

# **Newtown Residents' Association**

## **Submission to Wellington City Council on *Our Capital Spaces***

### **Preamble**

Newtown Residents' Association has worked actively with Wellington City Council for decades to preserve, improve and celebrate our community. We support this Strategy's aims of getting more people to use and enjoy Wellington's current and future open spaces.

### **Outcome 1 – Getting Everyone Active and Healthy**

#### ***Focus – Awareness***

We support WCC increasing its information - online, published, and on the ground - to attract more people to open spaces, and to improve their understanding of the spaces' management.

The focus of the framework is predominantly on the “large” open spaces, but attention is also needed to our smaller capital spaces.

The suburbs of Berhampore, Newtown, and Mt Cook already have relatively high populations densities by New Zealand standards, and relatively high population growth rates by Wellington standards. In addition they are identified by Wellington City as areas for further intensification as medium density mixed use areas. In short there are already a lot of us, there are more of us every year, and there will be a lot more of us in the future.

We appreciate the amenity of the open spaces of the Town Belt that marks our borders. But as population densities increase the smaller neighbourhood scale open spaces become increasingly important. For example, the small parks on the corners of Normanby and Daniell Streets, Wilson and Daniell Streets, and the playground on Riddiford and Constable Streets, although small, are important in their urban settings. We also draw attention to the potential, in high density neighbourhoods, for the use of vacant land awaiting development as temporary parks – for instance the site at the corner of Newtown Avenue and Daniell Street.

***Focus – Supporting sport and recreation and increasing participation***

We support increasing both active and passive recreation in open spaces. To increase participation we would like to see the Council help facilitate the connection of migrant communities with established clubs and organisation in their neighbourhoods.

***Focus – Community and Neighbourhood Spaces***

We endorse the concept of creating multi-purpose hubs. Wakefield Park would benefit from playground facilities for spectators and their families. Ongoing maintenance of these areas needs to be clearly identified too. Newtown Park playground should also be considered as an asset worthy of further investment, as it serves not only local residents and families attending sports events, but also significant numbers from a wider catchment visiting the Zoo.

**Outcome 2 - Protecting our Birds, Nature Streams and Landscapes**

***Focus – Providing accessible walking and cycling tracks***

We support this aim.

***Focus – Restoring Local Habitat and encouraging native birds into communities.***

We support these aims. Our communities have begun to benefit from the return of larger numbers of native birds as a result of the safe breeding environment at Zealandia and the success of the Regional Council in controlling possum populations.

The control of pest plants in our inner Town Belt is also a matter of concern. WCC must ensure it maintains funding and efforts to eliminate quickly spreading pests such as climbing asparagus.

We think WCC needs to continue acquiring new land to expand the network of open spaces.

## **Outcome 3 – Contributing to wellington’s Outstanding Quality of Life**

This outcome does not need to be stated separately, as it results from the implementation of the other parts. Projects and events fall under outcomes 1, 2 and 4.

## **Outcome 4 - Doing it Together**

### ***Focus- Local Partnerships***

We agree that this is a positive (and necessary) direction, but we don’t want to see WCC reduce its services offering assistance to community groups. It is important that WCC fully consults with affected communities, and signs Memoranda of Understanding, before handing over maintenance responsibilities.

We note that we were approached last year by a group trying to find land for a community garden - the Strategy says, *Our focus is to encourage more partnerships ... by: establishing community gardens and restoration projects in every community that wants one.* This does not seem to be happening at the moment.

Many sports clubs enjoy special use of public land on the Town Belt. Further extensions to these arrangements are contrary to the Town Belt Management Plan, which states among its objectives, *”to ensure that there will be no additional land area developed for organised recreational facilities (formal recreation) on the Town Belt”.* Any such extensions are of interest and concern to the whole community, not just the specific clubs and organisations involved.

### ***Focus- Strong Relationships with Maori***

We support this.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment. We would like to make a presentation.

Kate Zwartz for Newtown Residents’ Association