

Wellington City Council Environmental Reference Group Annual Report to Council

Introduction

The Environmental Reference Group (ERG) provides the Council with advice and peer review on issues relating to the management of the natural environment (including water, energy and waste management), although its Terms of Reference are currently under review.

The ERG is scheduled to meet six times a year, and has up to 15 members. Current membership (see Attachment) is relatively mature, with significant technical and policy experience across a range of environmental themes. The ERG supports the Council's strong commitment to biodiversity and environmental quality, and values the Council's existing environmental programmes.

During 2013/14, the ERG has worked to better direct its expertise toward supporting Council needs. In particular, members have worked to: focus its efforts; work on a more pro-active basis, develop more efficient ways of contributing to Council initiatives; and address limitations in its Terms of Reference. As a result, the ERG is better placed to articulate its value to the new Council, and to contribute to environmental aspects of the Council's policy, planning and operations.

Presentations from Council Officers

The ERG has received a broad range of presentations from Council officers during the year (see list below). These have ranged from officers simply informing the ERG of Council intentions or activities, through to those actively seeking ERG feedback.

- Sea level rise
- Local government reform options
- Draft Annual Plan
- Draft Town Belt Management Plan
- Our Living City Programme
- Engagement Policy
- Our Capital Spaces
- Town Belt update

- Island Bay Cycle Route
- Transport
- Basin Reserve Flyover
- National War Memorial Park & Buckle Street Tunnel
- Passenger Transport Spine Study
- Transport Strategy
- Climate Change Action Plan
- Water Sensitive Urban Design
- Zealandia

Contributions to WCC

- Annual Report (this document)
- Feedback on Water Sensitive Urban Design draft guideline
- Submission (written & verbal)on the draft Annual Plan
- Submission on the Draft Town Belt Management Plan
- Presentation to new Council on the role of ERG
- Members attended a Council workshop on Climate Change & Sea Level Rise

Miscellaneous Activities

- Recruitment of 2 new members (8 candidates interviewed)
- Review of how ERG can best support Council requirements
- Consideration of scope and relevance of ERG Terms of Reference
- Planning day to progress ERG thinking on key themes:
 - Blue Belt Harbour Strategy
 - Community Engagement & Empowerment
 - Green Growth

Conclusion

The ERG has used this past year to consolidate its focus and identify how it can better contribute positively toward council thinking and activities where development meets environment. Key conclusions arising from this year are as follows:

- ERG Terms of Reference are currently limited. It is recommended they are extended to include the urban environment, and the Council's operational activities.
- 6 meetings per year is insufficient to effectively transact the work directed toward the ERG. It is recommended that the ERG meet monthly.
- Officers should use the expertise available via the ERG to peer review or otherwise test their thinking, ideally in the early stages of policy development and planning (experience to date has been that late engagement undermines an effective ERG contribution).
- Key themes for future ERG focus are:
 - Blue Belt Harbour Strategy
 - Green belt & blue belt
 - Biodiversity
 - Climate change adaptation
 - Community (participation & resilience)
 - Green growth (development & environment)
 - Water conservation & resource management
 - Waste minimisation & recycling
 - Transport impacts (airport, port, railway, roads)
 - Regulatory effectiveness

Annex 1

Profile of current members of ERG January 2014**Dr Sea Rotmann (joined 2008)**

Sea is a behaviour change consultant, with improved energy use as her focal interest. Her current main project is being Operating Agent for Task 24 on Behaviour Change for the IEA's DSM Implementing Agreement (www.ieadsm.org). This work means that she now spends several months a year overseas. She previously worked at the New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority as Principal Scientist and has been co-chair of the Wellington City Council's ERG for 4 years. She is also on the board of trustees of the Sustainability Trust, and was on the board of the Monarch Butterfly Trust and National Energy Research Institute. She is actively involved in the NZ Green Party, especially the Rongotai branch, and is standing as a List Candidate in this election.

Bev Abbott (co-chair) (joined 2009)

Bev recently retired after many years in a variety of central government organizations'. Her ten years with the Department of Conservation included national roles in conservation education, visitor services and tourism concessions. During five years with Tourism New Zealand, she helped resolve issues between the tourism sector and government departments. Other jobs have developed her passion for strategic alignment and informative reporting. Six years on the Wellington Conservation Board provided insights into local and regional conservation challenges. She's a long-term active member of the Wellington Botanical Society, and has drafted and presented many submissions on their behalf. The joys of retirement include increased opportunities to attend a wide range of public meetings, seminars and conferences, and joining the team of voluntary guides at Otari-Wilton's Bush. She's been on ERG since early 2009.

Peter Gilberd (joined 2009)

Peter works for the Royal Society of New Zealand, where he helps run the Marsden Fund (Government funding for research projects in science, mathematics, social sciences and humanities). An interest in restoring the environment through native tree planting with Woodridge Planters and the Seton Nossiter Park Working Group has led him into extensive community initiatives in Newlands involving schools, scouts, corporate groups, churches, residential homes, and Community Work. He is on the committee of Nga Hau e Wha o Paparangi, the Wellington Regional Manager for Trees for Survival, and a founder member of the WCC-supported Jay St Community Garden and Nursery.

Claire Graeme (joined 2010)

Claire studied Ecology and Geography at Otago University and has worked for over fifteen years in the environmental field. She has worked primarily for the Department of Conservation; as a regional resource management planner, ecologist and later at the national office in central government environmental policy with a particular focus on freshwater issues. She has also worked for four years in London as a planner for local councils and also at the Environmental Protection Agency. Claire lives in Seatoun with her husband and 3 boys and so is involved in kindy and school activities. She is currently doing part time contract work for DOC helping produce RMA guidance for activities that affect Freshwater values. She has also been a member of the Wellington branch Forest and Bird Committee.

Phil Hancock (joined 2010)

Phil has worked with resource efficiency since completing a degree in Environmental Studies at Victoria in 2001. He has worked as a Waste Minimisation Officer for Masterton and Carterton District Councils, and managed resource recovery at Trash Palace in Porirua. More recently Phil has worked with energy efficiency, managing significant residential insulation and lighting projects across New Zealand. Phil represented the Insulation Association of NZ on the Standard's committee rewrite of the recessed lighting standard.

Phil is a founding member and current Trustee of Mt Hiwi Charitable Trust, which manages a QE11, covenanted 400ha block in South Taranaki ranging from wetland to sub alpine.

Charles Barrie (joined 2012, resigned early 2014)

In 2013 Charles completed a Masters of Design Thesis exploring collaborative community process in the sustainable design of suburban and urban public space. Charles has a background in ecological restoration, landscape construction and community development. Charles currently works as a Partnerships Ranger with the Department of Conservation and previously contracted to Porirua City Council as an environmental education project manager. Charles also coordinates the Kai o te Aro community garden and project managed the Catchment Community project on the Owhiro Stream - <http://catchmentcommunity.tumblr.com/>

Nick Crocker (joined 2012)

The way that Wellington presents itself is important as it affects the perceptions of future visitors or residents. I have a Bachelor of Architecture from VUW, undertook post grad research in energy use, lecturer Building Environment at CIT [1996-1999]. I am interested in being involved in considering the city's natural environment and environmental policies.

The Appropriate Technology for Living Association [ATLA] is a local environmental group I was actively involved in for over 10 years. Group held talks/workshops on technical and environmental issues, earth building, passive solar design, solar collectors and cookers.

Involved with a group interested in environmental & sustainability issues which formed to develop a sustainable development organisation, arranged a Green Wellington day in Newtown with stall and a series of talks - this has now become the Sustainability Trust.

Howard Markland (co-chair) (joined 2012)

Howard is currently working as a Senior Adviser with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, with previous work experience in the UK, Australia, United States and Bolivia. Much of his 25 year career has focused on environmental management roles, such as research scientist, regulator, consultant, programme manager and policy adviser. His experience most relevant to the work of the ERG includes 5 years as an environmental regulator with the Greater Wellington Regional Council, and 6 years in Environmental Health roles with local councils in the UK. He is also involved in community work, which has included starting an environmental restoration group in Northland, helping with the Kaibosh food recovery programme and coaching children at the Karori Pirates swimming club.

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.

Jane O'Loughlin (joined 2012)

Jane works at the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority doing corporate communications. Prior to this, Jane worked as press secretary to David Parker, the then Minister of Energy, Climate Change and Land Information, and before that a journalist at Radio New Zealand, focusing on transport issues.

Thanks to this background, Jane has a good knowledge of the energy sector, particularly energy efficiency, renewable energy, and climate change issues, both on a practical household level, and on a national and strategic level.

Jane has spent several years as a volunteer on the Aro Valley Community Council, taking on projects that involve community consultation and advocacy, particularly to do with urban planning, to protect the Valley's environment and historical features.

Jane's main interests are in community development, urban design, and waste management. She is a keen cyclist. She believes progress needs to be measured by the health of our society and environment, as well as our economy.

Alina Siegfried (joined 2012)

Alina's environmental interests stretch far and wide, with a particular interest in ecosystem services and the sustainable management of freshwater resources. Her background includes research, campaign planning, and strategic communication for Green Party MPs. She also has experience working as a district planner in the Rangitikei and in the ENGO sector in Canada, where she ran community engagement programmes, made policy recommendations to the provincial government and collaborated with other stakeholders in source water protection planning. Alina is an associate of Waterlution NZ, a (currently dormant) organisation which is focused on facilitating learning and cross-sector collaboration on freshwater management. She also is a keen performance poet under the alias Ali Jacs, recognising the potential of poetry, storytelling and the arts in general to inspire environmental and social change in a constructive way. Alina runs the monthly poetry series Poetry in Motion at Meow Cafe.

Paula Warren

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.

Resignations during 2013

	Year joined	First name	Last name
1	2008	Hamish	Allardice
2	2012	James	Wall-Manning
3	2010	Sarah	Free
4	2012	Matt	Barclay