

## **DISABILITY REFERENCE GROUP (DRG)**

### **MINUTES**

**5.30PM – Tuesday, 9 December 2008  
Committee Room 2**

#### **Members**

Sara Pivac Alexander (Co-Chair)  
Rosie Macleod (Co-Chair)  
Thomas Bryan  
Kendall Akhurst  
Sandie Waddell  
Philippa MacDonald  
Alan Royal  
Jules Taniwha  
Lisette Wesseling  
Councillor Pannett

#### **Also present**

Sinead Roe (WCC)  
Marie Retimanu-Pule (WCC)  
Alexia Pickering (Accessible Options)  
Sam Moroney (Opus)  
John Patrick (Opus)  
Byron Roff (WCC)  
John LeHarivel (WCC)  
Perry Walker (WCC)

#### **1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed the group and a round the table of introductions was held.

#### **2. Apologies**

There were no apologies

#### **3. Confirmation of minutes**

Minutes from the last meeting were read and confirmed. A correction was requested and accepted from Councillor Pannett that her proposal was not that the DRG email her their views on Wellington City Council having a Disability Policy. It had been agreed at the meeting that the DRG supports Wellington City Council having a policy on disability.

#### **4. Report from the Chair:**

The Chair noted that Kendall Akhurst's DRG membership is coming to an end in December. She thanked Kendall for his hard work both as a DRG member and as Co-Chair over the past three years. It is hoped that a new member will be on board for the first DRG meeting of 2009 in February next year. It was noted that youth with disabilities and people with experience of mental illness are not represented on the group at the moment.

**Action:** Co-Chairs and Sinead to take this into account during the selection process, so that diverse groups are represented on the DRG.

The Chair asked that people speak one at a time in order for the sign language interpreters to be able to keep up with their work. Signs were to be raised to indicate who wished to speak and those people would then be called by name. The Chair stressed that no-one was to speak unless their name had been called.

The following DRG subgroups were proposed for 2009:

- Accessible Arts
- Housing
- Urban Design and Transport

It was noted that the ICT subgroup are meeting this month with the Wellington City Council Web Centre manager and expect to continue focusing on the accessibility of the Wellington City Council website into 2009.

Subgroups will be asked to nominate a contact person to liaise with Sinead. Lisette Wesseling will be the contact person for the Arts subgroup, Alan Royal will be the contact person for the ICT subgroup.

At the February DRG meeting, subgroups will be asked to report to the DRG what their main priorities will be, how often they would like to meet and how often they would like to report at the DRG meetings. These reports will be a regular agenda item for 2009.

**Action:** Subgroups to nominate a contact person if they have not already done so. Subgroups are requested to prepare a report to the DRG for February. More information and guidance on this to be provided by Sinead in January.

## **5. Report from the Council officer:**

- **LTCCP** workshop to take place in February, likely to be a special meeting in addition to the monthly meeting. This will give the DRG guidelines on how to proceed with preparing a formal submission to the Council. Submissions will be due in April.
- **WCC Community Facilities Review:** will take place over the next 5 years. City Communities will be determining a minimum service level over the first six months of 2009. This will include accessibility of all Community Centres, pools, recreation centres, and libraries. It will be followed by a needs assessment of planning areas.
- **Accessible Wellington Forum April 17<sup>th</sup>.** Accessible accommodation is the theme for this year's Forum. DRG members were invited to express interest in being part of a planning group for the Forum.
- **Housing Upgrade Project:** DRG to be involved in consultation, to be outlined by Housing Upgrade officers at the meeting.

- **DRG Wiki** is up and running, members can post content and add their own web pages. Members to use these pages to keep the group up to date on different items and issues including the Forum, Housing Upgrade, Arts etc. Minutes and agendas also available. As the wiki is private, members are requested not to invite non-DRG members or post irrelevant/inappropriate content. The wiki will not replace email and cannot serve as an email group.
- **Mobility parking:** enforcement volunteers needed. 2-3 people needed to be expert witnesses for a pilot scheme focusing on increased enforcement of mobility parking. These will be lay people who collect information including photographs of parking infringements, and forward to Parkwise. The vehicle owner is then ticketed retrospectively.  
Also: Fabian Todd has been contracted by City Communities as Mobility Parking Coordinator for 2009.
- **Accessible Arts subgroup members:** Thomas Bryan, Lisette Wesseling, Sara Pivac Alexander, and Philippa Macdonald. First meeting scheduled for 17 December.
- **ICT :** sub group meeting with WCC Web Centre manager 17 December.
- **Wellington City Council** is in the process of becoming a member of the Lifetime Design Foundation.
- Noted by Councillor Pannett that other areas for the DRG to focus on in 2009 will be the proposed changes to suburban centres and residential rules, Wellington Waterfront and Kumutoto.

## **6. Streetscape Project/Research Project into the design of wheelchair friendly pedestrian crossings in Wellington CBD.**

Presenters: Sam Moroney (Opus) Alexia Pickering (Accessible Options)

Alexia Pickering has been contracted by City Communities to examine kerb crossings in CBD, particularly along an accessible route to Te Papa.

Her report has identified many crossings where upgrading work has been recommended. In particular there are problems with ramp gradients of 1:8 and channels between the road and the edge of the ramp. The report also identified that an older design of kerb crossings from the 1980s using brick tactile pavers was close to ideal in terms of ramp gradient.

Opus have been contracted by Wellington City Council to investigate the design of wheelchair friendly crossings.

Their brief was firstly to determine possible problems with crossings, and discover what were features of good crossings. Secondly Opus were asked to make recommendations on possible ways of fixing problems and come up with possible changes to Wellington City Council crossing design.

### **Problems with crossings:**

- Gradient of ramp too steep (1:8).
- Channel or gutter too steep leading to road.
- Lip at edge of pavement.
- Lip at end of ramp.
- Steep gradient or cross fall on road.

### **Possible ways of fixing problems:**

- Change gradient to a max of 1:12 to make ramp flatter.
- To get rid of a steep channel turn the channel into a shallow dish. If a dish channel is not possible then the gradient on the channel should be a maximum of 1:20.
- To get rid of a lip at the edge of the road the pavement is to be milled out in front of crossing before resurfacing.
- Any resulting edge build-up to be shaved off and graded to 1:12.
- To get rid of a lip at the end of ramp, the ramp and channel are to be one continuous surface.
- Where possible have a raised crossing across the road to combat roads with steep gradients or high crests.

### **Feedback from the DRG:**

Pedestrian ramps cannot be seen to be complete if they have missing or poorly placed tactile ground surface indicators.

Contractors should be penalised for failing to follow specifications or plans. Any specifications on design of kerb ramps should apply to Wellington suburbs as well as the CBD.

The placing of call buttons should also be considered when designing crossings to ensure consistency for blind pedestrians.

## **7. Housing Upgrade Project.**

Presenters: Byron Roff (Director, Housing Upgrade Project); John Le Harivel, Design Manager (Housing upgrade Project); Perry Walker, Stakeholder Engagement Manager (Housing upgrade Project).

### **An update for the DRG on the project:**

The Housing Upgrade Project (HUP) is a joint venture between the Crown and Wellington City Council. The project includes 34 complexes which house over 4,000 people.

Wellington City Council Housing Policy has two criteria for assessing potential tenants. Tenants must have a low income and must be inadequately housed at the time of their application, e.g. in substandard or overcrowded accommodation. Priority listing of potential tenants includes those with physical disabilities and those with experience of mental illness. Currently an estimated 15% of City Housing tenants are people with disabilities.

The design objectives are that all new buildings will be fully accessible in accordance with NZS 4121:2001. For existing buildings, the HUP will try to ensure accessible features are incorporated where practicable and financially viable. These include (but are not limited to) accessible paths and walkways; wet area or low threshold showers; accessible kitchens; graspable hardware and taps.

The project is constrained by budgetary limitations and the topography of some of the sites. Also working in existing concrete buildings poses constraints for modifications.

Since August 2008, the HUP team has had numerous briefings with tenants, support agencies and stakeholders. Needs assessments have been carried out with tenants at three complexes.

The HUP propose input from the DRG at a number of stages during the project. These include participating in the Pre-Upgrade building evaluations, providing feedback at both the concept and developed design stages, and during the post-construction review. The project team will also report every six months to the DRG on progress.

It was the group's opinion that people with disabilities were low on the City Housing's priority list. The group stated that feedback from the community was that there had been some confusion around renewing tenancy agreements and assistance for blind tenants with orientation training.

### **Feedback from the DRG:**

It was the group's preference that housing for disabled tenants be spread across various locations rather than being concentrated in specific locations.

The group felt that units should be adapted to be accessible to a broad spectrum of people with disabilities. The preference of the group was for universal, flexible design features rather than modifications specific to individual needs.

In terms of design priorities, the group mentioned Braille signage, adequate lighting, accessible doorways and non-slip surface. For communal spaces, features the group signalled as important were hearing Loop technology, ramps and adequate doorway widths for wheelchair access.

Overall, safe, comfortable and flexible facilities were seen to be important design priorities.

The proposed programme of consultation between the HUP team and the DRG was accepted by the group.

Meeting closed: 7:35 pm.

Next meeting scheduled for: Tuesday February 10 2009, commencing at 5:30 pm.