

Long-term Plan
Wellington City Council
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SUBMISSION ON DRAFT LONG TERM PLAN 2015 - 25, FROM TRELISSICK PARK GROUP

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Our submission on the above relates to budgets for pest control. Our Group is very grateful for our collaborative relationship and for the work Council have done over the years in Trelissick Park, despite budget restraints.

However, we have some reservations about: "As an eco-city Wellington will achieve high standards of environmental performance..." in p.4 of the Statements of Service Provision.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ISSUES/QUERIES

In the Statements of Service Provision

Biodiversity target and pest control lack of definition – On p.17 and 18, in 2.1, biodiversity targets of 55% – 70%, are given for "high value biodiversity sites (%) covered by integrated animal pest control or weed control".

- "high value biodiversity sites (%)" is ambiguous and subjective. Are they percentages of the total 4,000 ha of open spaces, or percentages of the high biodiversity sites? What is the area?
- "animal pest control or weed control" is too vague.
- What does "pest control" mean? Prioritised control? 100% elimination? Keeping the status quo? Containment?

We would like to see budget amounts for pest animals and weeds shown separately and the areas and methods of control defined.

Pest management budget inadequate

1. On p.21, in 2.1.8 of the Environmental Activity Budget, the net operating budget for "biodiversity (pest management)" is given as \$1.642 million per annum, only a little more than in the 2014/15 Plan. Pest weeds are burgeoning in Wellington, such as:
 - old man's beard, honeysuckle and climbing asparagus to dominate canopies, eventually killing the plants beneath
 - tradescantia (wandering willie) to carpet the ground, stifling natural seedling emergence
 - buddleia, wattle and sycamore to spread and take over.

Based on past experience, prioritised funding for dealing with pest weeds has not been enough. In Trelissick Park, some areas dealt with in the past, are going 'backwards' - a

waste of expenditure. Other areas, less fortunate than ourselves and without volunteer back-up, are in a bad way (eg Churchill Reserve between Trelissick Park and Otari Wilton's Bush). More funding is needed to prevent pest weeds running rampant.

2. Also, the target areas in 2.1 on p.17 and 18 are increasing over the ten years from 55% to 70%. There should be corresponding budget increases, with inflation adjustment (rather than a flat budget).
3. It should be noted that the budget in no way represents the true costs of pest management, given the huge input of the many volunteer groups in the Wellington area. Such a resource is not everywhere and may not always be available, being so reliant on goodwill, time, enthusiasm and support from Council.

Environmental performance measures questionable – On p.17, in 2.1 of the table of environment performance measures, it is stated that “Residents' satisfaction (%) with the quality and maintenance of green open spaces” is 90%. However, to some, flowering weed trees and old man's beard are attractive, as are the autumn colours of deciduous trees. Others do not know the difference between natives and weeds. Enveloping areas of climbing asparagus and honeysuckle lie hidden. While not wishing to denigrate Council efforts, not much store should be attached to this survey.

SUMMARY

The Long Term Plan lists a number of growth initiatives for Wellington, costing many millions, aimed at attracting more visitors/business. Some of these are risky and extravagant. Yet here we already have parks, reserves and coastal areas integrated with the urban areas, making Wellington a unique and attractive city. Well maintained pest-free natural green spaces provide a return on investment with better health, sense of place, cultural well-being and attractiveness for visitors/recreation/employment.

Pest weeds are burgeoning in Wellington. Surely we don't want "the stunning natural environment", referred to by the Mayor in p.3 of the Consultation Document, defiled or killed by smothering weeds?

We already have one of Wellington's major 'selling' features - our magnificent parks, reserves and beaches – needing more maintenance.

I would like to speak to this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Reimann
(Chairman, Trelissick Park Group)