



Submission on the Wellington City Council Draft Annual Plan, 2020/21

Introduction

The Newtown Residents' Association has been an Incorporated Society since July 1963. We are residents and business owners from Newtown and the surrounding area, who take a keen interest in the community and local issues. We are concerned with maintaining and improving our area's liveability, connectedness and sustainability and working to make our community a thriving, diverse, great place to live.

Submission

Overall approach to the plan

We agree with the overall approach to the plan. This is a pragmatic approach to providing support for recovery while being committed to continuing with essential services and plans for infrastructure improvements.

Rates increases

We approve of the proposal to increase rates by 5.1%. Although rates increases of any size have a detrimental impact on some households, the need to deal with water issues and also to repair important, earthquake prone buildings makes this a challenging time financially, and if rates weren't increased now it would increase the funding problems in the future.

We approve of the proposal to defer rates payments without penalty where this is necessary to ameliorate financial hardship caused by covid-19. We also recommend publicising the Rates Rebate available to low income households.

Tipu Toa – Build Back Better

We approve of these initiatives.

We are particularly excited about the potential for a **resource recovery centre** and for **green stormwater infrastructure**, and look forward to these initiatives being included in the 2021/31 Long Term Plan.

We are also pleased to hear about the **City Recovery Fund**. We have heard some discussion about this fund being used for innovative projects. This is attractive, but we are concerned that existing initiatives will need help to recover. Vibrant arts, events and festivals in our city are essential to the essence of Wellington. They are also the source of work and income for a whole range of artists,

technicians, and providers of infrastructure such as stages and lighting, who have been hard hit by the cancellation of so many events this year.

We have a particular interest in this because of our long association with Newtown Festival. As the country recovers from covid-19 it begins to seem that it will be possible to hold the Festival in March 2021, but if so there will be significant difficulties ahead. The majority of the usual funders and sponsors have had a dramatic decrease in income and are very unlikely to be able to provide the level of support the Festival has had in previous years. The City Recovery Fund could be a truly essential life-line to ensure the Newtown Festival can continue.

Support for improving Three Waters infrastructure

The Newtown Residents' Association has been advocating for this for many years. It was in our submission for the 2018/28 Long Term Plan, and we hope that it will get high priority in the 2021/31 LTP. We agree with the extra support for Wellington Water proposed in this Annual Plan.

Water storage and network improvements - We continue to support the speedy development of the Prince of Wales Reservoir.

Waste water network improvements - We strongly support the urgent upgrade of the waste water network.

Stormwater networks - We are concerned about the management of stormwater across the city.

There are times in our area when the existing infrastructure is clearly insufficient and the streets are flooded. This is exacerbated by the rain running off hard, impervious surfaces. We strongly support water sensitive urban design, and hope this will be required in future plans.

The City Library

We are relieved that after a long wait there are now some options available for the restoration of the City Library. We look forward to being involved in the consultation about this in the near future.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. We would like the opportunity to speak to Councillors about it in the appropriate forum.

Rhona Carson

President, Newtown Residents' Association

June 8th 2020

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