

Submission on Draft 2020/21 Annual Plan

Restore Built Heritage Incentive Fund

Historic Places Wellington (“HPW”) calls for the Built Heritage Incentive Fund (“the Fund”) to be restored to its previous level of \$1million per year.

- The Fund is a critical infrastructure support fund which is carefully targeted to ensure maximum return for its relatively modest level of investment.
- The Fund is crucial to assisting with the costs of earthquake strengthening heritage buildings.
- Significant projects are underway with contributions for historic buildings such as the buildings at the corner of Tory St (Athenic, National Bank and Noosons), the Wesley and St John’s churches and the catholic basilica in Hill St.
- Excellent progress is being made by Council with major work on the Town Hall, St James Theatre, and the Basin Reserve cricket stand.
- Much still remains to be done to earthquake strengthen Wellington heritage buildings.
- The level of the Fund was reduced some years ago and must be increased.
- Include additional resource in the WCC Annual Plan for the Fund in order to meet the goals of “Tipu Toa, Build Back Better”.

Eco-City Heritage Buildings

2. The “greenest” buildings are those already existing, strengthened for restoration or re-purposing.

- The Fund assists with efforts to address the carbon emergency, and shift to an eco-city.
- Continue to support upgrades of the laneways which enhances pedestrian and cycle access to all city areas.

Extend Deadline for Strengthening

3. HPW calls on WCC to ask central government to extend the deadline under which Wellington buildings must be strengthened. Heritage property owners are under extraordinary post Covid-19 economic pressures and will need more time.

Strengthen the Central Library

4. Retain and strengthen the Central Library building in a cost effective project.

- The building forms an important element in the Civic Square heritage precinct but should be separately listed under the District Plan in its own right.
- The building was ahead of its time being designed for Wellingtonians to relax in a reflective “city living room”. The unique wave windows provide views toward the harbour and outdoor public space enjoyed during more than a million visits a year.
- The important heritage nature of the building should be recognised by HNZPT.
- Getting the building fixed and reopened is urgent for restoring the vibrant heritage precinct at the heart of the city.
- Urgently fund the expedited process to begin work on strengthening the existing library building.

Capital City Heritage Tourism

5. Support is needed for advocacy work to create a focus on capital city heritage. This would link with the compulsory teaching of Aotearoa/NZ history in schools. With international tourism uncertain, this work would focus on promoting capital city visits. A restored Turnbull House could complement visits to Parliament, National library, and the wooden old government building (law school).

Post Covid-19 Expenditure

6. HPW acknowledges the difficulties for many Wellingtonians at this time but supports Council leadership with fixing our city heritage buildings. It is not the precise level of rates which concerns us but the quality of the expenditure of that income in order to protect the built heritage fabric of our loved city.