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REPORT 1  
(1215/52/IM)

## DISABILITY REFERENCE GROUP

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### 1. Purpose of Report

To present the year end report from the Disability Reference Group (DRG).

### 2. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*

### 3. Background

The DRG is one of the longest standing Council advisory groups, having been established in 1996 to provide advice on issues that concern people with disabilities. The Terms of Reference (2007) require a biannual report to Strategy and Policy Committee outlining the group's achievements and current work programme

### 4. Conclusion

This paper presents a report from the DRG.

Contact Officer: *Sinead Roe, Accessibility Advisor*

## **Supporting Information**

**1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome**

**) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome**

*The DRG contributes to the Council's governance outcomes and supports outcomes across all strategy areas, in particular:*

- *More inclusive*
- *More actively engaged*
- *Healthier*
- *Safer*

**2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact**

*There is no impact*

**3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations**

*There are no treaty implications*

**4) Decision-Making**

*This is not a significant decision and is for noting only.*

**5) Consultation**

**a) General Consultation**

*n/a*

**b) Consultation with Maori**

*n/a*

**6) Legal Implications**

*There are no implications*

**7) Consistency with existing policy**

*This report is for noting only*

### Report from the Co-Chairs of the Disability Reference Group.

#### Background

The Disability Reference Group or DRG are a group established by Council to provide advice on issues that concern people with disabilities. Our Terms of Reference require a report to the appropriate Council committee outlining the group's achievements and the issues we wish Council to consider further.

The DRG represents the approximately 17% of Wellington residents who identified as having a disability in the 2006 census. Our members represent a broad range of interests in the disability sector, including people with physical disabilities, mental health consumers, blind and visually impaired people, seniors and the Deaf community.

Over the past 12 months, we have advised the Council on a range of projects and issues, including the accessibility of the Council's website, the update of the Accessible Wellington Map, Housing Upgrade Project, and various other public space projects including Cobblestone Park and the Courtenay Precinct Upgrade. The group has participated in consultation on both the 2008 Annual Plan and the 2009 LTCCP and has prepared submissions on both plans for Councillors to consider. We have also been involved in planning the 2009 Accessible Wellington Forum, which focused on designing accessible homes.

#### Recent activity

The DRG meets monthly and is consulted on a range of disability-related issues, both internal and external. We have requested that due to a heavy work-load, officers tailor their presentations to address questions relating to access and disability that the DRG can comment on. Presentations at recent meetings have included information on the draft LTCCP, proposed changes to the District Plan and consultation on a draft Public Space Design Policy. The DRG have also formed four new subgroups in December 2008 to look more in-depth at various issues. The focus areas of these groups include Arts, ICT, Housing and Transport/Urban Design. These groups meet in their own time and officers also discuss issues by email on a weekly basis.

The DRG has been consulted regularly by the Housing Upgrade Project (HUP) team. Consultation has taken the form of meetings with the Design and Stakeholder Engagement managers, in addition to regular progress updates. The DRG have participated in several Pre-Upgrade Evaluations of City Housing complexes, advising HUP consultants on the accessibility and user experience of these complexes. The group looks forward to further consultation, including involvement in presentations on the developed design of the complexes as these are rolled out. The group also supports the Accessible Wellington Design Competition, and has agreed to be part of the judging panel for entries. The competition focuses on designing an accessible upgrade to a small block of four City Housing units, and is being run by City Communities in conjunction with HUP. The DRG encourages the Council wherever possible to use the principles

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of Universal Design and the Lifetime Design Foundation's Life Standards where possible during the upgrade process.

We are normally involved in choosing a theme for the annual Accessible Wellington Forum, as well as advising on the format used and presentations given. The group was pleased with the outcome of this year's Forum, Designing Accessible Homes. We see the Council as a key player in this area, having responsibility for the Building Consents and Licensing process.

The DRG has also advised external groups and organisations, for example, Snapper on their new ticketing system and Access Arts Aotearoa on their work for Creative New Zealand on a publication to educate mainstream arts organisations on marketing the arts to audiences with disabilities.

In addition, the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) has formed a new disability reference group, and one DRG member is on this group. They meet three to four times a year and our DRG member reports back, providing a valuable link between Greater Wellington and Wellington City Councils.

### **Plans for 2009**

The DRG will continue to meet monthly throughout 2009, and will also hold regular subgroup meeting with officers. Planned focus areas for the remainder of this year include access to the arts and continued improvements to the accessibility of the Council's website. The DRG will also be advising on the Kilbirnie Town Centre Upgrade and continue to advise on the Housing Upgrade Project.

We aim to make the WCC website accessible. We acknowledge that the Web Centre have a heavy workload and limited resources, however we believe web accessibility for all Wellington residents to be a priority. We intend to work together with the Web Centre to ensure that actions will be taken this year to meet our recommendations on improving the accessibility of the website. We look forward to advising the Web Centre on this issue.

Rosie MacLeod, Sara Pivac Alexander, Co-Chairs, Disability Reference Group.

## APPENDIX TWO

### Disability Reference Group Membership as at May 2009

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Rosie Macleod	co-Chair	People with physical disabilities
Sara Pivac Alexander	co-Chair	Wellington Deaf community
Thomas Bryan	Member	Blind and visually impaired people
Lisette Wesseling	Member	Blind and visually impaired people
Sandie Waddell	Member	People with physical disabilities
James Tait	Member	Mental health consumers
Alan Royal	Member	Wellington seniors
Julia Taniwha	Member	People with physical disabilities, tangata whenua
Philippa McDonald	Member	People with physical disabilities, tangata whenua

WCC representatives:

Councillor Iona Pannett  
Sinead Roe, City Communities  
Marie Retimanu-Pule, City Communities

**DRG meetings November 2008 to May 2009**

Date	Topics discussed	DRG members in attendance
11 Nov 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NZ Bus/Go Wellington driver disability awareness training</li> <li>• Accessible meetings</li> <li>• Accessible Wellington Forum</li> </ul>	8
9 Dec 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Upgrade Project</li> <li>• Design of pedestrian kerb ramps</li> </ul>	9
10 Feb 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DRG subgroup reports: Accessible Arts, Housing, ICT and Urban Transport</li> <li>• New member appointed</li> </ul>	9
10 Mar 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suburban Centres Review (District Plan)</li> <li>• Mobility Parking update</li> </ul>	8
14 April 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Space Design Policy</li> <li>• GRWC Regional Parks Network Strategy</li> <li>• Accessible Wellington Forum</li> </ul>	8
23 April 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft LTCCP presentation</li> </ul>	6
12 May 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kilbirnie Town Centre Upgrade</li> <li>• DRG submission on draft LTCCP</li> </ul>	8