

Post Designation Case Study- Wellington

Safe Communities Foundation NZ, November 2007

On the 14th June 2006, Wellington City was officially declared a 'Safe Community' by SCFNZ on behalf of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion, thereby becoming the 100th place in the world to gain such recognition. Wellington City was the fifth community in New Zealand and currently the only capital city in the world to hold this prestigious award. The accreditation as a Safe Community, within the WHO Safe Community Network, was the result of years of collaborative partnerships and coordination which have been successfully established between the Wellington City Council, the ACC, the NZ Police and the Capital and Coast District Health Board (CCDHB). These organisations have successfully worked in many areas of injury and crime prevention to reduce the injury and violence burden and improve overall perceptions of community safety. The designation ceremony was a wonderful celebration of what had been achieved and Wellington City is to be congratulated in the way they promoted their achievement through the media. The work and enthusiasm of the WCC Manager City Safety Laurie Gabites contributed greatly to this achievement.

Since designation, Wellington City, has actively promoted the Safe Community model and Wellington City's journey towards accreditation, at Council Community forums throughout New Zealand including Dunedin, Selwyn, Wairarapa, Hamilton, Christchurch and North Shore. This has been particularly appreciated by councils contemplating working towards Safe Community accreditation. In addition Mr Gabites has been appointed a trustee of the Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand (SCFNZ) and in this role has provided strategic advice and support to the work of the SCFNZ.

Post designation, partners in Safe City Wellington are continuing to collaborate on projects with a particular emphasis on integrating violence/crime prevention with wider community issues. In August 2006 a key meeting of key stakeholders was held to consider how safety would be better managed in Wellington City. It was the first meeting of key collaborators Police, ACC, Capital and Coast District Health Board (CCDHB), Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Regional Public Health, Council

Business Units (City Safety, Safer Roads, Public Health, City Communities and Research and Evaluation) since the designation of Wellington as a Safe City. This Safety Advisory Group meeting provided a great opportunity to think strategically and develop policies and governance for the way Wellington City is going to work in the future. As a group of internal business units and external partners they identified alcohol as a significant contributor to violence, injury and crashes involving pedestrians. The group using an evidence-based approach to project planning also identified the worst times for incidents was between 1am and 6am and that most incidents happened in the entertainment precinct known as the Courtenay Quarter. This information led the group to consider a specific campaign aimed at personal safety especially in the lead up to Christmas as December traditionally is a time when there are more people about and generally a higher alcohol consumption which can make the central city a riskier place to be.

Working across the partners and addressing a range of issues the key partners produced material that supported safe practice, safe transport and remaining safe in Wellington City. This was then extended to all big events such as the Rugby Sevens, Student Orientation, Cuba Street Carnival and other festivals when personal safety is especially challenging. This includes everything from advertising to tangible actions such as having more Walkwise officers out on the streets, sponsored giveaways for safe activity in the city, letting people know when the last bus or train leaves, supervised youth events, a central city liquor ban, closed circuit surveillance in the Te Aro area of central Wellington with cameras monitored by the Walkwise City Safety Officers who have radio contact with the police, and issuing safety information on 'safe city' cards. Support also came from local businesses such as Wellington Combined Taxis, Stagecoach, and Burger King and safety messages were promoted using posters, billboards and radio and newspaper advertising.

As a consequence of this innovative collaborative initiative Safe City Wellington's 'Stay Safe in the City' campaign won the category two 'Outstanding community safety and/or injury prevention initiative or programme' at the 2007 New Zealand Community Safety and Injury Prevention Awards. At the Award Ceremony the WCC's 'Stay Safe in

the City' was congratulated on the way it had "demonstrated an ongoing commitment to safety and made Wellingtonians more aware of how they can protect themselves and their friends". As a result of this campaign surveys showed the safety message had reached Wellingtonians as approximately 70% of the public and 84% of students when asked said that they were now more aware of staying safe.

In addition to participating in the national awards, the council also annually recognises "people and organisations in the community that have shown bravery and courage, dedication and passion, outstanding community spirit and outstanding public duty to keep Wellington and its citizens safe". In promoting these local awards this year Mayor Prendergast said "Wellington is a WHO Safe Community and maintaining and retaining that prestigious title continues to be a priority for us. Safety is a community issue and everyone has a role to play in keeping our citizens safe".

As well as 'Stay Safe in the City', post designation activities in Wellington City have included:

- Walkwise City Safety Officers continuing their role of identifying hazards in and around the city assisted by ACC providing health and safety training and refresher training;
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) being a key consideration in all council planning and project development;
- Participation in the Sports Accreditation Programme targeting sports clubs in the city;
- WCC working with ALAC, ACC, Sport Wellington, Police, Liquor Liaison Group and the Trinity Group to pilot a project focussing on hazard management where alcohol and the management of patrons will be addressed as key hazards;
- City Council Business Units working with key providers/stakeholders to reduce alcohol supply to youth;
- The Roding, Traffic Business Unit of the WCC working with Police, LTNZ and CCDHB targeting areas in the city where there has been the highest number of crashes, impacting on hospitalisations. This has included reducing the speed limit around schools;
- Including ACC home safety checklist/safety information in all

WCC housing tenant packs and ACC providing safety education and safety devices to low-income/at-risk families with children under five years and people over 65 years;

- Encouraging and promoting hazard management and other injury prevention initiatives to residential builders through the WCC Building Consents Licensing Services Business unit;
- ACC and WCC working towards developing a programme of projects focussing on safety in Wellington City;
- ACC working on initiatives to reduce falls in children under five and older persons, and promoting health and well-being in Pacific Island communities; and
- *Swim for Life* supported by the WCC. The purpose of Swim for Life is that every New Zealand child by the age of twelve should be able to swim 200 metres confidently and competently with associated survival skills and water safety knowledge. Swim for Life is a marketing initiative managed by Water Safety New Zealand in partnership with the Swim Coaches' and Teachers' Association of New Zealand and the New Zealand Recreation Association.

"Wellington City Council's signing is another huge step for the initiative taking the total number of facilities involved to 187 across New Zealand".

A 2007 National Quality of Life Survey conducted by TNS Research Company in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development, rated Wellington City as the highest among the country's 12 largest centres in terms of safety. Wellington takes first place among the cities in terms of the number of residents rating their quality of life as good or extremely good. Almost all Wellingtonians surveyed felt safe in their home and in the city.

In conclusion, Wellington City is to be congratulated on the way that it continues to support the Safe Communities movement by: its ongoing promotion of safe environments for residents and visitors to Wellington; its participation in the Safe City Wellington's Safety Advisory Group; its physical presence at forums to support other communities on their journey towards accreditation; the adoption of an evidence based approach; the promotion of their WHO Safe Communities status on their web site and the way that this is linked to all their safety activities. However, as information sharing

is an important part of belonging to the Safe Community movement Safe City Wellington could consider developing a newsletter to provide an opportunity for all organisations involved to share their activities and successes. Post designation, WCC has continued to ensure that safety is a priority and has provided great leadership on the opportunities that a broad approach to safety that covers violence, road safety and injury prevention can achieve. Safety is a major contributor to how residents and visitors perceive Wellington City as a good place to live in or visit. The support provided by the Wellington City Council is exceptional and has certainly contributed to improvements in community safety in Wellington.