

Historic Places Wellington oral submission on WCC's draft 2026/27 Annual Plan (budget); 18 May 2026. Presented by chairperson Felicity Wong

Kia Ora koutou, Only 26% of residents think the central city is lively and attractive. But 77% support heritage.

HPW seeks a City History & Tourism Regeneration Fund to support the maintenance of historic areas, community-led tourism, and retention & development of trade skills.

We ask for assistance to be given to building and property owners to encourage upgrades and maintenance to make the retrofitting of "buildings with history" more affordable than new builds.

We support retrofit & conservation and advocate for "repair and reuse" over demolition and deterioration.

HPW asks Council to prioritize the retrofit and reuse of old buildings to efficiently use expensive resources, support local employment, and reduce carbon emissions.

Adaptive re-use should be our city's default preference, over demolition and empty car parks.

Welcome news is that the historic Dixon St flats are on track for all 120 modernised and refurbished homes to be occupied by the end of the year.

A sad contrast is the carbon crime being committed by Te Herenga Waka VUW's demolition of the 80-unit Gordon Wilson Flats by not simply removing its tatty heavy facade and replacing it with a light weight glass frontage. The remaining 80% of the building is not earthquake prone. The enormous amount of embodied carbon in its sturdy concrete skeleton is instead going to the landfill.

We want a strengthening of local planning rules to prioritize adaptive reuse and protection of areas with history.

We view those places as drivers for local economic regeneration, civic pride, and sustainable development. We ask you to retain heritage funding in the budget.

We support right-sizing our city plans & budget. Focus on renewals and maintenance not upgrades in the city's enormous transport budget.

January's Transport Report used misleading stats for 25% population growth for Wellington City. We actually have 2000 fewer people now than in 2018. Don't accept flights of fantasy. A sensible approach is a "maintenance mode" of renewals, at least until we pay down the city's crushing debt.

Statement re Courtenay Place Heritage Area:

... HPW supports policy HH-P12 of the Wellington District Plan which requires “the height of development within heritage areas to recognise and respect their unique form and scale in the City Centre Zone.” etc