

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The 2008/09 year has seen the Council and its staff respond to a changing environment.

The global economic slowdown has affected the city's households and businesses. The Council has also faced cost fluctuations in some areas throughout the year but overall we remain in good financial shape.

The slowdown has highlighted the importance of delivering services that are affordable and represent value for money. This is something that we always strive for.

The review of our long-term plan during the year gave us a chance to take stock of our progress and set out our response to this and other challenges. As the Mayor has noted, this review included an extensive engagement exercise.

The review looked beyond the immediate economic context. We considered issues such as population growth and diversity, demands on the transport network, changing service needs and retaining the city's character, amongst other issues.

The response is strategic. Take our approach to urban development. We aim to manage intensive growth along a 'spine' that connects key centres. This maximises the use of existing infrastructure, provides transport choices, including reducing the need to travel, and strengthens 'sense of place' – pride in our local areas. Our response is also tailored; a Braille walk (page 34) and 'natural' burials (page 62) are examples of meeting specific needs and providing choices in response to changing demands.



GARRY POOLE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We've also looked at the way we work to ensure that we are well positioned for the future. This process is ongoing and includes ensuring that health and safety remains at the forefront of our work. 12 December 2008 marked a tragic day for the organisation. Brian Taurerewa, an employee at our landfill, died in a vehicle accident while at work. His death is a stark reminder of the very real risks a number of our operational staff face as they aim to make the city even better.

Throughout the year, our team has maintained a high level of professionalism and dedication to public service. In our latest residents' survey, 73% of Wellingtonians rated the Council's performance positively – up five points since 2007.

The survey also found that 72% of residents believe they get value for money from the Council. This is a slight decline from last year – a solid result given the tightening in household budgets.

The financial and performance results in this report reflect our ongoing commitment to high quality services. As you will see throughout this report, we are generally performing well against our targets or past achievements. Where we fell below the levels we expect, we are working to address this and to sustain the city's place as an affordable and internationally competitive city.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Council's staff for their part in that.

ACHIEVEMENTS / AWARDS

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INFORMATION

- In the 2008 CRM Contact Centre Awards, the Council's Call Centre won awards in the city council online (web/email) customer service categories. This was our fourth year winning the Customer Service category.
- Our annual reports were again recognised for excellence. In July 2008, we won the Supreme Award (all sectors) for an unprecedented third consecutive year at the NZ Institute of Chartered Accountants awards for our 2007 report. We also received a silver award at the Australasian annual report awards for our 2008 report.

RACE RELATIONS

- The Council was honoured with a Te Wiki o Te reo Maori Award for promoting Maori language. Council initiatives include promotion of Te Wiki o Te Reo Maori (Maori Language Week), Waitangi Day entertainment and commemorations, promotion of Matariki (Maori new year), and development of a Maori heritage trail which was completed in June 2009.
- The Council won a Human Rights Commission Award for an internal Council programme to celebrate Race Relations Day.

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

- At the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network's annual conference in August 2008 the Council's Berhampore Nursery won the best nursery award.
- The Kelburn School Gully Project, which is supported by the Council, also won an award. Over the past decade Kelburn School has returned a blackberry-infested gully to something like its native state, using plants from Otari-Wilton's Bush and the Nursery.
- The Owhiro Bay interpretation centre won three awards: the New Zealand Recreation Association Outstanding Park award, the Wellington Civic Trust Best Environmental Project award, and a Merit award in the Special Purpose category at the Property Council New Zealand Awards.

- Wellington Bush Builders, a Zoo-based project that saw more than 700 children explore their local ecosystems, won a Department of Conservation Wellington Conservation award for education and advocacy.
- Zealandia was named one of Australasia's top ecological restoration projects, won the Tourism Industry Association of NZ's 2008 Conservation in Action award, and continued its progress towards becoming a 'living ark' of native wildlife with the birth of its first baby tuatara.

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

- The Adelaide Road town planning framework was highly commended at the New Zealand Planning Institute's 2009 annual awards.
- Shed 13 won a silver award of merit from the Association of Consulting Engineers.
- Kumutoto Wharf won an urban design award at the New Zealand Institute of Architects annual awards, and an Illumination Engineering Society lighting design award.
- Waitangi Park won the supreme award and best public space award at the Wellington Civic Trust awards, while the waterfront sculpture Solace to the Wind won the people's choice award.

STAFF AWARDS

- Jasmine Zimmerman, a Botanic Gardens curator, was a finalist in the Young Horticulturist of the Year for the Amenity Horticulture sector.
- Brayden Rawlinson received the Groundsman of the Year award from Cricket Wellington.
- Three Walkwise Officers received Certificates of Appreciation from the Police in recognition of their work in assisting to catch offenders from two serious incidents in the city.
- The New Zealand Recreation Associations – Mark Mitchell Memorial Award was awarded to Esther Bukholt of our Recreation Wellington team.
- David McLachlan received the Association of Local Government Information Management's Excellence in Leadership Award.
- The Association of Local Government Information Management also recognised Adrian Humphris work. He was named Archivist of the Year for 2008.
- Helen Rogers was named Young Accountant of the Year for the central region.

RESIDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH:

