

Accessible Wellington Action Plan 2012-2015: Interim 2014 Annual Reporting

(final report will be available on the Wellington City Council website in June 2014)

What follows is a record of the major Wellington City Council actions completed or initiated in 2013 and 2014 under the requirements of the Accessible Wellington Action Plan 2012-2015. This report was compiled by Elizabeth St John-Ives, Accessibility Advisor, Wellington City Council. To comment on this report or for further information, please contact Elizabeth on 04 803 8581 or email Elizabeth.stjohnives@wcc.govt.nz.

The actions are recorded under each of the groupings as set out in the Action Plan; that is social and recreation, governance, ease of travel across and around Wellington City, arts and culture, the built environment and open spaces, and economic development. Each action is set in line with the relevant three year objective of that grouping. There are some actions that Council has completed over this time period that do not fall under a three year objective, however they do fall under the key purpose of the plan and have therefore been included in this report. The plan is seen as a living document and this widening of scope and achievement was expected from the outset.

To view the Accessible Wellington Action plan, please visit: <http://wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/accessible-wellington-action-plan>

Social and recreation

Three yearly objective: Review the way information and resources can be accessed and delivered

- The Accessible Wellington Map is being updated and is due for completion in late June. The map design will be more user friendly and the information contained will appeal to a broader population of people with access needs. For example, we have located services for youth, parents, and people living with mental health issues. The map will be available in a variety of accessible forms. GIS information of accessible routes and public spaces has been collected alongside the creation of the new map, helping to achieve our commitments under the objectives of the built environment and open spaces grouping of the Action Plan.

Three yearly objective: Explore opportunities to ensure services respond to the varied and diverse needs of the community

Appendix 1

- The Online Community Directory, a joint project between the Capital and Coast District Health Board and the Wellington City Council, is in its development stage. The directory will be a comprehensive, usable and accessible directory of available community services ranging from passive to active recreation, leisure groups and social/support services. Throughout the creation, accessibility of both the directory website and the information it contains has been the key priority. The directory will be a resource that assists in providing information pathways for people living with impairments and their families, as well as mental health service users and support providers.
- As part of the upgrade underway at Keith Spry Pool in Johnsonville, the Council has improved access into the new teaching pools through installing ramps and stairs. Shortly, we will be upgrading the changing facilities to include one fully accessible changing room and four family rooms. The upgrade will be completed in early 2015.
- Wellington City Council Libraries now offer the customer agent library membership card service. The customer agent library membership card allows companions of customers to use library services on behalf of the customer. This new service offers accessible options for residents who find it difficult to physically visit the library.
- Wellington City Council Libraries have expanded their e-book and e-audio collection to 18,000 items available for customers to borrow. Staff are available to support customers wishing to learn how to use e-books and e-audios by giving customers the skills to download information to their own devices. This expansion offers more reading options for both the blind and visually impaired, and residents who are unable to physically visit the library.
- Library customers are now given two days overdue fees grace as well as free renewals for library materials not on a waiting list for other library customers. This change gives customers more time to plan return visits to the library and reducing the barrier penalty fees can cause.
- Over the past year, accessibility has been given key consideration when assessing sites as potential welfare centres and mass temporary accommodation centres in a Civil Defence Emergency. We have consulted with the accessibility community to ask them what makes a welfare centre truly accessible for them.
- Wellington Zoo has undertaken many projects to improve their accessibility. These include:
 - increasing the number of accessible toilets;
 - providing an annual sign language session for Zoo staff;
 - providing volunteer opportunities through Emerge Supported Employment Trust;
 - updating the Visitor Map to make it easy to read by those with visual impairments; and
 - improving pathway gradients where possible. Given the steepness of the site this is not always achievable but the Zoo is very conscious of this and considers accessibility in all designs for capital projects.

Three yearly objective: Ensure emergency preparedness messaging is accessible and promoted effectively to the disability community, especially exploring the use of social media

- Wallet-sized Neighbours Cards have been developed for people to record their neighbours, whanau or support peoples' details. Carrying this information around with them makes residents with access needs more prepared for an emergency. Initial distribution of the cards has been targeted at people in the community with accessibility needs. The cards will be distributed with the CCDHB Health Passports.

Governance

Three yearly objective: Explore approaches that support new engagement options as part of the Council's democratic process

- For the 2013 local elections, a programme of assisted voting was provided to support people with any access needs. Candidate information booklets were also provided in accessible formats in both their online and printed forms for the 2013 elections.
- The Council has begun work on complementing these initiatives with others steps for the 2016 local elections. Firstly, the Council Electoral Officer (EO) is working with the NZ Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) electoral working party on redesigning voting papers and all supporting documents to ensure they are fully accessible. Secondly, the Council EO is also working with the Department of Internal Affairs working party to include Wellington in the 2016 online voting trial. These initiatives will increase the accessibility of voting for the blind and visually impaired, as well as the elderly and people living with mental health issues.
- The Quarterly Report Dashboard has been made more accessible for the blind and visually impaired through the addition of alt text captions on the tables and graphs. We have also ensured the dashboard is able to be read in a coherent manner and the correct order by the Read Out Loud function on Adobe Acrobat screen reader. The Read Out Loud function also reads the description of the tables and graphs.
- Wellington City Archives reviewed and updated the marketing and information about their services. There is now greater detail, provided in an easy to understand format, of the services City Archives offers.
- The Council is now using 'popdoc' for Council's Annual Plan and Annual Report. The popdoc system enables us to present these documents in different formats including a HTML based web version and an accessible PDF version.

Three yearly objective: Improve promotion of accessible public meetings, including venues, use of sign language and aids for visually impaired

- The Council has reflected on both the accessibility and the promotion of the accessibility of the 'meet the candidates' meetings held during the 2013 local elections. As an outcome of this reflection, the Council will encourage organisers of 'meet the candidates' meetings to provide both sign language interpreters and voice recordings for their 2016 local election meetings. This will improve accessibility of voting for the hearing impaired and visually impaired. The Council will then promote these services to those with access needs.

Other achievements under this grouping

- Communication with Wellington residents and visitors has become even more accessible as Council teams increase their knowledge of what accessible communication means and act on this knowledge. For example:
 - Creative Services staff have received training in creating accessible design for the blind and visually impaired;
 - Two Creative Services staff members completed additional accessibility training in print and PDF accessibility and will share learnings across the design team this calendar year;
 - Alt text is now being used on all web images where possible;
 - Documents are created in accessible PDF formats;
 - Council staff have been asked to follow best practice guidelines on how to make their emails accessible;
 - The Marketing and Communications team include accessibility considerations for creative briefs other Council teams bring them;
 - City signage is required to meet set font sizes and types; and
 - Large print and braille business cards have been issued to certain staff members.

Ease of travel across and around Wellington City

Three yearly objective: Develop a bus stop design standard to improve accessibility

- The Council has provided around 50 new bus shelters across the city in line with the approved new accessible design standard.

Three yearly objective: Work with Greater Wellington and public transport providers to: Improve access to public transport information

- The City Networks team worked with Greater Wellington to provide improved public transport information at bus stops.

Three yearly objective: Complete planned work programmes (e.g. accessible parking meters and crossing signals, lighting upgrades, footpath upgrades, kerb ramps, seating) and promote creation of pedestrian shelters and covered footpath routes

- The traffic signals in the central city have been reviewed to provide a more user friendly service for pedestrians, making busy intersections easier to negotiate. Traffic signals in the suburbs are next in line for this review.

Appendix 1

- The new Kelburn terminus of the Wellington Cable Car improves accessibility by having multiple entrances and ramps. This allows easy access for physically impaired passengers, mobility scooters, push chairs and strollers. In addition, the platforms at both Kelburn and Lambton Quay have braille fittings that alert blind and visually impaired passengers to the proximity of the platform edge.
- Wellington Cable Car has installed large scale displays and audio alerts on Snapper Card readers at the Lambton Quay gates for blind and visually impaired passengers and those with hearing impairments.

Three yearly objective: Implement recommendations from the review of the impact of the Safer Roads project on pedestrian safety

- The City Networks team has consulted on a 30km/h speed limit in the central city. The slower speed limit would enhance safety for vulnerable users.

Three yearly objective: Develop programmes that will create accessible pedestrian routes throughout the suburbs and the central city as well as covered footpath routes and seating

- At the beginning of 2014, the mobility parks in the central city were audited in terms of location, safety and usability. At the same time the accessible journeys across the central business district were audited. The recommendations in these audits will be taken on board, improvements will be made and the information will serve to improve future works. In particular, this year we will be: installing four new mobility car parks in the central business district, upgrading two car parks that currently fall under the standard required in NZ Standard 4121, and improving the kerb ramp design of two crossings on the inner city accessible route.
- The Public Health team has implemented compliance monitoring of outdoor seating activities on public footpaths throughout the city. Monitoring ensures that the footpath width is maintained for ease of access and pedestrian movement.
- The Council has installed new way-finding signs for pedestrians between Northland and the central city, enhancing the ability of pedestrians to move throughout the city.
- Improvements have been made in the design and construction of pedestrian kerb ramps, tactile pavers, and footpath surfaces; these being core aspects of the accessible journey. The design of pedestrian ramps has been aligned with best practice. Adherence is required in all situations where the environment is conducive. This year we will be improving certain inaccessible kerb ramps in Miramar and Kilbirnie. Other additional features installed in the past year include approximately 25 new street-side seats, and direction signs for pedestrians on some key routes.
- The Local Hosts who work under the City Safety team, have undergone accessibility training. They now have increased awareness of the features needed for a truly accessible journey and can therefore report on any problems they come across during their work walking the streets in the central city.

Arts and culture

Three yearly objective: Demonstrate a commitment to always consider accessibility in venue selection, interactions and meetings for Council activities

- All Toi Pōneke marketing and media will now incorporate appropriate signage for people with impairments. This includes accessible information regarding access to the buildings, parking, reception, gallery, HUB, studios, offices and casual rooms for hire.
- Toi Pōneke is continuing to build on positive friendly staff attitudes, , to ensure healthy customer relationships, through staff training initiatives.
- Wellington Museums Trust has drafted an Access & Inclusion Policy. Once this policy is adopted it will provide staff with guidelines and a framework for action. Accessibility has been adopted as a Wellington Museums Trust three year improvement strategy from 2013-2016 in their long-term planning.

Three yearly objective: Establish an accessibility audit cycle for venues, facilities and programmes

- Toi Pōneke will audit accessibility as part of the 2014 review.

Three yearly objective: Review different ways to access city artworks, such as audio tours of sculptures

- The Council has started to install QR codes on or near public artworks in the central city; this project will continue into the future (QR codes are barcodes containing information about the item on which they are located. The information is picked up by smart phones). The City Arts team is also exploring the possibility of adding audio files to the QR code content in order to provide another way for people to access information about public artworks.
- The Council is reviewing the way that Council's art collection and public artworks are archived online to ensure that the information is accessible for all.
- Arts Access Aotearoa was awarded a \$10,000 Arts & Culture Fund Grant to provide audio description training. Audio description allows the blind and visually impaired to more fully enjoy theatre and visual arts in general, and has also been used for weddings, meetings and sports events.
- Other grants in the past year which have encouraged accessibility of the arts have included:
 - Arts Access Aotearoa redesign of their *Arts for All* resource book,
 - Wellington Integrated Dance to continue to offer integrated dance classes for those with or without impairments,
 - Playback Theatre training for IHC clients, and
 - Support for programmes at creative spaces such as Vincent's Art Gallery.

All applicants were asked to provide information about the accessibility of their projects. Awarding these grants improves viability of arts organisations to offer accessible programmes at their venues or for people with access issues to participate in or access the arts in Wellington City.

- All three-year contract funded arts organisations are required to attend at least one Arts for All meeting each year. Arts for All is an initiative of Arts Access Aotearoa and Council's City Arts Team that provides support and advice to improve the ability of arts organisations to increase the accessibility of their services. The initiative also serves to connect arts organisations with people and groups working in the accessibility sector. The Arts for All initiative has led to audio described shows at the Opera and Circa Theatres, programmes for children with intellectual impairments run by Chamber Music NZ, and more generally, the development of organisational accessibility policies which consider of the accessibility of the service provided the way in which this service is marketed.

Three yearly objective: Investigate use of 'companion cards' (free passes for helpers) across the city's cultural activities

- Initial scoping has begun on companion cards to improve access for helpers to the city's cultural activities.

The built environment and open spaces

Three yearly objective: Help building owners to understand the benefits of universal access and exceeding the minimum accessibility requirements

- The Property team has made sure all business units who manage council properties and all contractors who undertake the work are both aware of the Action Plan and take the plan into account when doing maintenance and upgrades. The Property team is integrating the objectives of the action plan into the services it delivers.
- Council architects are regularly trained on universal access requirements to ensure these are incorporated (as near as reasonably practical) in all construction projects.
- Members of the Corporate Property team are about to undergo accessibility and universal access training.
- At the beginning of 2014, the Building Consents team recently updated their accessibility knowledge through further training. This has given them robust knowledge when helping building owners to ensure their buildings are accessible.
- In April 2014 the Council made a submission made on the Building (Earthquake Prone Buildings) Amendment Bill to the Local Government and Environment Select Committee. The Council took of the stance of disagreeing with the proposal to separate accessibility improvements from alterations to existing buildings. The Council's stance relays the importance of accessibility upgrades to building owners carrying out alterations.

Three yearly objective: Establish an accessibility audit programme for Council buildings, venues and public spaces

- A proposal has been sought for the preparation of an Accessibility Design Guide to work in conjunction with the Council's Public Space Design Manual. For this three yearly objective, the design guide will aid urban designers in evaluating public spaces in terms of best practice accessibility measures. This will feed into a formal audit programme.
- The Council has formed a partnership with Barrier Free Trust to create an Accessible Upgrades and Maintenance Handbook to be used by all property manager and construction contractors. Alongside the benefits of ensuring accessibility improvements are always made where possible during upgrades and maintenance, the handbook will be used as a basis for auditing Council buildings and venues.

Three yearly objective: develop GIS information that will map accessible routes through the city and green spaces and accessible buildings.

- Implementation of a Green & Built Asset Management Information System began in December 2013. The system allows accessible buildings and green spaces data to be collected, retained, and mapped.

Three yearly objective: Review the provision and design of open spaces and accessibility for children's playgrounds and explore provision for activities for families

- The Council is undertaking an audit of the accessibility of Wellington's playgrounds. This audit will provide recommendations for both improvements to be undertaken during upgrades and facilities to be included in new developments. Already the Council has installed basket swings, realigned paths leading to equipment and improved seating to be more accessible and closer to equipment.

Three yearly objective: Review the provision and design of public toilets

- New accessible public toilets have been installed at Karori Cemetery and Alex Moore Park.
- Improvements have been made to the accessible toilet at Balaena Bay Beach.

Other achievements under this grouping

- Under the City Housing Upgrade, Marshall Court Apartments are being developed for older residents with mobility issues. The new four storey building will have lift access and units will be designed for people with limited mobility, including flat access showers, wider doorways and mobility scooter storage.

- The City Housing team has engaged with the Accessibility Action Group on the Housing Upgrade Design Guide.

Economic development

Three yearly objective: Work with Positively Wellington Tourism to develop accessibility information

- The content of Positively Wellington Tourism website has been improved to include significantly more information about facilities and activities that are accessible to all. The website now has features that make it easier for people with disabilities to access information.
- Positively Wellington Tourism has developed an easy to use URL for information on the accessibility of Wellington's cafés, restaurants and bars. This was initially developed for use on the new Accessible Wellington Map.
- The Positively Wellington Tourism i-Site maintains current Be- Accessible certification.
- The current Accessible Wellington Map has been distributed through Positively Wellington Tourism channels such as the i-SITE.
- The City Mobility service has been expanded. This is a joint project between Wellington City Council and TSB Bank that provides free scooters for use around the city. There are now two new scooter locations: Wagamama Restaurant and CQ Hotel. The new marketing of the scooters is about to be released and it will have a broader reach across the city, ensuring all visitors and residents know about this service.