently studying Biotechnology, Entrepreneurship and Environmental Studies, Sam hopes to utilize a multifaceted youth perspective and effective action to promote positive change, resilience and sustainability within the city they love.

Spencer Clubb (joined in June 2022)

Spencer has 20 years' experience working as an environment and sustainability policy professional. He has worked in government and non-government roles in New Zealand and the UK on a wide range of issues including natural resource management, biodiversity, energy, environmental impact assessment and freshwater.

ERG Work Plan 2022/2023 Financial Year

TOPIC	OUTPUT
1. Mandatory/legislative	
District Plan	ERG Statutory Submission
Annual Plan	ERG Submission
Role of ERG	Assist new councillors to understand and appreciate the role of the ERG
2. Delivering on Strategic Priorities	
LGWM Mass rapid transit City streets package Golden mile Thorndon / Hutt Road	Presentation/information on plan, review or strategy. Direct comment on WCC's plan, review or strategy. ERG's own submission to WCC.
Central City walking improvements	As above
Paneke Poneke Bike Network Plan	As above
Te Atakura First to Zero Sludge Minimisation	As above
Social & Community Facilities Review & Our Capital Spaces	As above
Heritage Strategy	As above
Development Contributions Policy	As above
Economic wellbeing Strategy	
Additional Topics	
Te Atakura, Climate Change / Zero Carbon Capital- quarterly updates	
Annual Update of ERG Portfolio Principles	Updated Principles.
3. Central Govt & Regional Priorities	
Three Waters Reform	ERG submission to Water Services Entities Bill
Implementing NPS on Fresh water management	Presentation/information on WCC's actions. ERG to comment & submit if actions are out for public comment.
Review of waste Legislation, product stewardship & levies	Presentation/information on WCC's submission/views. Comment on WCC's submission. ERG's own submission.
Regional Transport Plan incl. LGWM	Presentation/information on WCC's submission/views. Comment on WCC's submission. ERG's own submission.
Proposed NPSs – Proposed national policy statement for indigenous biodiversity, proposed NPS for Heritage (currently being scoped); etc.	Presentation/information on WCC's submission/views. Comment on WCC's submission. ERG's own submission.
Regional Waste management and minimisation plan, including kerbside waste review, resource recovery and Southern Landfill Extension	