



WELLINGTON CIVIC TRUST

Annual Report and Financial Statements **for the Year Ended 31 March 2013**

Presented at the Annual General Meeting, May 30th 2013.

BOARD TRUSTEES 2012/13:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Alan Smith
<u>Deputy Chair:</u>	Toni Izzard
<u>Treasurer:</u>	David Tai (and Membership Secretary)
<u>Secretary:</u>	still a vacancy; meanwhile, secretarial duties are shared between Blair Badcock and Dorothy Thompson.
<u>Webmaster:</u>	Bruce Stokell
<u>Other Trustees</u>	Blair Badcock, Bill Robertson, Chris Watson, Craig Palmer, Liz Mellish, Mike Mellor, Jonathan Suggate, Gerald Blunt, Duncan Joiner, Brett Mckay, Murray Thessman, and Jim McMahon.

www.wellingtoncivictrust.org

P.O.Box 10183 Wellington 6143 NEW ZEALAND

The objectives for which the Wellington Civic Trust is established are:

- To promote a civic environment whereby the City of Wellington, its surroundings, and its adjacent countryside becomes a resources for the use, benefit and enjoyment of all Wellington citizens;
- To stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the City of Wellington and its surroundings and adjacent countryside and coastline and its dignity as the Capital City;
- To preserve, develop and improve buildings and features of general public amenity or historic interest or beauty;
- To create or improve features of beauty or interest in and about the City and its contiguous countryside and coastline;
- To promote high standards in architecture, landscape management, building and town and country planning;
- To promote knowledge of and interest in the objects of the Trust by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, educational courses and all other forms of instruction and publicity; and
- To maintain communication with and co-operation with persons or corporate bodies in New Zealand or elsewhere (including membership of other bodies corporate) for the purpose of promoting directly or indirectly the objectives of the Trust.

(Wellington Civic Trust – Constitution, 1981.)

Annual Report for 2012/13: for the AGM 30/5/13

1. It's a pleasure to present this Annual Report for the year ended March 2013. At times there seems to have been much activity but few results; but looking back I believe that the Wellington Civic Trust continues to meet the high expectations of those who drew up its statement of purpose (which is recorded in our financial statements). We enter the new financial year reasonably well placed to continue this work, and aware of the need to make our work widely visible. Political decisions are usually made more from focus groups and polling than from formal analysis; getting our submissions into wider public debate outside our natural comfort zone is the positive challenge.

2. This year we've made more of an effort to keep members informed of developments through frequent newsletters and through the website. So this not a detailed

description and repetition of those accounts, but a summary overview of the year, grouped under some broad subject interest headings.

Wellington the national Capital City

3. One very satisfying outcome in 2012 was the decision to create a proper *National War Memorial Park*. Although the Park was announced in 2008, only one year ago we were told that it was all decided that “the cheapest option” would occur, with State Highway One (SH1) slicing through the park on the level. We and many others refused to just accept this and so it was that suddenly in August “the only sensible option” was substituted, along with emergency legislation suspending normal resource management processes to make it all happen by 2015. This means that the national memorial park to the dead of all wars will now be worthy of its purpose rather than just being roadside landscaping. The Civic Trust made written and oral submissions to Parliament’s Transport & Industrial Relations [sic] Select Committee in the fast-tracked passage of the empowering bill. We are represented on the “Community Forum” set up under the Act and, while much of its early work has been about interim road works and (reasonably enough) their impacts on nearby residents, the Trust’s main interest is the quality of the park’s design and how it will actually work. This includes sorting out how Massey University’s main entrance will fit into the Park’s design, and the efficacy of the planned low-speed local road linking the Massey entrance from Tasman St. and its exit to Taranaki St.

4. The real tragedy here is the poverty of thinking and vision at central government level which led to this decision on separating the Park from the northbound SH1 having to be dragged out for so long. The bill was enacted in October and is quite a neat template - we do not want to see it wheeled out again the next time someone leaves their project planning too late. 2015 is not just the centenary of the Gallipoli ANZAC landings, but also the 150th anniversary of Wellington as New Zealand’s capital city; something to be reflected in, amongst other things, good urban form and design.

The Basin Reserve Bridge

5. The roading aspects of the War Memorial Park are tied up with the *Basin Bridge*, the latest New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) name for the one-way, two-lane flyover to carry SH1 traffic westbound from the Mt. Victoria tunnel. The Civic Trust position on this is:

- i. The movement of people and freight to the airport needs improvement, and the 2008 *Ngauranga-to-Airport Corridor Strategy* remains a good basis for this.
- ii. Taking out the SH1 aspect and fast-tracking it as a “Road of National Significance” (RoNS) is a political decision rather than an engineering one, and our actions aim to mitigate its worst impacts on Wellington.
- iv. The Basin Bridge will do nothing for SH1 traffic to the airport, which will still use Vivian St and Kent Tce, crossing other roads and public transport corridors without grade separation. NZTA have confirmed to us that this will meet forecast traffic needs “for at least the next 20-30 years.”

iv. The bridge will not, it has been decreed, be an “iconic” structure. It will be just another concrete overbridge.

v. As the War Memorial Park decision has shown, the “cheapest solution” can be changed to the “only sensible option” through the political process.

We regard the Basin Bridge as one relatively small part of the overall Ngauranga-to-Airport corridor and will comment on the project’s fit with the sorts of urban design and transport outcomes central to the vision encapsulated in our 2009 submission to the WCC’s *Smart Capital 2040* strategy.

Public Transport

6. One of the many ironies made apparent during the year is that, while the RoNS aims to meet through traffic needs, the NZTA/Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) / Wellington City Council (WCC) *Public Transport Spine Study* considers that through traffic needs are low compared to those using the Wellington Railway Station as an ultimate destination. For many, it is just a time-consuming transfer point. Hence this “spine” is not the same as the Johnsonville-Kilbirnie “growth spine” already agreed for the city, and is based on travel needs south from the Railway Station whereas most of the urban area’s population lives north of it. Another work-in-progress for us.

7. We have also been represented on the reference group for GWRC’s *Wellington City Bus Review*. The proposals will affect every bus route and we noted inter alia that they seem to reduce the use of the trolleybus network on which so much has been invested in recent years. The Review also places emphasis on suburban interchanges and we have noted that these must be of real quality to work. Observation right now of the very poor fit of the Kilbirnie bus interchange with the suburban upgrade work going on there shows that a much more “joined-up” approach is needed by all those accountable.

8. Public Transport is important for the Civic Trust because it helps reduce both traffic congestion and land use demand for roads, while boosting people density in the city centre as well as making Wellington accessible for those without other vehicles.

Our Built Heritage

9. Heritage values are recognized in law and “listing” is not something undertaken lightly. Accordingly, we opposed the owner’s application for consent to demolish the Grade 1-listed *T&G/Harcourts building* on the corner of Lambton Quay and Grey St. The application was declined on the strength of the heritage values involved, the decision noting that “the principal issue in contention was the tension or ‘conflict’ between the loss of a significant heritage building and the risk to public safety, if a building identified as an earthquake-prone building remained unstrengthened. A second issue was the tension between the costs associated with strengthening and commercial / economic viability”. The Commissioners’ decision went on to note that “it may be that this is one of the first, if not the first, publicly notified resource consent applications in the post-Canterbury earthquakes ‘environment’ where consent is being sought under the Resource Management Act 1991 to demolish a significant heritage building, principally

on the grounds of public safety, given that the applicant has been served with an Earthquake-Prone Building Notice under the Building Act 2004.” The owner has appealed this decision to the Environment Court, and we will be a s.274 party to oppose this appeal.

10. Changes are under way for the law empowering the present Historic Places Trust. This, along with continuing changes to the RMA, require a continuing close watch by the Civic Trust. We are not advocating a freeze-frame on the city, nor do we believe that every old structure is by definition valuable heritage. The mix of the old, the contemporary and the potential is part of the dynamism of Wellington’s urban form, whose enduring quality is the interest which underpins our biennial *Civic Trust Awards*. Planning work on the 2013 Awards programme began late last year and this year’s winners were announced at a ceremony hosted by the Mayor just a week before the 2013 Annual General meeting.

Earthquakes

11. We want to anticipate the effects of a Christchurch-scale earthquake on Wellington, so that we can identify the best mitigations before such an event, and have a policy framework for how we might respond after one. A sub-committee of Duncan Joiner, Craig Palmer, Win Clarke and Chris Cochran, chaired by Bill Robertson, developed this and framed our submission to the MBIE Seismic Building Codes review. We took the policy-based view that the sort of Wellington we aspire to needs:

- i. early actions and incentives to assess all at-risk buildings
- ii. to prioritise unreinforced masonry structures
- iii. to support a national publicly-accessible register, and
- iv. to ensure that the relevant professional skills are in place in both quality and quantity for such a huge nation-wide task. This includes the sufficiency of skilled advice for strengthening heritage buildings.

The Waterfront

12. As with our response to the seemingly rash waves of heritage building demolitions in Wellington in the early 1980s because of “earthquake hazards”, the redevelopment of the former working wharves south of Bunny St. has always been a core Civic Trust interest. Our stance is based around firm support for the 2001 *Waterfront Framework*, which was reviewed and re-confirmed in 2011. Wellington Waterfront Ltd’s plans for Kumutoto sites 8, 9 and 10 (opposite Whitmore St and the Postal Centre) seemed to us to be generally within this context, but were defeated in the Environment Court challenge to DP Variation 11 mounted by Waterfront Watch and others. Following this, we contributed to the formulation of a new design brief for this area, noting the need for improved connections between it and the CBD, and noting that quality development did not necessitate a “cram everything in to the maximum site limits” approach. New proposals from developers were called in December 2012 and the outcome, in a time of apparently reduced demand for new commercial space in the inner city, is still awaited.

Open Spaces

13. The open space of the harbour is a huge factor in Wellington's urban quality, as are the open spaces of land which overlook it. Chief of these is *The Town Belt*, originating from New Zealand Company days in 1839 with the commitment to it remaining open space in perpetuity for public enjoyment. Our submissions to the WCC's review of The Town Belt during the year emphasised the increasing value into the twenty-first century of those founding principles for the compact quality capital city which has grown from the small habitations of the early nineteenth. Hence we advocate no more leasing of Town Belt land, fewer buildings and the importance of public open access for general recreation as distinct from club-based organized sports. The fact that the Town Belt has, over the years, been nibbled away at by sale, lease, and public works strengthens the value of now reversing that trend.

14. The Civic Trust has long had an interest in the "Northern Gateway" and has since April 2012 had a specific interest in the reclamation around the outlet of the *Kaiwharawhara Stream*. The future of this remains tied up in the always-varying plans for rail, port and highway changes in this "throat" area. The reclamation once envisaged just as a site to stack containers, logs or old concrete has, more or less by chance, now become edged with trees. From a distance, it presents an attractive green foreground to the port and CBD at the very point where Wellington presents itself spectacularly to road and rail travelers approaching from the hills. Closer to the site, it offers a small beach for kayaks, conservation strips and recreation space at the end of a "green corridor" around from Zealandia and through Trelissick Park. We are convinced that a collective solution which meets both amenity and commercial needs is achievable, so long as all the parties can see mutual benefits and are prepared to work collectively, rather than competitively, towards them.

15. On the other side of the harbour – which in time will be reachable by the visionary *Great Harbour Way* cycle and walking path - the Miramar headland presents a new opportunity for imaginative urban landscape design, now that defence and prison needs for the site have gone. This is Wellington's "southern gateway" for those arriving by sea and by air. I would like to thank the Hon. Chris Finlayson, Minister for Culture & Heritage, for agreeing that the Civic Trust be represented on the Ministry's working group being set up to develop a new future for this open space.

Governance

16. Changes to the *Resource Management Act* and to the *Local Government Act* have been monitored and submissions made. These crucially affect the nature of local democratic decision-making and that is why we spend time on this.

17. The issues around whether or how the balance is changed between local and regional elected councils for providing services to the Wellington area continued through the year. Our 2012 AGM guest speaker John Shewan focused on this, and we have spent much effort of contributing to this debate under the leadership of convenor Blair Badcock. Our position is:

- i. the present set-up is not sustainable for our small 400,000 pop region

ii. Wellington is in competition for state attention and resources with Auckland and Christchurch in particular, and with Australian cities given global trends; small-time competition between public bodies within the region makes no sense.

iii. The ability to improve the present set-up by more “shared services” and by unenforceable ideas through the Mayoral Forum has been shown to be nebulous.

18. We considered this year running one of our regular public seminars on these issues, in an effort to extract the debate from self-interested public bodies and to expose it to a wider audience. However we were trumped by the excellent seminar organised by Victoria University’s Institute for Governance and Policy Studies, which we commended to members in our August 2012 newsletter.

Our own internal governance

19. The Civic Trust remains a wholly pro bono body, funded by members’ modest subscriptions and by voluntary work. It has been a privilege to work with such a fine Board and I thank retiring members Chris Watson, Brett Mackay, and Blair Badcock. The death so soon after last year’s Annual General Meeting, at which he was elected an Honorary Life Member, of long-time Trustee Peter Brooks continues to affect us as we grapple without the benefit of his prodigious corporate memory and attention to detail.

20. The Board agreed that, rather than getting trapped into becoming just a clearinghouse for submissions in response to agendas and timelines set by statutory bodies, we would emphasise a constructive role which casts the Civic Trust in a creative rather than a reactive light. This means not commenting on everything, but using good evidence to assert our core principles.

21. One big problem persists with the lack of anyone prepared to stand as Secretary. Some of the pragmatic work has been farmed around amongst others, but the lack is still a concern. This shows especially when we need to improve our communications with members, to maintain (largely digital) documentation and to ensure website currency, much of which work now has to be contracted out. Membership numbers have remained broadly stable, at 118; and it is sad to record the deaths of pioneer members Philip Alve and John King (John as Chairman of the Wellington Harbour Board was a great support in those early days), and of Jim Weir as well as of Peter Brooks. The financial position shown in the audited accounts shows modest reserves which preclude larger-scale activity.

Thanks

22. The reputation of the Wellington Civic Trust for considered impartiality, for well-researched statements and for its “holistic” approach to urban design quality is an asset which we cannot take for granted, but upon which we can build. I appreciate the good working relationships that Trustees have found at many levels within the City and Regional Councils, NZTA, KiwiRail and other Wellington entities. Similarly, our independence is helped by further building positive relationships with The Architectural Centre, with Waterfront Watch and with other organizations of all kinds working for the

good of Wellington. We are starting to explore some collective capacity with our Civic Trust counterparts in Auckland and Christchurch, and to make contacts with the quite differently-comparable Civic Trusts in Nelson and in Oamaru. The main thanks, apart from that to my fellow-Trustees on the Board (and to their families) go to the membership generally, and I hope we can do more to enlarge this.

Alan Smith, Chairman – May 2013.

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2013

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2013

1. **Description of the Trusts Activities** – see p.2
2. **Statement of Accounting Policy**

Reporting Entity

The Wellington Civic Trust is a Society Incorporated under the Charitable Trust Act 1957. It is an entity reporting in terms of the Financial Reporting Standards.

Differential Reporting

The Trust is a qualifying entity for differential reporting by the virtue of the fact that it has no accountability and it does not qualify as a large entity as defined in the Framework for Differential Reporting published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of New Zealand. It has taken advantage of all available differential reporting exemptions.

Measurement System

The accounting principles recognized as appropriate for the measurement and reporting of financial performance and financial position on a historical cost basis have been followed.

3. **Particular Accounting Policies**

Taxation

As the Trust has been granted charitable status by the Inland Revenue Department, no taxation has been provided for the financial statements.

Goods and Services Taxes

The Trust is not required to be registered for GST purposes and therefore the financial statements have been prepared stating all income and expenditure items inclusive of GST where applicable.

Changes in Accounting Policy

There have been no changes in accounting policy.

Remuneration of Trustees

The Trustees of Wellington Civic Trust receive no monetary or non-monetary remuneration from the Trust.

Stock in Hand

All stock in hand has been written off.

Wellington Civic Trust

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2013

Income	31 March 2012	March 2013
Subscription	\$ 2,870.00	\$3,030.00
Interest Received	\$ 170.86	\$ 114.35
Donations	\$ 75.22	\$ 150.00
Publication Sales	\$ 90.00	\$ 40.00
Seminars	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Other Incomes	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Total Income	\$3,206.08	\$ 3,334.35
Expenditure		
AGM Costs	\$ 874.74	\$ 658.90
Awards	\$ 902.30	\$ 0.00
Photocopying & Newsletters	\$ 2,545.12	\$ 63.25
Room Hire	\$ 510.00	\$ 500.01
Seminars	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Web Page	\$ 1,338.23	\$ 882.43
Stationery	\$ 658.41	\$ 0.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 437.97	\$ 297.89
Total Expenditure	\$7,266.77	\$ 2,402.48
Surplus/(deficit)	\$(4060.69)	\$ 931.87

Wellington Civic Trust

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2013

	31 March 2012	31 March 2013
Assets		
Cheque Account Balance	\$ 111.94	\$ 929.46
Online Account Balance	\$ 3,827.98	\$ 3,842.33
Liabilities	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Total Assets	\$ 3,939.92	\$ 4,871.79
Total Equity	\$3,939.92	\$ 4,871.79
Equity		
Total equity as at 1 April 2012	\$3,939.92	
Surplus/Deficit 31 March 2013	\$ 931.87	
Total Equity at Year End 2013	\$4,871.79	