

MAYOR'S REPORT

Wellington is a city of many communities.

Our 190,000+ people include those who were born and raised in the city and those who have come from elsewhere to make Wellington their home.

We think of ourselves as New Zealanders, as Wellingtonians, as people of Newtown or Miramar or Thorndon. We speak many languages. We spend our time with families and friends, and in churches, or volunteer groups, or cafes, movies or galleries, or playing football or netball or any of a hundred other pursuits.

We are, in short, a diverse group with a wide and ever-expanding range of interests and aspirations.

As a Council, our job is to respond to those diverse needs and, from them, build a common vision for the city.

That has required us to listen, to create an urban environment that supports residents' aspirations, and to be nimble and responsive as new needs and demands arise.

This report is about that process. Throughout, you will find examples showing the Council engaging with the community, responding to a changing environment and to new demands.

Whether we are making schools safer by lowering speed limits, or enhancing the Botanic Garden experience for the sight-impaired, or installing all-weather turf on sports fields, committing to an indoor community sports centre, or supporting volunteers to clear weeds and plant native trees and shrubs alongside the city's streams, we are reflecting community demand in Council action.

While it is a record of Council spending and activities, this report is also a celebration of the people of Wellington, of all that makes us diverse and vibrant, and all that bring us together.



KERRY PRENDERGAST MAYOR

HIGHLIGHTS

QUALITY OF LIFE

- **Wellington continues to offer world-class quality of life.**

In our 2009 residents' survey, 93% of Wellingtonians said their quality of life was good or very good.

The city has consistently ranked well in national and global quality of life surveys over several years. In fact, we ranked first in New Zealand for quality of life in the 2009 Quality of Life in New Zealand's 12 Biggest Cities Survey.

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

- **88% of Wellingtonians are proud of the city's look and feel.**

After the completion of Waitangi Park and other urban parks, we continued to develop an attractive inner city and waterfront. These areas bring together high quality open spaces, places to live and work, culture and heritage sites, and the city's famous cafe culture.

- **We are focusing development and protecting character and heritage.**

Our new Centres Policy is part of our strategy that seeks to accommodate growth, raise urban design quality, and control 'big box' retail developments outside of existing suburban centres.

It complements other policies which aim to improve the quality of infill housing and focus development in high density areas with strong transport infrastructure.

The new policies are reflected in exciting new plans for Adelaide Road, Johnsonville and those being developed for Kilbirnie and other areas of the city. We also continued to enhance protection for heritage buildings.

TRANSPORT

- **Our commitment to public transport has made bus travel more convenient.**

In recent years we have established bus lanes throughout the central city, reducing travel times and improving reliability.

In June, we set aside funds for a proposal to open Manners Mall to buses and further extend Cuba Mall. The proposal to open Manners Mall is subject to further consultation with community and decisions of Council.

We've also worked alongside other agencies to improve the vital transport corridor from Ngauranga through the city to the airport and have made commitments to enhance the city's network of cycle ways.

- **75% of residents think the city is easy to get around.**

There have been dramatic improvements since 2007 in the number of people who think the city is easy to get around and the number who find peak traffic volumes acceptable.

ECONOMY

- **Tens of thousands of Wellingtonians enjoyed Cuba Carnival, the IRB Sevens and other Council-funded events.**

We secured the rights to host two Rugby World Cup 2011 quarterfinals, and the highly popular Montana World of WearableArt Awards committed to Wellington for another three years.

The city continued to perform well as a visitor destination despite the economic slowdown and the regions economic development agency Grow Wellington continued its support of emerging industries.

ENVIRONMENT

- **More than 300,000 people visited conservation attractions including Wellington Zoo, the Karori Sanctuary, and Otari-Wilton's Bush.**

Tens of thousands more took advantage of the leisure opportunities provided by the city's 34+ square kilometres of Town Belt and reserve land, parks and gardens, and coastline.

The sanctuary was rebranded Zealandia and work got underway towards its new visitor centre, while progress was also made in the long-term development of the Zoo and in finding a home for the Marine Education Centre that all Wellingtonians can support.

PEOPLE AND RECREATION

- **We've started to weatherproof winter sports.**

The installation of artificial turf on the upper field at Nairnville Park has improved conditions for winter sports training and competition and allowed the field to be used in all weather. The Council has committed to install all-weather surfaces elsewhere in the city over time.

We also committed, following extensive consultation and independent reviews, to the construction of an indoor community sport centre in Kilbirnie.

More than 1.6 million people used the city's swimming pools and recreation centres, while many more used sports fields and took part in Council-supported recreation programmes.

- **We provided homes for more than 4,000 people. These homes are being upgraded to make them warmer and healthier to live in.**
Te Ara Hou flats in Newtown is the first Council housing property to receive a makeover under the Council-Government partnership to upgrade the city's social housing.
- **A new community centre was opened in Newlands.**
Throughout the city, use of community centres and halls increased during 2009, reversing an earlier decline.
- **People are feeling safer in the city centre.**
Wellington is a safe city by national and global standards. About two-thirds of residents feel safe in the central city at night, up 9 points from 2008.

CULTURE

- **A major expansion of the City Gallery was started.**

Set to re-open in September 2009 the extended gallery will provide new exhibition spaces including one for Maori and Pacific art and an expanded Michael Hirschfeld Gallery for Wellington art.

ENGAGEMENT

- **We reached new audiences during engagement on our long-term plan.**
Over 500 people made formal submissions and many more took part in online discussion groups or phoned our 0800 hotline. Other residents signed e-petitions or took part in online polls.
These are a few of the new ways residents chose to have a say about the city's future.
- **The number of residents who feel they can influence the Council is growing.**
Sixty-four percent of residents feel the public has some or a large influence on the Council, up 8 points over the past two years. Three-quarters of residents find it easy to access Council information.

