

OBRA Submission to 2020 Annual Plan

Introduction

Wellington's South Coast is the raw edge of the innovative capital – known to be a little wild and a little eccentric but also highly innovative. It is the leading edge of Wellington when the wind turns to the South and it should be the leading edge for recovery and recycling.

OBRA agrees with the Draft Annual Plan's (AP) statement that the "role of Wellington City Council is to deliver services that support a well-functioning city" (page 4) and also the Annual Plan as a mechanism to support the building of a stronger Wellington to meet current and future challenges (page 8).



This submission covers the following aspects of the Annual Plan

1. **Investigation Process of the Ōwhiro Catchment + Roving crews**
2. **Digital Platform for Wellington Freshwater Super Catchments**
3. **Coastal Mitigation**
4. **Residents Associations and Democracy Project**
5. **Landfill**
6. **Recycling Precinct**

1. Investigation Process of the Ōwhiro Catchment + Roving crews

Ōwhiro Bay Residents Association welcomes the news that WCC has approved funding for the Roving Crews to investigate contamination in Wellington Waterways, commencing with the Ōwhiro Catchment. Councillor Sean Rush and Wellington Water CEO Colin Crampton have confirmed this at recent meetings and we look forward to this work commencing in the coming months.

OBRA have been invited by Wellington Water to help establish the requirements/parameters for the Roving Crews.

We believe Wellington City Council will need to provide significant financial resources to Wellington Water to ensure that the programme is professionally structured to achieve the following cycle of activity which to date has not been carried out systematically in any catchment:

1. Monitoring
2. Evaluation & Reporting
3. Investigation
4. Evaluation & Reporting
5. Remedying
6. Reporting

WCC and Wellington Water face rising expectations from both the community and its commitments under the National Policy Statement on Fresh Water. Wellington Water does not have a high level of expertise or adequate budget to undertake serious ongoing freshwater investigation and remediation of the kind that will significantly improve water quality in Wellington's catchment. The Ōwhiro Catchment, feeding into the Taputeranga Marine Reserve, will be the test case for whether Wellington City Council is serious about meeting its commitments. To do so, Wellington Water must be tasked and funded by WCC to undertake this work as part of a Catchment Management Plan developed in collaboration with the community.

2. Digital Platform for Wellington Freshwater Super Catchments

At a meeting between Wellington Water's Senior Management, led by CEO Colin Crampton, and the Owhiro Bay Residents Association on 28 May, it was agreed that Wellington Water would lead a project to create a significant digital platform for sharing information, including monitoring, investigations, surveys and plans, with the public.

The agreement is to use Owhiro Bay as the Beta test case and rapidly expand it to cover all of Wellington's super catchments. Wellington Water has traditionally been extremely poor at sharing data with the community and this has contributed to the health risks in bays and the appalling state of contamination in our streams.

WCC is ultimately responsible for this and needs to ensure Wellington Water is adequately tasked and funded to deliver a first class digital platform that has two primary audiences:

General public who need access to simple, clear information. This would involve Wellington Water aggregating data, presenting to the public in visually simple and interesting ways and ensuring it is distributed to both the web and social media, such as the community Facebook Page. LAWA's Baywatch site system is hugely misleading and a menace to public health and safety and needs to be addressed by WCC and GWRC.

Accurate, up-to-date information that will help people make decisions about whether it is safe to swim, ideally getting real time information to the public.

Stream and Marine ecologists, activists, etc:

Community groups increasingly use applications with analytical capability and are developing their own analysis.

Therefore we need:

Structured unit record data:

Machine readable data – raw operational data at a low level of granularity to develop our own insights, with all the associated metadata. This will cover all monitoring, investigating and reporting of the waterways and bays, including leachates, e-coli and an array of other data currently gathered by Wellington Water and its suppliers.

This is a significant project and needs to be appropriately funded.

3. Coastal Mitigation

In recent months, the Mayor, WCC Chief Executive and WCC's Chief Resilience Officer have all told coastal communities that "hard conversations have to be had" over rising sea levels, increasing frequency of over-topping storm events, and other threats posed by climate change. We are not aware of anything practical that WCC has done to address this challenge or what budget currently exists for this.

WCC needs to provide significant funding to prepare the city and coastal communities for these changes and to ensure our coastal homes, businesses, roading network, bridges and other infrastructure are protected to the degree possible.

Budget needs to be allocated not just for "consultation" but for active collaboration with communities who need to be adequately resourced/funded to take part in this process.

Communities need to be engaged immediately and be active partners as the city starts the process of risk mapping and planning. Funds need to be made available to assess the risks, identify the most vulnerable points on our coastlines, and develop science/fact-based responses to the upcoming events. Decisions need a high level of scientific expertise including from Metservice, Niwa and coastal engineering specialists.

We suggest a permanent, multi-agency taskforce, with community membership, be immediately formed to start this process.

4. Residents Associations and Democracy Project

Owhiro Bay Residents Association welcomes WCC commitment to establishing an integrated digital platform for individual Residents Associations and the Wellington Residents Associations Network.

The quality of OBRA's community engagement experience with the Wellington City Council, its officers and its operational partners has been variable and primarily reflects a mind-set that Council is 'expert' with a focus on 'educating the community'. Generally, engagement is characterised by reductionist patriarchal over tones that minimises citizen voice and knowledge. OBRA acknowledges the advocacy efforts of some Councillors to strengthen constituent voices, knowledge, and expertise. However, given the rash of inaccurate information and poor management we are cynical about the quality of the Council's assessments of costs and option. The Annual Plan is silent on funding allocation to strengthen community engagement practices within council. This can be achieved with minimal impact on financial resources.

5. Landfill

The current process of minimal rubbish recycling, and dumping of sewage sludge, as outlined in the Southern Landfill, (page 9) is an embarrassment to a City. The Council is completely out of alignment with its Community in terms of its commitment to environmental protection. Community groups, such as the 'Predator Free' programmes have worked tirelessly in their own time to reintroduce Kaka to city suburbs, but this is not matched by the Council who continues to dump sewage sludge in the landfill. Rather than minimise waste it has created an incentive to increase waste to match a growing population.

OBRA considers the Southern Landfill Extension an opportunity for Council to enhance and strengthen its community engagement methodology and systems. The Resource Recovery hub and work to minimise Wellington's waste, sludge transformation and reduction in need to maximise Southern Landfill Extension are opportunities for Council to develop practice excellence with community engagement.

OBRA proposes the Council uses a co-design methodology to develop the Resource Recovery hub. Co-design provides a strength-based partnership model that values all participants equally, engages people who have used and are end users of services/ product to inform process and design. Co-design values all participants equally for their own unique expertise. The bringing together of a more diverse range of expertise to the design process, a wider range of ideas are generated and more creatively explored.

When well done, co-design services meet needs more efficiently, effectively and sustainably. The mutual respect required by the process encourages a sense of collective ownership for the service models that emerge from it

6. Waste Diversion and Recycling Precinct

We also support the Waste Diversion Trial (page 9) and OBRA is keen to endorse the concept of bring the timeframe for the Resource Recovery Centre forward.

Our initial assessment is that the budget of \$200,000 is appropriate for the beginning of the transformation needed, but more funding should be applied in future years to ensure a transformation of refuse recycling that is appropriate for a Capital City known for both leading edge innovation and environmental concerns.

We also believe that the Business Plan should be widened to consider:

- A recycling retail centre which moves the emphasis from disposal imports to re-using good quality older products.
- Related recycling industries which could range from recycled timber to repurposed furniture.

Our conversations with other entities suggest that there is far greater potential than the Council may be considering. Our initial conversations around re-cycling schools at Massey suggests that there is a growing potential for this model.

We believe that the potential can involve both commercial activities (repair of appliances) through to community based ones such as 'Mens Sheds'. There is the potential for

- recycling retail centre/department store for much greater recycling – that is big enough to compete with bulk retail as a destination for shoppers.
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- University-led programme on recycling innovation which attracts Government funding for education and research.
- A visitor centre for schools
- A recycling 'incubator' with space for start up firms which are trailing new technology

Owhiro Bay already is home to innovative concepts like the Carlucci Land and Nautilus Art Space, which demonstrate world class recycling and innovation. Let's move from the drudgery of filling landfills to the innovation of recycling and reusing in a way which befit the 'coolest capital in the world.'

In conclusion

We are eager for the opportunity to present on these issues.

Responses can be made to:

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