

Accessibility Advisory Group

Annual Report 2014

Co-Chair's report

We are pleased to report the Wellington City Council Accessibility Advisory Group (AAG) had another successful year.

The membership of the AAG has undergone significant change and refreshment as long-serving members have reached the end of their maximum term of service or moved away from Wellington City. Newly appointed members have demonstrated a keen interest in making Wellington the coolest little accessible capital.

The highlights have been:

- Seeing the completion of works to rectify ongoing accessibility challenges in Cuba Street
- The open attitude Councillors and Council staff have to improving accessibility in Wellington
- The significant number of projects we have had an opportunity to advise on
- The eagerness of many project leaders to meet with the AAG to seek practical advice from those with lived experience.

Low lights have been:

- While we recognise the position of Accessibility Advisor was never intended to be permanent, it was disappointing to see the position will not be continued in 2015. The Accessibility Advisor role was a direct and highly effective channel through which the AAG and the WCC improved accessibility in Wellington.
- We were disappointed that the significant investment in the Parliament Precinct does not include a new accessible route. The grand staircase is not design to be accessible to all and is missed opportunity for improving accessibility.

In 2015 we will continue maintaining and improving accessibility in Wellington with special focus on mobility parking, embedding accessibility awareness across all Council activities and shaping the accessibility of the urban environment.

Purpose

The purpose of the Accessibility Advisory (AAG) is to:

- Advise Council on how to help grow a great and accessible City where barriers to people with impairments are minimised.

- Bring lived experience and knowledge to Council around accessibility issues in the context of Council's roles and priorities.

The AGG will not be seen as representing all views on accessibility in the city.

Terms of Reference Review

The Terms of Reference were reviewed in 2014. The updated terms of reference provide the AAG with clear guidelines on how best to work with Council.

The new Terms of Reference base the AAG activities on the financial year rather than the calendar year. This report covers the period January 2014 to March 2015 to transition towards financial year reporting.

Annual Work Programme

As part of the 2014 Terms of Reference a new process of implementing an annual work programme (See Appendix One) was agreed on. The purpose of the work programme was to ensure that the work of the AAG was aligned with the City Council's Annual Plan and Long Term Plan.

The agreed work programme is set out in a letter that is attached as Appendix One. The following table summarises the work programme and comments on progress.

Work programme item	Progress
<p><u>Urban Landscape and Open Space Projects</u> To include projects such as Kilbirnie Centre upgrade, the Children's Garden and the Victoria Street Precinct</p>	<p>The AAG has given advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Children's Garden • the Victoria Street Precinct • the Mount Victoria Master Plan • Accessibility at the Museum of Wellington City and Sea, in the Parliamentary Precinct and for City Housing.
<p><u>Earthquake Strengthening</u> Providing advice on accessibility requirements while improving the earthquake strengthening of Council buildings.</p>	<p>Work on this item will be scoped in last part of 2014/15.</p>
<p><u>Transport</u> Work with officers to provide input into transport projects and support the Council to ensure compliance around the use of mobility parks.</p>	<p>The AAG provided advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Island Bay cycle way • four new mobility parking in the central city <p>Work on mobility park compliance is planned for 2015/16.</p>

Work programme item	Progress
<u>Events</u> Work with officers to develop a checklist for Council and event organisers which will help them identify and address issues so that their events are accessible to all.	This work will be scoped in the last part of 2014/15.

The AAG recommended that the 2014/15 work programme should include actions on accessible information as well as relate to the Accessible Wellington Action Plan. It hopes these areas of work can be added to the 2015/16 work programme.

Meetings

The AAG met 15 times between January 2014 and March 2015, with additional sub-group meetings carried out as required. The agendas and minutes for these meetings are available on the Wellington City Council's website.

Membership

The AGG has eight members and one vacancy which will be advertised on the completion of a WCC internal restructuring. Tables listing the names of current AAG members and of ex-members who have left the AAG since the 2013 Annual Report are provided in Appendix Two.

Advice

The following is a list of the major pieces of work carried out by the Accessibility Advisory Group in 2014, and demonstrates how the Accessibility Advisory Group works on a wide variety of issues with Councillors and Council Officers.

Accessible Wellington Action Plan

The AAG believes that removing accessibility barriers will help grow the city and therefore recommends ensuring that accessibility is improved by reviewing and strengthening the Accessibility Wellington Action Plan in 2015/16. The Council should consider:

- Adding a section on accessibility in project Terms of Reference and templates
- Developing a network of accessibility champions across the Council
- Ensuring that there are a good range of accessible attractions for cruise ship passengers.

Parliamentary Precinct

The AAG is disappointed that the joint Parliamentary Services – Council project to upgrade the Parliamentary Precinct has not improved accessible access to the cenotaph or to Parliament via the grand stairway. In our view, these decisions are short-sighted and contrary to both the Accessible Wellington Action Plan and the second strategic objectives of Parliamentary Services – an “Accessible Parliament”.

Victoria St Upgrade

The following comments were made regarding the Victoria St upgrade:

- Mobility parking needs to be retained during the work
- Access must be taken into account at every stage of work

- The crossing on Dixon and Victoria St at the moment is very inaccessible, it would be good to see this brought up to standard
- Any seating needs to have standard arm rests and be low enough for cane users to pick up that there is a seat there
- Footpaths must not be obstructed

Overall the AAG is very happy with how the Memorial Park Alliance who is running the Victoria St Upgrade has interacted and consulted with them.

Mt Victoria Master Plan

The AAG provided officers with pre-consultation advice which included:

- the need for a section on how the plan deals with accessibility
- plans should comply with accessibility standards described by New Zealand Standard 4121:2001
- the social and recreation section of the Plan should provide for accessibility
- improved mobility parking is needed
- Braille signage should be considered.

While outside the scope of the Mount Victoria Master Plan project, the AAG believes that a ramp or lift should be installed to make the Mount Victoria lookout accessible as this is one of Wellington best view points.

Museum of Wellington City and Sea

The following comments were made regarding the upgrade of the Museum of Wellington City and Sea:

- Number and location of mobility parks
- Accessible tours of the Museum
- Films shown there should be captioned and/or interpreted into New Zealand Sign Language

Island Bay cycle way

The following comments were made regarding the proposed changes to the Island Bay Cycle Way:

- Cycle lanes inside parked cars put pressure on people getting from a car to pavement. In effect, there is traffic on both sides.
- Pedestrians should still have priority in shared space.
- Motorised wheelchairs should be able to use the cycleway as they can travel at similar speeds to bicycles and because pedestrians are much slower.
- Cycle parks numbers are increasing in the city but there is a dilemma around keeping pedestrian space free.

City Housing

The following comments were made regarding the changes to City Housing:

- AAG are happy to contribute on anything that the City Housing would like input on. Most things can be handled by subgroups but the very important projects could be managed by the full group.

- A question was raised regarding the Council fully partnering with Lifemark like Christchurch and Auckland Councils. City Housing pointed out that in Wellington there will be a number of processes including the Warrant of Fitness programme. City Housing are happy to work alongside all programmes.
- Other comments were made regarding the small size of lifts and hallways for wheelchairs in Hansen Court. However, as Hansen Court was an upgrade only, the lift wasn't replaced. Also a comment was made that touch screens should be avoided in any new lifts.

Readability of Voting Documents

The AAG provided advice on proposed designs for voting papers and candidate profiles for the next local body elections. Some of the main points were:

- Ensure strong contrasts
- Avoid wordy instructions. List instead steps or use the Easy Read system
- Avoid small fonts
- Avoid difficult to read fonts
- Use Plain English

New Mobility Parking

The AAG provided advice on the four new mobility parks being put in Wellington CBD.

The number and location of these parks were:

- 2 on Balance Street at the waterfront end,
- 1 on Courtenay Place next to Cambridge Terrace on the south side,
- 1 on Blair Street at the Wakefield Street end.

Relationship Building

The AAG further developed relationships with the sector and the Council through:

- A successful accessibility forum to help develop the Accessible Wellington Action Plan in May 2014
- By co-hosting an event with the Disabled Persons Assembly for International Day of Persons with Disability in December 2014
- Regularly meeting with officers to provide formal and informal advice.

Acknowledgements

The Council is to be congratulated for:

- Fixing long standing accessibility issues in lower Cuba Street
- Creating a significant number of new mobility parks in the city
- Adding an accessibility section to the draft Mount Victoria Master Plan

The Accessibility Advisory Group would also like to thank Councillor David Lee and Councillor Malcolm Sparrow for their continued support and Simon Wright and Lisa Matthews for their administrative support.

Appendix One: Annual Work Programme 2014-2015

October 2014

Chair – Accessible Advisory Group

Wellington City Council

101 Wakefield Street, PO Box 2199

WELLINGTON 6140

Dear Chair

Re: Letter setting the Work Programme for the Accessible Advisory Group (AAG)

Purpose of this letter

I am writing to you as the Chair to clarify the Council's priorities and outline Council's expectations for the Accessible Advisory Group over the next 12 months.

The AAG is part of Council and I know that your group wants to contribute in the best possible way to our City. This letter will help focus the work of the group so that Council officers can engage with you at an early stage and in an effective way.

AAG's work over the next 12 months

The City Council recently finalised its Annual Plan (AP) and is working on developing the 2015-25 Long Term Plan (LTP). It is important that the work of your advisory group aligns with the priorities of the AP and LTP.

We want you to bring your experience as a group to help solve problems and find solutions for the work streams below. This is consistent with your group having deeper and more-ongoing involvement with the work-streams of greatest priority to the City.

Key AP and LTP priorities	AAG input
Urban Landscape & Open Spaces Projects: The Council is undertaking a number of landscape projects as part of its Urban Growth Plan for the benefit of residents and visitors. In keeping with past practice, the Council would like to work with AAG to ensure the projects take into account the needs of people with impairments.	Work with officers to provide input into projects including the Kilbirnie Centre upgrade, the Children's Garden and Victoria Street Precinct based on members' experience of living in Wellington.
Earthquake Strengthening: The Council is undertaking a programme of strengthening works on its portfolio of buildings. The Council has agreed to work with AAG to improve the accessibility of these buildings as part of the strengthening programme.	Work with officers to provide input into improving the accessibility of Council buildings that are being earthquake-strengthened.
Transport: The Council working on a range of transport projects this year. The Council is also looking at how it can ensure better compliance around the use of mobility parking in the city.	Work with officers to provide input into transport projects and support the Council to ensure compliance around the use of mobility parks.

Events:

The Council is looking to build on and refresh its events offer in the coming year. It wants to ensure there is a diverse range of events that appeal, and are accessible to all Wellingtonians.

Work with officers to develop a checklist for Council and event organisers which will help them identify and address issues so that their events are accessible to all.

As part of Council's wider engagement, the Council will also consult with other groups on the issues that we bring to AAG. Furthermore, the above list does not preclude the AAG from having input into other Council projects and policies as these become apparent during the year. Such items can be considered by AAG with the agreement of the Chair and the Council Liaison Officer.

Additional information on how we see AAG operating is set out in the Terms of Reference.

Meeting to discuss and agree the work programme

Once you have discussed the priorities and suggested work-streams outlined in this letter with the other members of your group, we would like to finalise and begin working on the programme with you. Please contact me with your response to this letter by 4 November 2014.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Martin Rodgers

Manager, Research, Consultation & Planning

Appendix Two: Membership of the Accessibility Advisory Group and individual meeting attendance

The membership of the AAG as at 31 March 2015 was as follows. The attendance figures are for the period January 2104 to March 2015. Note that some members were appointed during this period so could not have attended all 15 meetings of the AAG.

Name	No of meetings attended in period since appointment (% Attendance)	Name	No of meetings attended in period since appointment (% Attendance)
Tim Pate	12 (92%)	Christine O'Sullivan	13 (100%)
Julia Mosen	14 (93%)	Lee Rutene	12 (80%)
Paula Booth	14 (93%)	Tristram Ingham	6 (100%)
Micheal Bealing	13 (87%)	Christine Richardson	6 (86%)

Ex-members who left since the AAG's Annual Report 2013 was presented:

Alan Royal	Shannon Krogmann
Kendall Akhurst	Jackie Buckley
Jason Strawbridge	Robert MacKay
Rosemay Cole	Angela Vanderpoel
Linda Hobman	Lachlan MacKay