

Appendix one

Accessibility Advisory Group

Annual Report 2013

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

It is with pleasure that we report back to you on the work the Accessibility Advisory Group (AAG) has undertaken and the progress that has been made towards making Wellington a more accessible city in 2013.

Milestones and achievements

As you will see from the attached list of AAG activities, we have had another busy year, with some significant milestones and achievements. With the approval of the Accessible Wellington Action Plan last year, the challenge has been for us to make it a living, breathing document that the Council is proud to consider in everything they do. The appointment of Elizabeth St-John Ives as the Council's Accessibility Officer has been of great assistance to us with regard to this.

Throughout 2013, the AAG worked closely with Council officers to get in at the planning stages of projects. In general, there has been some great team work to get some great outcomes for Wellington. In particular, the Urban Design team have shown a real willingness to engage the AAG at the earliest possible opportunity, City Housing has committed to more frequent communications with us, and Wellington Waterfront Limited and the Technical Advisory Group are committed to greater accessibility on the waterfront.

Other relationships were worked on in 2013, including the Council's Building Consents Team which with the departure of Wayne Goodfellow and Stephen Peng has meant building the relationship up from scratch again.

We have been very pleased with the on-going level of engagement with the Memorial Park Alliance team. They have demonstrated a willingness to explore options to improve accessibility within a tight schedule.

The 'Wellington Accessible Employment Forum' at Te Papa in early 2013 was attended by a large audience, and featured high level speakers. Many people walked away with a better understanding and changed attitude around employing people with impairments.

Challenges and things we can improve on

While 2013 has had some achievements, it has also had its share of frustrations.

1) Lower Cuba Street

In 2011, the AAG raised concerns regarding the upgrade of the Lower Cuba Street area. Problems have continued at this site post-construction and despite meeting with numerous people at Council over this issue and voicing our complaints, nothing seems to happen.

2) Parliament Precinct

We were disappointed to hear that the commitment to, and investigations towards providing a new accessible route as part of the cenotaph and grand stairway upgrade have ceased. (At this stage it is our understanding this outcome was agreed to by both Parliamentary Services and WCC.) In our view, this decision is short-sighted and contrary to both the Accessibility Action plan intentions, and the second strategic objectives of Parliamentary Services – An “Accessible Parliament”.

Where to now

In 2014, the AAG is committed to continuing to help the Council embed the Accessible Wellington Action Plan in everything it does. In doing so we would like to build on relationships we have with Councillors and Council staff and engage in new relationships. We also want to really concentrate on making sure we do not have the same issues popping up again in 2015. This will require a commitment by the Council - that being accessible is the expectation not the exception.

We would like to make thanks to Councillor Iona Pannett for her years of valuable assistance to the AAG, and her strong commitment to an accessible Wellington for all people regardless of their ability.

We would also like to acknowledge the faithful service of Alan Royal. Alan’s knowledge of accessible documents, commitment to networking on accessibility issues and determination to see results has been a major asset to the AAG. Alan stepped down after two terms (six years) with the AAG due to the requirements of the Terms of Reference.

Looking to the future with the addition of David Lee, Greg Orchard and Malcom Sparrow, 2014 is looking to be a power charged year of achievements for the AAG.

Thank you for all your support in 2013. We look forward to working with you all to make Wellington a more accessible and vibrant city in 2014 and beyond.

AAG 2013 Activities

Wellington Accessible Employment Forum March 2013

Submissions

GWRC Public transport Spine study including an oral submission

Te Mahana - A Draft Strategy to End Homelessness in Wellington by 2020

Draft Engagement Policy including oral submission meeting

Ministry of Building, Innovation and Employment Building Seismic Performance Consultation

Town Belt oral submission

Advice

Elections

City Housing upgrade

Capital Spaces

Wellington Waterfront walk about

Assisted with accessibility training in Building Consents

Memorial Park Project – ongoing and regular engagement with the project team in relation to design, temporary traffic arrangements and accessible documents.

Accessibility Report written for Zealandia

Urban design advice

Parliamentary Precinct

Opera House Lane

Lower Cuba St

Membership of groups

Greater Regional Council Accessibility Reference Group

Greater Regional Council Public Transport Spine Study Group

Safe and Sustainable Transport Reference Group (6 months only – membership resumed 2014)

Lobbied

Lower Cuba St

Accessible documents

Around City Housing joining Lifemark

NZ Bus

Technical advice

Testing accessibility – Fixit App, new Council website, community directory, Living City

Website, Accessible Wellington Map, new Council logo

Attendance

Disability-Inclusive Emergency Planning meeting, Wremo

Draft Annual Plan meeting

Building Seismic Performance Consultation meeting

Government Online Engagement Service meeting

Cycling Forum

Arts For All Forum

The Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand/Barrier Free NZ Trust - regulatory requirements on access in the built environment