

Environmental Reference Group

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Summary

The Environmental Reference Group (ERG) is pleased to present this report on its activities in the 2014 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.

The ERG is particularly pleased that Council has expanded ERG's terms of reference (ToR) to include transport and urban design, and has funded ERG to meet 12 times per year. Other highlights of the year include:

- agreement on a work programme which identifies Council's priorities for the ERG over the next year
- the recruitment of seven new members with extensive experience in many aspects of environmental management
- the preparation of formal submissions on the Draft Town Belt Bill, the Draft Annual Plan, and the Draft Urban Growth Plan
- a contribution toward the Water Sensitive Urban Design guideline.

Annual Work Programme

A feature of the new ToR is the requirement for an annual work programme (see Appendix 1). The work programme provides a mechanism for Council to identify the priority projects, programmes and policy areas it wants ERG to focus on. Council officers, ERG, and the Chair of Council's Environment Committee (Councillor Pannett) all contributed to the development of the work programme. The intention is that the ERG will have deeper, earlier and more sustained involvement with officers at each stage of the associated work stream. The work programme also allows ERG to provide advice on other matters as they arise.

Under the new ToR, Council also signalled its expectation that ERG would provide advice to Council staff to help Council involve more people from Wellington's communities in the setting and meeting of city objectives, in-line with the Council Engagement Policy.

Progress on some work stream items commenced has already started, for example, the review of the Biodiversity Action Plan (Nature Capital), and the review of Council's performance framework.

Engagement Policy

Council updated its 2013 Engagement Policy in October 2014 to meet a new statutory requirement that all councils have a Significance and Engagement Policy. Council's public commitment on engagement, (a schedule to the policy), now includes a specific reference to advisory groups:

Listen first and seek to understand

We will collect and reflect on what we hear from the community, including, for example, council advisory groups and community boards, before we develop and engage on any proposal.

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 new ToR. Council officers will 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 Water Sensitive Urban Design guideline, the drafting of provisions in the Draft Town Belt Bill, and the early stages of the development of the Biodiversity Action Plan. Extending the role of the ERG and the frequency of its meetings also provides Council endorsement of the ERG's activity.

Changes in Membership

During 2014, one member, Dr Sea Rotmann completed her second three year term, which is the maximum allowed under the previous ToR. Six members resigned during the year. Matt Barclay, Charles Barrie, Claire Graeme, Alex Hannan, Alina Siegfried, and Jane O'Loughlin due to personal commitments. Seven new members were appointed in October 2014 following a recruitment round which included public advertising and interviews.

The following table shows the members as at 30 November 2014 in alphabetical order. Short profiles and appointment dates are provided in Appendix 1.

Bev Abbott (Co-Chair)	Phil Hancock	Martin Payne
Nick Crocker	Yvonne Legarth	Graeme Sawyer
Stu Farrant	Howard Markland (Co-Chair)	Paula Warren
Mark Fenwick	Kate Mitcalfe	Janet Young
Peter Gilberd	Sophie Mormede	

Meetings

The ERG met nine times during 2014, in March, April and June under its previous TOR which allowed six meetings per year, and monthly from July to December. An extra meeting was arranged in October for discussions with Colin Crampton (Chief Executive) and Iqbal Idris (Senior Projects Manager) from Wellington Water Services. The ERG anticipates working closely with this Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) during 2015, given the prominence of water, stormwater and wastewater in its ToR.

Advice

The following list of the ERG's major work areas during 2014 illustrates the different ways that ERG works with officers, Council committees and Council.

[The Draft Town Belt Bill](#)

ERG members first became involved with the Draft Town Belt Bill when officers presented a draft to the Environment Committee seeking approval to release the draft for public consultation. ERG lodged a formal submission and spoke at the oral hearings. An ERG member with significant experience in drafting legislation also worked with officers and Council's legal advisors on specific provisions in the Bill. Council approved the revised draft in September 2014.

[Council's Draft Annual Plan 2014/15](#)

ERG lodged and spoke to a formal submission as part of the public consultation process. The submission recommended that Council identify and fund the Blue Belt programme as a key project¹, and initiate a review of Council's performance measures. A review of Council's performance framework has been initiated, and ERG participated in a workshop outcome measures in December 2014.

[The Environment Committee's Forward Programme](#)

Councillor Pannett sought comments from ERG a draft of the Environment Committee's Forward Programme. The responses praised some aspects of the programme, (e.g., regular reports on implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan 2013). Suggestions included that the Environment Committee ask officers for updates, at least annually, on 10 of Council's other environmental strategies, management plans, and action plans (e.g., the Town Belt Management Plan, the Weed Management Plan). This reflected concerns about the slow implementation of many plans.

[The proposed Petone to Grenada link road](#)

ERG identified issues that Wellington City Councillors and officers may like to consider when responding to the New Zealand Transport Agency. The collated responses were provided to Councillor Pannett.

¹ The Blue Belt Programme is part of in *Our Living City* and is in *Our Capital Spaces*. Its purpose is to recognise and celebrate the harbour and its many values

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) Guideline

Council Officer engaged with ERG at several stages during the development of this document promoting the use of water sensitive urban design as a way of reducing the negative environmental impacts of urban stormwater drainage. ERG members commented extensively, questioned the willingness of public and private developers to follow voluntary guidance, and suggested statutory provisions may be required to achieve the necessary changes in behaviour and funding.

The Draft Biodiversity Action Plan (Natural Capital)

Council officer, Myfanwy Emeny held workshops with ERG in August and November. The first workshop resulted in further development of the principles. The second allowed members to comment on an early draft of the complete plan. Further ERG input may be sought in 2015 when officers are considering how to respond to public feedback on the draft.

The Draft Urban Growth Plan (Draft UGP)

Council officer, Lucie Derosiers, made a presentation on the Draft Urban Growth Plan in October, and ERG lodged a formal submission with the Transport and Urban Design Committee (TUDC). ERG was not able to speak to its submission as no oral hearings were held.

Transport and Urban Design Committee (TUDC)

As part of responding to its new ToR, the ERG reviewed the relationship between transport issues and the environment. A summary of the review was sent to the committee's chair (Councillor Foster) who arranged for the letter to be circulated to other members of the TUDC. Councillor Foster's positive response suggested further engagement and discussion in 2015.

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, and members are heartened by more regular attendance of Councillors in recent times. The opportunity to comment on the Environment Committee's Forward Programme provided a useful insight into the wide-ranging responsibilities of this committee.

Throughout 2014, ERG has valued the services and support provided by a succession of liaison officers, initially Graeme Shimmin (3 meetings) then Lisa Matthews (2 meetings), and Simon Wright (3 meetings). Martin Rogers also assisted at one meeting. We were impressed by their professionalism, good humour, and ability to manage the increasing work load associated with:

- the review of the terms of reference and the negotiation of the work programme
- the increase in the number of meetings from 6 to 12 each year, and hence additional agendas and minutes
- the requirements of the recruitment, appointment and induction processes

- the introduction of Loomio as an online tool for making decisions between meetings.

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.

Appendix 1: Approved Work Plan

6 September 2019

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. In addition feedback will be sought on significant projects in the Plan.
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	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

<p>economic development.</p> <p>The infrastructure strategy focuses on the big 5 core infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater, storm water, wastewater, flood protection and the provision of roads and footpaths.</p>	<p>manage these. We would welcome the group's review of the 30IS with a particular focus on demand management solutions and advice on potential solutions for technological uptake.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Identify potential solutions to overcome barriers to WSUD implementation.</p>
<p>Flagship environment projects: As part of its LTP, Council will focus on two key initiatives in the 3 waters area. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. 	<p>Work with officers and Wellington Water (formerly Capacity) to progress the development of these initiatives.</p>

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

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 Gilbert (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.

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.

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.

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.

Kate Mitcalfe (October 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.

Janet Young (October 2014)

Janet fell in love with New Zealand's people and environment while on exchange at Otago University and she's never looked back. Three years as a technician in an analytical water laboratory taught her the value of meaningful work and personal relationships. Since making a career jump from microbiology to environmental education, she's worked as an EnviroSchools Facilitator, a Youth Action Facilitator for Sustainable Dunedin City, and is currently a Sustainability Advisor for Sustainability Trust. Janet's expertise lies in on the ground practical sustainable solutions, and she is excited about bringing her experience to the table at the local government level.

Yvonne Legarth (October 2014)

Yvonne is an experienced RMA planner with a comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of planning practice. She has a background in managing environmental issues from both a policy and planning perspective, primarily while working for public sector organisations. At the moment Yvonne works for the Department of Corrections on land management and RMA issues. She also gets involved in community issues from time to time, preparing submissions and appearing as an expert witness before the Environment Court and Board of Inquiry. She has worked at a national level providing policy advice, and in the past worked for New Zealand Historic Places Trust, the New Zealand Defence Force, the Department of Conservation and Wellington City Council.

Most aspects of public policy development have been covered in Yvonne's career, having operated in senior and management roles, worked in solo roles and as part of teams small and large. She has prepared and implemented policies for the protection of heritage buildings for the Wellington City Council, and heritage strategies for the NZ Defence Force and Department of Corrections.

Mark Fenwick (October 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 Tenth 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 (October 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 Matairangi/Mt Victoria and assists with the Clyde Quay School's enviro-group activities. As a keen diver he is an avid fan of Wellingtons 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 (October 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 (October 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.