

PONEKE PROMISE

WAASV Safety Walk-around Reports

Wellington City Council (WCC) officers did walk-arounds the Poneke Promise area with several external organisations. The purpose being to better understand their experiences and observations of safety, inclusivity, and accessibility when moving around the city at both night (10:30pm-12am) and day, and identify what type of changes would improve their experiences and safety in the city.



Day-time Hikoi

Perceived Safety

6 March 2022

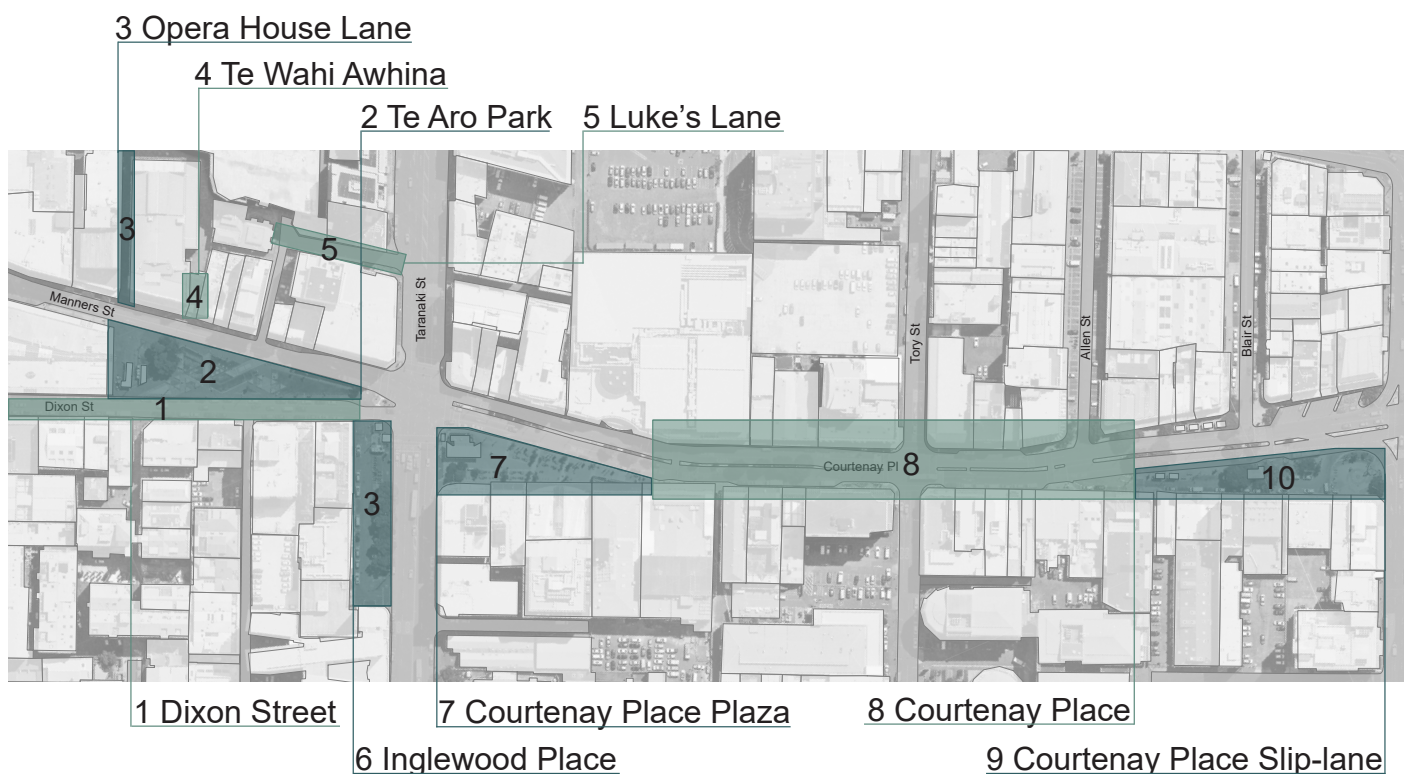
Wellington Alliance Against Sexual Violence Walkthrough of the Pōneke Promise area

Wellington City Council roles who attended - urban design, city safety and harm reduction

Summary:

- 1. Safer, friendlier, more inclusive spaces** - More spaces to hang out in the city are needed as well as more colour, light, performers, local artists, food trucks, greenery. Use these elements to activate te aro park, the laneways and streets and draw people into spaces. Big open spaces can tend to be dominated by men - open spaces need more seating, and seating needs to have backs and be broken up by e.g greenery. Collaborate to develop a more diverse offering of venues and activities in Courtenay Place to cater for all (there are so many “dim dark places”).
- 2. Pedestrianise** - Create more space for free movement of pedestrians and improve accessibility by reducing clutter and fit-for-purpose street furniture and non-slip pavers. Find ways to reduce the current congestion on narrow footpaths from people waiting, queuing, trying to move past and improve amenity for people waiting at bus stops (ie seating).
- 3. Kaitiaki** - A sense of safety is enhanced by relatable kaitiaki such as Māori wardens. Lots more work is needed with licenced venues on things such as: transition spaces onto the street to prevent queuing/intimidation by patrons of passers-by, and how crowds and sexual harm is responded to if it occurs - to ensure they are safer for all.

Map



1 Dixon Street

- No space for queuing inside business and people spill out onto the road while waiting, this creates less safety.
- Businesses here have lots of deliveries - vans stop and hover which creates more congestion.
- Camel Grill/this strip only has lighting from the shops. In fact the moment you leave Courtenay Place the lighting drops off.
- Recessed doorways along Dixon make it feel unsafe as they can act like hiding/lurking spots
- People strategically cross the road to avoid crowds spilling onto Eva St and the side walk and patrons who hang out outside Dream girls and mermaids
- It was actually good for personal safety/boundaries when the COVID making space markers were there.
- Lack of rubbish bins for late night takeaways
- Pedestrian crossing Dixon into Te Aro would help make people safer as they cross the road between cars in this location
- More colour, planting would make the street more pleasant and feel safer.
- Big open spaces can be dominated by men. We need more diverse places in the city for people to “hang”. Is it possible to strategically cluster Te Aro Park, the new Inglewood Place space - to create more connection between these spaces.
- The recessed doorways along Dixon make it feel unsafe – perhaps we could have some requirement for the future to prevent these being designed into new buildings
- Accessibility advisor should have more input into this street and the way new buildings are designed in the city to make them more accessible for everyone

2 Te Aro Park

- Dixon Street/TAP - will avoid this area, do errands in one trip.
- Police presence can make it feel less safe/creates an issue when it may not have been there.
- But we are very keen to see other kiatiaka on the street - the Māori wardens are a perfect space for this significant area. Having big billboards of people’s faces with messages about their role in caring for spaces such as this was suggested - relatable faces and identities would help community members who may not have a positive experience of the police feel that there are kaitiaki enhancing their safety out there, and would help create more community confidence.
- Want it to be more people centred instead of a thorough fare.
- Te Aro park needs better lighting and safer to sit. The seats are not inviting, they do not seem designed to sit on, not comfortable to use in a group. The seats have no back to them/are not broken up by e.g. bushes like the area near Tommy Millions - creating a sense of being watched by the male gaze if you sit in this big open space. The triangular edges jutting out is an issue for people with low vision. The water feature is slippery so avoided. [Looking over at an unsightly muddy patch in the lawn near the toilets] - the area “needs more love”. It sends a message that it is more of a bird hang out than a people hang out, it’s not designed for people to use.
- The vibe in Te Aro Park precinct is very mixed - Crumpet has a very different feel from some of the other less inviting venues.
- It doesn’t need to be expensive, colour, planting etc. There is a need for more open space (we discussed perhaps this was a factor in the greater popularity of other central city parks).
- Generally the city needs more open spaces, hang out spaces out of the weather - nothing has replaced Readings and Central Library.
- Fairy lights to make it friendlier

3 Opera House Lane

- Wouldn't use the lane to get to waterfront. Too dark, long and narrow, we just wouldn't think about using it.
- There could be investment in the space bringing in local artists to make physical changes, the parking area half way down would make a perfect performance/activation/food truck space. It needs to attract people down from Manners Street.
- Better signage would also help attract people to use it more.
- In general, the Alliance had a number of concerns about laneways raised when they asked for feedback on Instagram.
- Lighting not very good – flood lights?

4 Te Wahi Āwhina

- Alliance members attended the opening, but since then they haven't seen much activity there - at least from the street.
- It's hard to identify what it does - "community support" is very vague. Could there be a list of issues on the window/kinds of assistance provided?
- General comment - the red pavers in this strip are very slippery when wet.

5 Luke's Lane

- This lane is quite hidden, people didn't know it was here. Ways of inviting people down need to be used - it is a "destination" lane, not a throughfare.
- Food trucks, moving the market from Inglewood place here, performers could help activate. Involve e.g. drag performers - they experience so much harassment in the city - it is a way of helping it be their space too.

6 Inglewood Place

- This area is congested - the freestanding signs could be removed.
- Fixtures such as these (the freestanding phantom signs) should also be contrasting colours and thoughtfully placed as a feature, not clutter - it was easy to bump into them, add more colour.
- Wind shelters could be perspectives to avoid hidden spaces and increase visibility
- Include seating
- This part of the city really needs more green space, seating, greenery - this will reduce noise
- Bars that have seating where patrons look down above street level can encourage men to survey women passing by.
- Amy commented that the safer bars project will provide more opportunities to work with bars and potentially influence design and layout of spaces to promote patron safety.
- Also venues that have transition spaces and patrons don't spill straight out on the street create more of a feeling of safety.
- Trees might create dark coverage for toilets and need to be considered. What about cars that park there? Will they be moved?

7 Courtenay Place Plaza (near Tommy Millions)

- This open space is very successful as noted above - due to features such as attractive well designed seating that groups can use, broken up by trees. You have a sense of it being open space but have something behind you.
- This could be a great place for toilets, why don't we just put them there?
- Plaza feels safe, might change if there were no food places in plaza.
- High buildings are far apart in this location so it adds a sense of openness

8 Courtenay Place

- The footpath outside St James past the bus stop is one of the worst areas of Courtenay Place. Despite the hoarding, men still gather and survey women and others, it gets congested with the bus stop. When delivery vans pull in it get more and more hectic.
- Bus stops should always have some sort of amenity in the form of seating.
- Footpath outside Timezone needs a deep clean
- Take10 service is really good
- In general, it was thought venues should do more to manage queuing or crowding onto the street. The garden hotel was given as an example of how a transition space at the front can help with crowds.
- Over the other side of the road, Pow Wow is popular and can have people spilling out into the street and an aggro crowd.
- Saturation of bars and clubs leads to negative behaviour.
- Blair st – often fights on Friday/Saturday nights.
- Lack of safe spaces to breath after assault.

9 Courtenay Place Slip-lane

- The slip road - if it wasn't dominated by parking, this could be a great space for seating, eating, pedestrians. The park at the end of Courtenay Place with circular seating around the perimeter isn't well used - seating would help. The European (across the street) has a great vibe, and it would be good to see this here.
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General observations

- Circus feels safer, as it is a consistent crowd of young women. Intergenerational mixing can be good, but it needs to be curated to make sure people feel safe.
- Courtenay Place needs more of a mix of bars to have wider appeal - so many are narrow and dark spaces - there's nowhere to dance safely. Need more young women running bars!
- There are less events - 19 Tory used to have them –
- There is lack of venue spaces for hire, NGOs and community organisations looks for non alcohol venues and they are hard to find
- Do patrons know how to report safety issues when they happen in bars. How do experiences of bars where more sexual harm is occurring get through to the licencing committee? Should it be young women/patrons responsibility to do this.
- Student hostels kick out students early at night, meaning they get really drunk before they leave or drink on the streets before going into bars.
- pedestrianisation but not to the detriment of accessibility in terms of access to places

Night-time Hikoi

Perceived Safety

13 August 2022

Overview

On Saturday 13 August, Wellington City Council (WCC) officers did a walk around the Pōneke Promise area with several external organisations. The purpose being to better understand their experiences and observations of safety, inclusivity, and accessibility when moving around the city at night (10:30pm-12am), and identify what type of changes would improve their experiences and safety in the city. The participants rotated around 10 sites where they explored, observed, and discussed their thoughts together as a group.

Summary of Observations

In general, participants felt unsafe due to a lack of lighting, hidden areas, and the unpredictable nature of the crowds.

Hidden areas include recessed building entrances, unlit courtyards, and carparks that are accessed via a laneway. Low lighting levels were found on all side streets/laneways, and around the Tripod by the slip lane on Courtenay Place. Several laneways had carparks that were positioned in a way where they could not be seen until the participants were in the laneway. These areas promote anti-social behaviour and could prove dangerous for people using the laneway as a thoroughfare. Multiple participants observed several cases of anti-social behaviour in these carparks during the walk around. The combination of narrow footpaths, people queueing behind barriers, and people congregating meant walking along Courtenay Place is a very unpleasant experience. The addition of intoxicated people causes an intimidating atmosphere leading to participants feeling unsafe.

Summary of Opportunities

Most participants felt that the existing public spaces would be improved with additional lighting, seating, and clear sight lines.

Participants would like to see additional activation of the laneways, including improved lighting, activation of building edges, an artwork upgrade, and signage to highlight destinations through the laneways.

They would like to see more greenery, and art implemented in the existing public spaces. Installing more benches would allow people to pause and provide rest points for vulnerable users. Many participants would like to see drinking fountains installed along Courtenay Place. There is a lack of bins available for waste produced and many of the existing bins are broken, installing more would be useful

It would be great to create some guidelines around movement and queueing to create consistency and clear areas to move through.

There are limited accessible carparks along these streets, installing more would allow vulnerable users to access this space easier. The area at the end of Courtenay Place could be used as a designated app-based vehicle pick-up location, with extra benches and phone charging capabilities installed and parking removed. Another participant highlighted that area could have accessible parking only, due to the ease of access provided by the low kerb height.

Categories

At each location, participants commented on a variety of things about how they felt about the space and why they feel these things. It is important that these are understood both separately and relative to each other, so these have been separated into the following categories:

Opinions and Feelings: formed from past experiences.

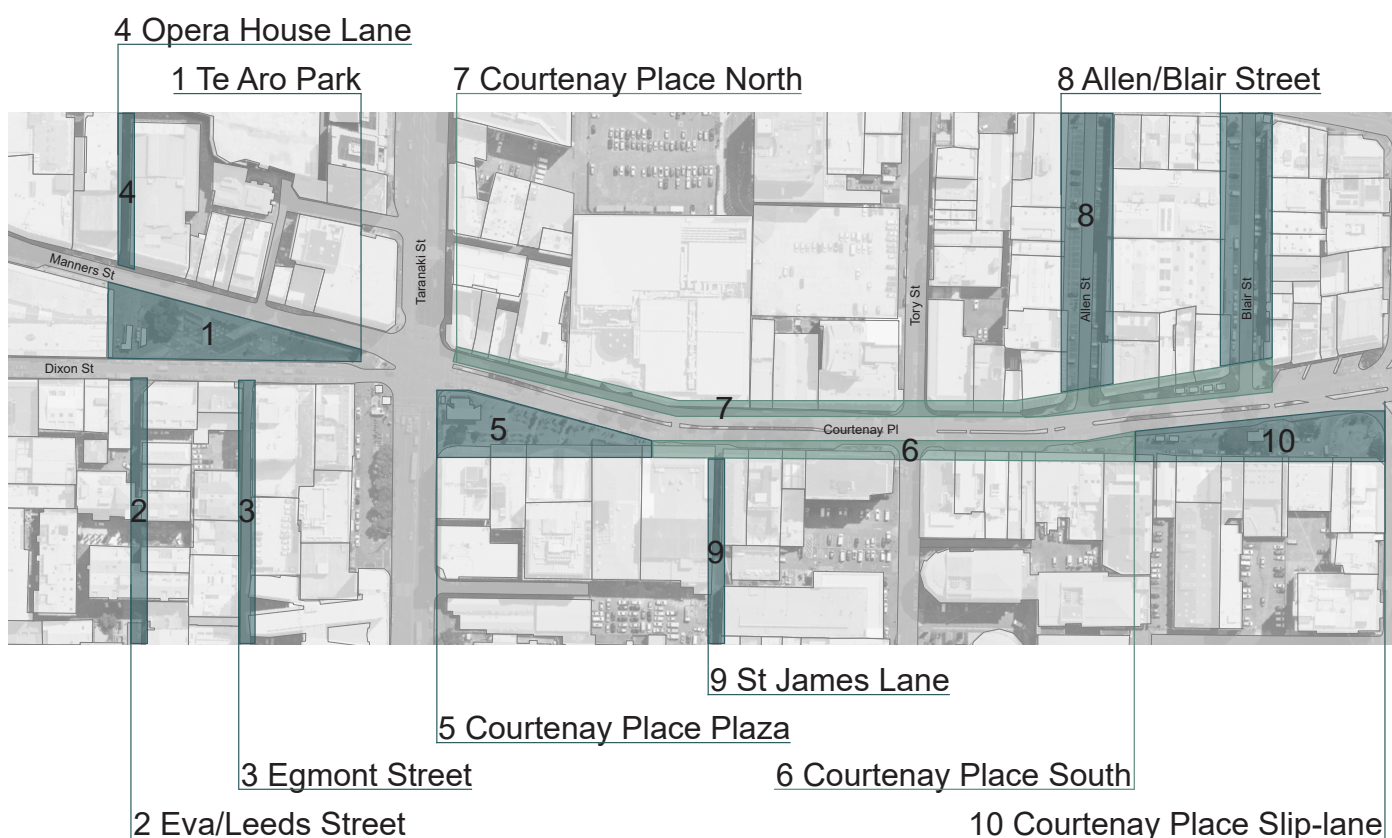
On-site Observations: events seen during the walk that may be a regular occurrence.

Spatial Elements: the physical elements found on site

Opportunities: new things to implement in the space.

Map

The zones have been created based on the similar atmosphere found within it.



Participants

- Victoria University of Wellington Students Association
- Massey at Wellington Students Association
- Thursdays in Black VUW
- National Disabled Students Association
- Wellington Alliance Against Sexual Violence
- RespectEd Aotearoa
- Let's Get Welly Moving
- Wellington City Council

1 Te Aro Park



There was a collective understanding amongst the participants that their overall view of the park is negative which has led to an apprehension of using or visiting the park without reason. They would often intentionally walk away from the park or avoid it due to the space making them feel trapped and the park's reputation for drug dealing and other anti-social behaviours.

There were no safety-promotion groups (ie. Take-10) near the park. Any loitering groups were observed as a potential hazard.

The lighting in the park was strong enough to dimly light the whole park but not concentrated enough to highlight usable spaces, it felt like an overhead flood light similar to a parking lot. The toilet block is the only thing in the park that blocks sightlines. The bus stop is not well lit and surrounding shops are closed providing no lighting or passive surveillance. Dixon Street footpaths are narrow which can lead to groups spilling out into the park. The space by Swimsuit/Heartbreaker is well used both day and night, the 'courtyard' layout and the passive surveillance from other users make this side of the park more inviting. The slippery tiles and downtrodden look of the water features add to the preconceived view of the park's atmosphere.

Most participants highlighted that this space had a lot of potential to be a pleasant public space if it was more open, had focused lighting and had more seating. They would like to see a branch of Take-10 in this location at night due to the positive reputation and atmosphere the group brings with it. There was a positive response to the planned demolition of the toilet block.



2 Eva/Leeds Street



Most participants viewed this laneway negatively due to a sensed lack of safety and they would choose to take a different route at night. It felt safer when a few people were also in the space but returned to feeling unsafe with no people or crowds of loud people. The participants did not acknowledge this space as a usable public space but rather a rundown thoroughfare route.

The vibe and attitude of people from the strip club and El Barrio/Eva Beva, along with people lurking in the darkness, made this area appear unsafe to inhabit.

The lack of lighting is a major deterrent and does not promote this as a positive public space. The asphalt is broken and uneven, there are multiple large potholes, which makes it difficult to navigate. There are many alcoves that are not well lit which can become areas for anti-social behaviours. The lack of artwork and planting provides nothing for the participants to interact with at a pedestrian level and accentuates the height of the surrounding wall compared to the narrow lane. Surrounding buildings dump their rubbish bags here for collection, there is no clear location or large bin to keep it contained.

The participants would like to see additional activation of the whole laneway and the removal/revitalisation of the carpark by Fix and Fogg. There also needs to be a lighting improvement that would remove the shaded areas where people were found lurking. Building edges need further activation (ie. Eva Beva once brought life into the laneway by opening the restaurant/bar space to the lane), a few businesses have closed and the previously found life of Eva/Leeds has since diminished.



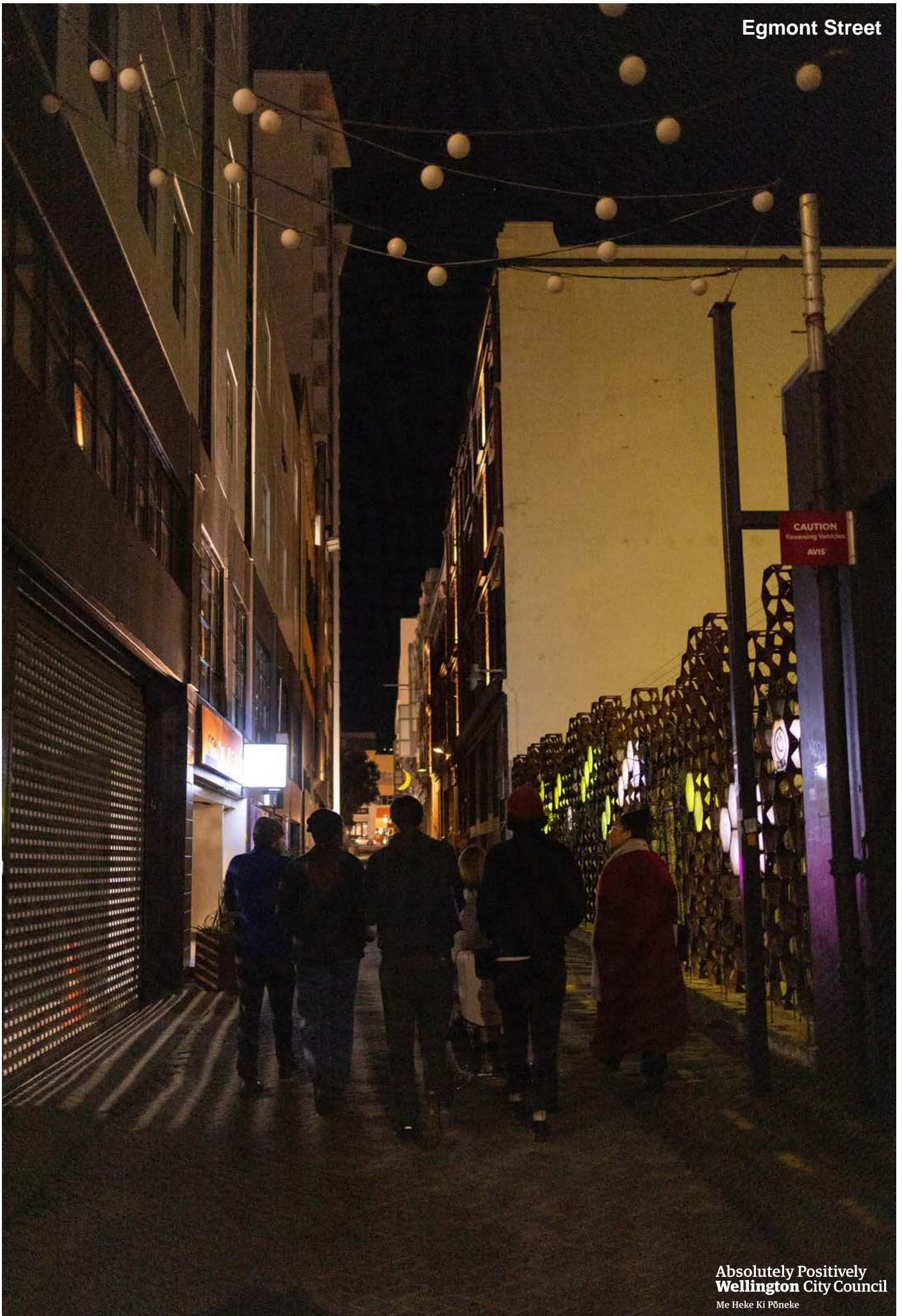
3 Egmont Street



This laneway was viewed mostly positively by the participants as there was a clear ambience. Although, some were apprehensive as to whether they would walk down here at night and if it was a thoroughfare route they would choose.

The narrow width of the laneway made it difficult to share the space with vehicles using the street as a shortcut, that would speed doing so. The paving is relatively even, although there were some spots that were trip hazards. There are consistent material choices through the laneway which unites it as one space. The alcoves are limited and any spaces are well lit or still visible from far away which promotes safety.

There is an opportunity to increase the number of lighting panels on the honeycomb wall and promote it as a photo destination, this would bring people to the laneway for positive reasons and create a positive reputation for Egmont Street. The overhead catenary lighting needs to be adjusted so that it remains constantly illuminated. Most participants highlighted a need for signage at the end of the lane to show what is available down the lane and what destinations are found through it. Additional lighting at the Ghuznee end would be beneficial and carry the ambience through the whole laneway.



4 Opera House Lane



Most participants felt isolated and unsafe walking through this laneway and would choose to take an alternate route. This route was not considered a late-night thoroughfare because very few people would be coming to/from the waterfront late at night, which implied it would not be very populated and/or any people encountered along the lane may be engaging in antisocial behaviour.

There were several people drinking next to their car that weren't visible till halfway along the laneway, this reduced the safety felt by the participants.

The section of laneway alongside the Opera House is extremely well lit. The remaining laneway is poorly lit, it is enclosed on the sides by caged fencing and the height is reduced by a low ceiling. The carpark is set back from the laneway, it is dark and not visible from the beginning of the laneway. The length of the laneway can lead pedestrians to feel isolated and not have an alternate escape path.

There is an opportunity to install a formal crossing on Manners Street to improve the accessibility of Opera House Lane from Te Aro Park. Some participants noted that they would feel safer if the carpark was closed off in order to prevent such easy access to a potential predatory space. Taking inspiration from the LUX festival, participants would like to see the murals and light installations revitalised.



5 Courtenay Place Plaza



Most participants felt safe in this location, although they acknowledged that this was partially due to Take-10 being present. People gathering in large, loud groups diminished the feeling of safety due to their intimidating nature. Some participants noted that they would not sit in this space if they were alone, as there were many options for seating that were not close enough to Take-10.

Town-goers would use this space as a meet-up point in case their groups got separated. The gathering point for the Victoria University student bus is nearby, but in an un-lit area further along Taranaki Street. Take-10 would sometimes walk along Courtenay Place and hand out water bottles to town-goers, however, this is not a regular occurrence due to their own safety.

The space was well lit, is one of the larger spaces available along Courtenay Place and provides a lot of seating options, so the Plaza gives pedestrians/town-goers the opportunity to pause.

Participants would like to see more greenery, art, and lighting implemented in this space in a way to amplify the landmark status that it has at night for many people. There are many food outlets in this area, so many would like to see picnic tables installed in the area to accommodate this use.



6 Courtenay Place South

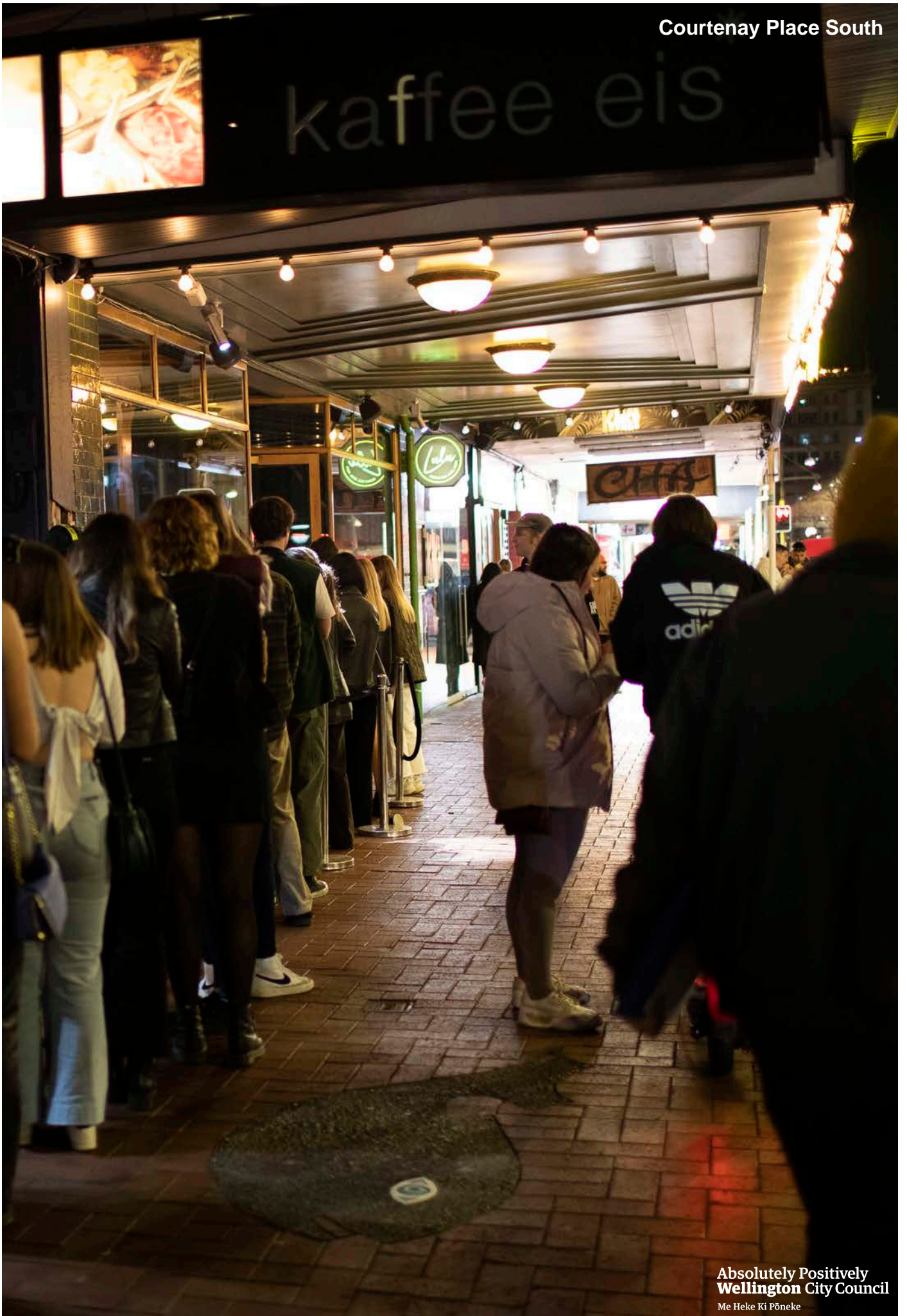


There was a consensus amongst participants that this side of the road was less chaotic and allowed for a moment of respite. This feeling was often very temporary because due to fewer people there was a reduction in perceived safety from passive surveillance. However, the feeling of respite remained in place outside the late-night food shops because the lighting and small amount of people brought the perception of safety.

There was one busy bar on this side and when the line was under control, the security guards were able to survey the surrounding area and kept an eye out for anti-social behaviours.

The footpath is sometimes blocked by people queueing because there are no barriers used for directing. There was a good level of lighting provided where shopfronts were open. Surrounding businesses that close before the nightlife starts, dump their rubbish bags here for collection, there is no clear location or large bin to keep it contained. There were several unlit alcoves created from closed businesses (the alcove created by the Paramount Cinema is very large).

Drinking fountains could do well along this stretch, for both night and day uses.



7 Courtenay Place North



There are a lot of security guards along here that neither improve nor reduce the perceived safety, due to most of them being preoccupied with letting people into their bar. Participants enjoyed the atmosphere created by iRate Barber because there are only positive vibes and intentions and isn't centred around alcohol.

This location had the most observations more than any other which is due to how many people were in this space and the chaotic atmosphere. The bars often have speakers outside which makes the footpath incredibly loud. A bottleneck forms between the bus stop and outdoor dining. Large groups gather and queues spill out on the footpath and prevent movement. There is no clear flow of movement and queue locations vary from bar to bar. Some bars split the queues along both sides of the footpath so that pedestrians would need to move between the two lines and walking through that atmosphere can be intimidating. There is a regular busker that sometimes causes people to congregate, which can lead to conflict amongst intoxicated people.

The footpath is very narrow, and queues often take up half of the available space, although, the use of barricades to contain queues allows for clear separation. Most of this area is well lit, especially by the old Readings cinema entrance which makes for a great place for pedestrians to step aside.

It would be great to create some guidelines around movement and queuing to create consistency and clear areas to move through. Dakota's queue needs to move closer to the building edge. There is a lack of bins available for waste produced, installing more would be useful.



8 Allen/Blair Street



Participants did not have many pre-conceived thoughts about these areas, other than they knew these streets were always quite busy and had a good selection of bars, theatre spaces, and Rainbow spaces..

There were a lot of people and cars moving around the space, there were a couple of close calls. There are a lot of BYO restaurants and bars along these streets which leads to large consumption of alcohol. One participant noted that there are some bars along Allen Street that are popular among the LGBTQIA+ community.

The lights were off which made both streets very dark, to the point where faces could not be seen easily. The width of the street made it easy to have a clear view of most activities, although the parked cars blocked some vision and became places for people to hide. Due to the lack of lighting and frequency of available hidden spots, someone could pass out, and not be noticed by the crowd. The lack of kerb meant that many cars were parked into the footpath space, making it very narrow at points. Lighting shone from some shopfronts produced a safer environment, compared to the darker areas where alcoves were harder to see. The layout of some bars located activity further inside which created a lack of activity on the street around the bar, making the area feel empty.

There are limited accessible carparks along these streets, installing more would allow vulnerable users to access this space easier. Closing off both roads to vehicles at the Courtenay Place end would improve safety due to the streets not being used as a thoroughfare. Pedestrian priority crossings along Courtenay Place could improve the safety of movement around this area. Installing more benches would allow people to pause and provide rest points for vulnerable users. The lighting needs to become a priority for Wellington Electricity because when it goes out the safety is reduced. Participants would enjoy seeing more artwork here, and a suggestion was given to incorporate a similar artwork to the rainbow crossing at Dixon Street due to the LGBTQ links.



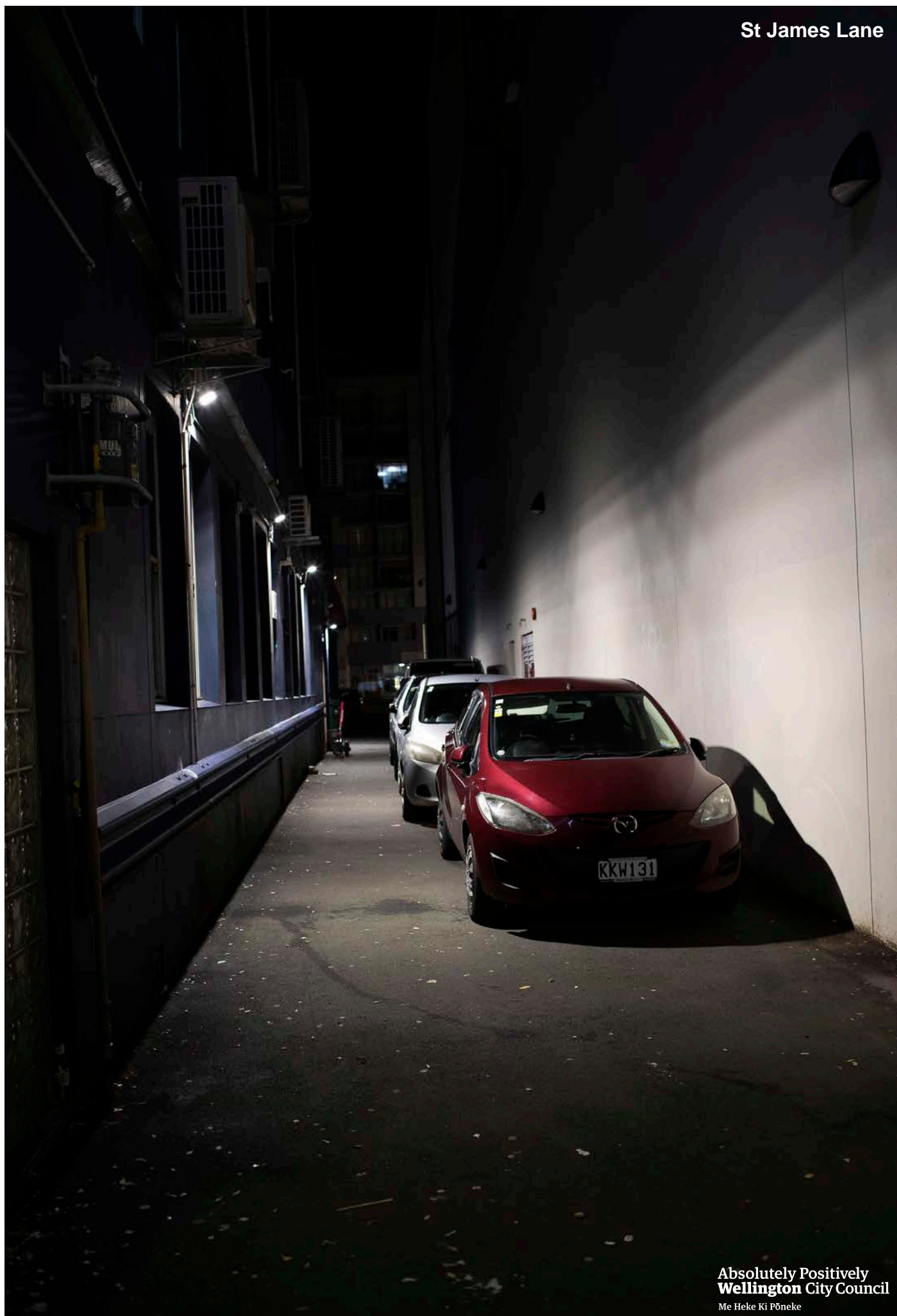
9 St James Lane



Most participants viewed this laneway negatively, due to a sensed lack of safety and they would choose to take a different route both day and night. They felt there was no destination available through the lane that another route would get them to better. There was a pushiness that came from the bouncers at the strip club as they attempted to get people to enter the club.

This laneway has minimal alcoves and is relatively well lit, allowing a view of the whole lane. This view is only blocked by a few cars parked along the lane's side. The height of the surrounding buildings prevented a lot of sound coming from Courtenay Place. There was some lighting along this lane that was not turned on.

Participants would like to see a large mural on the white wall, cars removed and a large area to sit with planting. This along with good lighting could create a calm, public space that could be enjoyed, rather than a design highlighting the thoroughfare.



10 Courtenay Place Slip-lane



Some participants felt that this end of Courtenay Place had a reduced party atmosphere, and there was a larger variety of people other than students. Many participants either forgot the toilets were located here or viewed them as a hub for anti-social behaviours, either way, the toilets were not commonly used.

There are a lot of cars (ride-share services and delivery trucks) moving through here which, paired with intoxicated people, can cause issues. People will congregate outside the late-night eateries when the bars and clubs close, which depending on the atmosphere could escalate confrontation between various groups.

The sculpture and garden beds create points of interest and improve the visual quality of the space. The seating area at the end of Courtenay Place was unused due to the lack of lighting. The cars parked alongside the footpath created a wall, visually and physically blocking people into the footpath space. Lighting along the footpath is great due to the open food shops.

This area could be used as a designated app-based vehicle pick-up location, with extra benches and phone charging capabilities installed and parking removed. Several participants saw the potential to turn this end of Courtenay Place into a well-lit location to sober up, charge phones and organise to get home safely. Some participants highlighted this area could have accessible parking only, due to the ease of access provided by the low kerb height.

