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| Speak Up - Kōrerotia  20 January 2016  **Christchurch: An accessible city?** | |
| Male | This programme was first broadcast on Canterbury’s community access radio station Plains FM 96.9 and was made with the assistance of New Zealand on Air. |
| Female | Coming up next conversations on human rights with “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”, here on Plains FM. |
| Sally | E ngā mana,  E ngā reo,  E ngā hau e whā  Tēnā koutou katoa  Nau mai ki tēnei hōtaka: “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”.    Join the New Zealand Human Rights Commission as it engages in conversations around diversity in our country. Tune in as our guests “Speak Up”, sharing their unique and powerful experiences and opinions... May you also be inspired to “Speak Up” when the moment is right.  Nau mai haere ma ki tēnei hōtaka: “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”. I am Sally Carlton with the Human Rights Commission in Christchurch. Today we’re talking about accessibility in a Christchurch rebuild. It’s been five years now since the earthquake and how are we doing? Accessibility is one of the key themes to come out of Share an Idea; it’s been picked up in Christchurch City Council documents; in documents of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - but what does it actually mean? It tends to be interpreted in these documents as primarily transport, cycle ways and things like that. Last month it was the International Day of People with Disability and we’re going to be thinking about what does accessibility mean through a different lens perhaps?  On the phone we’ve got Erin Gough from the Human Rights Commission in Wellington. Erin, how are you? |
| Erin | Hi, good thanks Sally, how are you? |
| Sally | Well thank you. Could you tell us a little bit about what you do within the Commission? |
| Erin | So I work in the Disability Rights Team, in the Policy and Advocacy team more widely, so I work on a wide range of disability rights issues including inclusive education, bioethical issues and also supported decision making alongside another colleague and Disability Rights Commissioner Paul Gibson. |
| Sally | Cool thanks and we are specifically interested today to hear from you about, what is the International Day of People with Disability? When was it established? What’s its aim? Those sorts of things. |
| Erin | Sure, so the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, or IDPD as it is also known, has been sort of going on since 1992 - so 23 years now. And its aim is to promote awareness and mobilise support for issues relating to the inclusion of people with disabilities in society. So the Day kind of works to promote action, to raise awareness about disability issues and draw attention to the benefits of an inclusive and accessibile society for all. Every year, the day has a theme that the UN sets; so this year the theme was, in 2015, “Inclusion Matters, Access and Empowerment for People of all Abilities.” |
| Sally | Which works very well with the topic for today. |
| Erin | Yes indeed. |
| Sally | Erin when you’re thinking about accessibility, what does it mean for you? |
| Erin | Accessibility for me means a number of things really. It means being able to get around independently. I use a wheelchair and so I obviously have accessibility requirements that I need to be able to get into buildings so either have a flat entrance or a ramp. But it also means wider than that. Sort of being included in all aspects of society, people’s attitudes being open minded towards disability and just really seeing the benefits that people with disabilities can bring to the world rather than having any negative assumptions or any misconceptions about it. |
| Sally | Fantastic. Erin you’ve recently moved to Wellington from Christchurch, how did you find it living in Christchurch and living in a wheelchair as well? |
| Erin | So, I moved to Wellington about three months ago now and before that I was living in Christchurch for the past 15 years so it’s really home for me and obviously during that time I’ve lived through the earthquakes as well. I found Christchurch a really interesting place to be, obviously the rebuild has been an amazing opportunity to rebuild in a way that’s never been done before and that includes accessibility. I involve myself quite strongly with advocacy groups who did advocate, especially from a youth perspective, for innovation and that kind of included accessibility and I think there has been some really great successes in that and some work that still needs to be done. But I found Christchurch a really interesting innovative place to be and I can’t wait, now that I’m outside of Christchurch, to go back and see the progress that’s happened there. |
| Sally | Yes I wonder… It’ll be interesting, won’t it, because in many ways it’s very, very slow the progress. |
| Erin | Yes it is slow and that’s what I did notice when I lived there but it will just be interesting to see whether I feel the same way after I’ve been away a while or whether I notice some things that have happened because I know when people… When I used to live in Christchurch, when people used to come over after not being there for a while, they did notice some progress had been made. So it will be interesting to see if I feel the same way. |
| Sally | Yes definitely and we’ll continue with this idea of accessibility in Christchurch coming up, but Erin I wanted to ask you a couple more questions about the International Day of People with Disabilities and what the Human Rights Commission did, at the end of 2015, to promote it. |
| Erin | So essentially we first looked at what was going on for IDPD 2015 and we couldn’t really find any sort of coordinated national campaign. There were pockets of events here and there but nothing sort of national and so we decided to do something small ourselves. And so what we decided to do was send out orange-coloured wristbands with the words *“Inclusion Matters”* which was the theme for last year and also December the 3rd which was the date. And so this was just really a way of getting people to engage with the idea of the day, having sort of a symbol of pride and solidarity and sort of coordinating some kind of national effort. |
| Sally | Do you have a sense of how that went? How many wristbands you produced or I know you also encouraged people to have orange-themed morning teas which takes a little bit of lateral thinking. |
| Erin | Yes so the colour orange, just to give you a bit of background, was chosen because the Australian Government, who does quite a lot around the day, adopted it as its colour of inclusion. So we kind of took that on as well so that’s where the orange idea came from. In terms of the impact, there was a very high demand for the wristbands which was great to see. We sent out, in the end, about 6500 and originally we’d only ordered 5000 so we had to order more part way through the campaign. Within that there was about 30 different organisations involved and we got a lot of requests from individuals as well so there was a strong interest in the campaign in kind of having that symbol of unity and solidarity. And also there were many workplaces, schools and different organisations that held morning teas and we had some great pictures come through of creative foods that people had made with the colour orange. That’s been awesome. |
| Sally | You mentioned there were 30 organisations that had been involved, were they mainly disability rights organisations or different kinds of organisations as well? |
| Erin | So there was a real mix of them really. Some of them were disability-focused so service agencies like CCS and IHC. |
| Sally | Could you just maybe tell us what those mean for people who don’t know? |
| Erin | Sorry. CCS Disability Action is an organisation which serves disabled people across the country and gives them a range of support from really when they are young until right through to being retirement age and then IHC is for people with intellectual impairment so they support them to live independently in the community. And then there was also disabled persons organisations; so, organisations run by and for disabled people such as People First which is the people with learning disability and DPA, Disabled Persons Assembly which is kind of a cross-disability national disabled persons organisation. And then there was also… yeah, there was schools who became involved. Some of them were disability-focused, so there was one school who specifically is focused on blind and vision-impaired students who became involved and one school who is focused on students with cerebral palsy which is a physical impairment who became involved as well. And then there were a few local businesses who became involved, which was quite cool. Like, there’s a hotel here in Wellington called CQ and they pride themselves on sort of being the most accessible hotel around and they requested a wristband for each of their staff members to wear so that was awesome. |
| Sally | Fantastic, it’s nice to see these different groups getting involved. |
| Erin | Definitely. It was good to see interest from a wide range of people as well. |
| Sally | Erin we’re probably out of time unfortunately but you’ve chosen a song for us today, ‘Long White Cloud’. If you could maybe explain why you chose it please? |
| Erin | Yes so ‘Long White Cloud’… I heard on the day at the Attitude Awards and it was a song created for Disability Day and also for the Rio Paralympics next year as an anthem for disabled people to kind of promote that idea of pride, solidarity and unity. So I think it’s a really cool song and I hope you enjoy it. |
| Sally | And just for people who are not aware, what are the Attitude Awards? |
| Erin | So they are a disability-focused event that happens every year around International Day of Persons with Disabilities and it sort of is just to promote the achievements and celebrate the lives of disabled people. |
| Sally | Thank you very much Erin, and here’s ‘Long White Cloud’. |
|  | **MUSIC – LONG WHITE CLOUD BY SHAPESHIFTER** |
| Sally | Welcome back to “Speak Up” – “Korerotia,” here on Plains FM 96.9. Now we’ve just been speaking with Erin Gough up in Wellington and we’re down in the studio now in Christchurch with some different guests. We’ve got Lorraine Guthrie from Barriers Free Trust, Ruth Jones from the Earthquake Disability Leadership Group and John Bourke who is doing a PhD at the University of Canterbury. If you could all please introduce yourselves and tell us a little bit more about your work and how it relates to this theme of accessibility. |
| Ruth | Kia ora, thank you. My name is Ruth Jones, as you said, and I’m one of the co-founders for the Earthquake Disability Leadership Group or EDLG Christchurch for Every Body. We were formed really to ensure that there’s a disability voice in the recovery and rebuild of Christchurch and as we’ve gone on from 2011 until now our focused has changed. But really we’re just really promoting an accessible city that everybody can use. |
| Sally | Ruth when you say “every body”, is that a deliberate pause? |
| Ruth | Yes, so two words, all capitalised and all really important because I think as a person with lived experience of disability I want to be included in my city but I can’t ask for inclusion unless I am sure that everybody else is as well. |
| Sally | Lorraine? How about you? |
| Lorraine | So I’m Lorraine, I’ve been with Barrier Free New Zealand Trust for many years now and the trust has been around for over 20 years. And really the trust was developed to try and educate and get information about how to create a built environment that is accessible and without barriers. So we have a few key areas that we do that. Education. So we’ve been educating the architects, designers, building consent officers and so forth for quite a long time and more recently we’ve really got into providing a lot more technical information in a way that people will listen so we provide that to architects in a way that they want to hear we hope and then we provide the same sort of information in a whole sort of variety of different ways, so that’s guidance documents, checklists and so forth. We also advocate for a built environment and for the Human Rights Act and the Building Act to meet together so that anyone using the environment can do so the same as everybody else. So that’s us. |
| Sally | Thank you. And John? |
| John | Hi there. I’m a wheelchair user myself, so like Ruth have lived experience of appreciating accessible environments and not appreciating inaccessible environments. And I am doing my PhD at the University of Canterbury which is just looking at how one section of the disability community, people who use wheelchairs, are experiencing the recovery of Christchurch in the four to five years following the earthquake. There’s quite a lot of literature about how disability communities get on in the short term period following a natural disaster but very little literature that looks at the long time impact, so we had a quite a good opportunity to explore that phenomenon in the current context of Christchurch. |
| Sally | And have you decided or have you got to the stage now of drawing any conclusions or any findings? |
| John | Yes we’re about two-thirds of the way through the research and the first stage of the research interviewed 13 people who use wheelchairs and that was subject to a thematic analysis so we came out with five key patterns of that data and that’s informed a survey which we are currently administering to a larger sample of wheelchair users. So hopefully we should kind of have the robust findings all together in 2016 but at the moment we’re getting quite an insight into how people are experiencing community inclusion in Christchurch as it rebuilds. |
| Sally | Great thank you John. Now I guess to kick start this conversation it might be really important to think about what is actually accessibility and I think there are a lot of different ways people interpret this so maybe we’ll begin with that. |
| Ruth | I was thinking about accessibility and the really simple way that I can say it is, that as a wheelchair user and a person with a disability, I want to be able to get the milk from my dairy, I want to be able to go to events without having to worry about where the accessible facilities are. But really for me, access is about being able to travel to a building, access a building in the same way that other people do so rather than through the backdoor and being able to use the building well and for me to do all of that stuff means that I can contribute, I can shop, I can spend my money, I can do a whole heap of things in the city. I can be part of the city if I am able to access it in all its forms. So for me that’s what accessibility is but I mean I always think of the simplest example, which is I want to go down to get something from around the corner if I need to. |
| Lorraine | So I suppose for the Trust we talk about the accessible journey and just like Ruth said, it’s the journey to, through and from wherever you want to go, in the same pathway as anyone that you happen to be with. So it’s really quite simple and it’s a basic right really. |
| Sally | I liked what you said before about the Human Rights Act and the Building Act coming together, I think that’s very important. |
| Lorraine | Yes. |
| Sally | And John, anything to add? |
| John | Yeah just what Lorraine and Ruth have said is my view as well. Just doing the small things like having the opportunity to go down to the dairy and get the milk without having, like Ruth said, to go through the side door or round the back of the building, having the opportunity to do things on an equal basis as all other citizens whether that’s practical accessibility or social and attitude accessibility as well. |
| Sally | What exactly do you mean when you say social and attitude accessibility? |
| John | Well I think physical accessibility doesn’t exist in a vacuum, it’s inevitably tied to attitudes and how we value accessibility and inclusion of all citizens in society. And it stems from politics and economic models of society and how we view people with disabilities and things like that as well. So I think it’s all connected. And as Lorraine was saying, it’s the Building Act and the Human Rights Act and the New Zealand Disability Strategy… It’s a big old complex world but as Ruth said it’s good to keep it simple and if you can just access things with the people you want to access things with, that’s a good measure of accessibility. |
| Sally | Well put. When we’re thinking about this idea of accessibility, there are untold benefits really, aren’t there, in terms of building buildings to be, for example, wheelchair accessible. Lorraine you may be a good person to talk to this but what are the benefits that come with these accessible buildings? |
| Lorraine | I can’t help but reflect on various meetings that we’ve been to, Ruth will remember a lot. So if you go along and you are talking about education or you are going along and talking about work and making sure that persons with disabilities or any impairment can actually participate, the discussion goes round and round and round and then ends up that: if the physical environment isn’t accessible, all the things that go on inside creates exclusion.So for me, accessibility starts with the built environment and the public places and spaces as well because all those other things sort of follow on - so employment; whether it’s the right to education; where you want to be - it all comes back to: we have to make the built environment accessible so we don’t even have to think about who can and can’t get into an education facility, that sort of thing. |
| Sally | And I think as well, we always think about the population in New Zealand and other places is aging so it’s not just people today we need to be building for but down the line as well. |
| Lorraine | Yes exactly. |
| Ruth | And everyone will experience a temporary or permanent impairment at some stage in their life so we’re looking at the whole community really and I think that’s what the important message to get across is that everybody will need the city to be accessible. |
| Sally | We’re just going to have our first break now, we’re listening to a song that you’ve chosen, John. Could you maybe tell us why you chose this one? |
| John | This song is by an Australian singer called Courtney Barnett and I think there’s a lot of Australian artists who are quite good at telling stories. It’s a little bit tongue in cheek this song, she’s singing about trying to buy a house as a young person and how she’s getting pushed into the outer suburbs of Melbourne and I think it kind of reflects to New Zealand as well and specifically Christchurch how there’s so many suburbs popping up on the outside of the city and that’s all well and good but if we don’t invest in infrastructure and make them accessible so that communities can flourish and interact it actually can be - as the song says - a little bit depressing. I’ll leave it there. |
| Sally | Great so here’s ‘Depreston’ by Courtney Barnett. |
|  | **MUSIC – DEPRESTON BY COURTNEY BARNETT** |
| Sally | Welcome back to Speak Up – Korerotia. I’m Sally Carlton, your host from the Human Rights Commission. We’re here with Lorraine Guthrie from Barriers Free Trust, Ruth Jones from Earthquake Disability Leadership Group and John Bourke who is doing a PhD on accessibility in Christchurch and what we’re talking about it is what is accessibility and what is accessibility in this rebuilding city and I guess how can we focus it on Christchurch? What is it about Christchurch and the opportunities that Christchurch provides? And Lorraine you were mentioning that building for accessibility is both an opportunity and an obligation and that might be a good place to start. |
| Lorraine | OK well as we talked before about bringing the Building Act and the Human Rights Act together so that it’s one and there are… there’s some sort of conflict between them around the accessible journey. So for us, we see Christchurch as an opportunity to prove that an accessible city can be built because too often we hear you can’t do this when you’re retrofitting something or you’re building it there’s always reasons around the actual environment where the building is. So from Barrier Free NZ Trust’s point of view, and working with the EDLG it’s about: here’s an opportunity to prove that it can happen, get on board, the rest of the country. |
| Ruth | Look I just agree with that, I think this is a unique time or opportunity for Government and the City Council but also to say what people and our allies to be asking for more, exporting more and supporting good access, good buildings when they occur. I think that’s the other piece, I think that we can push for good design and congratulate those who do it. |
| Sally | Do you see that happening now? The good design and also the congratulations? |
| Ruth | I see elements and I see people who are trying and have the best of intent and often I think the Barrier Free Trust can help massively with this, often just need help in terms of how to do it That would be fair to say, eh Lorraine? |
| Lorraine | And I think we should congratulate the CCDU [Christchurch Central Development Unit] who actually committed to including an access auditing process throughout from concept design right through to construction. So they committed to that, they promised us that they would do it and now they followed through and now we’re just putting pressure on Christchurch City Council, now that they’re taking over, to do the same thing because they said they were going to create an accessible city and they’re certainly trying very hard. We’re just so rapt with the likes of Don Miskell and people, aren’t we? |
| Sally | Just to clear it up for people who might not be aware, the CCDU is the Central City Development Unit, which is a part of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority. And was it something that they had mandated, they wanted external auditing for their accessibility? |
| Lorraine | With a bit of pressure from all of us, yes they agreed that that’s what they wanted to do because Christchurch people had said that they wanted an accessible city and they knew that that would be the way to do it. |
| Sally | And so Barriers Free Trust has been auditing these buildings? |
| Lorraine | The plans and obviously as it goes through construction as well. Yes. |
| Ruth | And for example with the Metro Sports Facility there’s a group of people who are working to think about how some of the facilities can be made accessible. If they’re looking in an innovative, fun sort of place, we want to make sure that everybody can use it but often it’s more than… the Building Code absolutely and Act and stuff and it’s thinking about: how do we create this environment so that it’s fun as well? |
| Lorraine | And useable. |
| Ruth | Yes. |
| Sally | And I guess I’m also thinking about the sort of sports facilities for example. How might it look… an accessible sports facility, what are the criteria or the innovations that might be implemented? |
| Ruth | I’m just going to answer this quickly because I’m sure Lorraine would know more than me, but as a disabled person I would see myself in there, not just in my togs but a whole lot of people using it who I recognise with different impairments. That’s how I would judge the accessibility of sports facilities. So there’s people using the courts, different people in the specialised water sensory, multi-sensory experience part of it for disabled people but also just using the whole building and enjoying the whole building. So coming in and out of the dressing rooms easily and looking dry or looking wet depending where you’re going but not having to be concerned about how they navigate that building. Navigating it, like Lorraine said, without needing to think about it too much. But Lorraine will know all that technical stuff. |
| Lorraine | Or without having to have someone help, it’s all about independent access as well, isn’t it? So we’ve actually written a guide with Sport NZ which is quite extensive so to be able to sort of list off all the things that it would require, there are quite a lot and so the process really of…they’ve committed as well with Metro Sport, of looking at what the door widths need to be right through to little things, it’s quite a major exercise and it really needs a group - whether it’s us or someone else - to actually go through that and collaborate with the other disability groups as well to make sure that their user needs are incorporated within whatever that looks like, because a wheelchair user may have different needs to a visually impaired person. So it’s a technical task that requires a technical expert. |
| Sally | John are you getting a sense from the people you’ve been speaking with, for example, about what they’d like to be seeing in their city? |
| John | Yes, a lot of the participants we’ve spoken to just echo some of the things you’ve been raising there about how this is such a unique opportunity in the sense that trying to make traditional buildings that are inaccessible accessible is quite a challenge, a physical challenge and economic challenge and a local government policy challenge - but when you have an instance when a city is literally being bulldozed, flattened and rebuilt, this pretty much never happens especially in western cities so the opportunity here is just one I think that really needs to really be taken and a lot of the participants in my research have all echoed that view really. |
| Sally | And what would they like to be seeing? What’s the vision? |
| John | Just the same thing as Lorraine and Ruth have been talking about there in the sports facilities, just having buildings and infrastructure around the central city that make it so they can access places without sort of needing additional help. Or, say if they were going into a sports facility, so they could get through the door without having to ask someone to open it or get into the changing rooms as Ruth said before. And also like Lorraine said, even though my participants use wheelchairs, it’s other sections of the disability community like people with vision impairments or hearing impairments, having buildings that are accessible for people with a variety of impairments as well just so they can… I suppose that the city embraces the diverse nature of disability as well and that everyone has equal opportunity. |
| Sally | Wouldn’t that be nice? |
| John | It would. |
| Sally | John, you mentioned at some point there’s an economic opportunity. Do any of you have a sense of the kind of the cost, the economic costs, of building something for accessibility and new versus retrofitting for accessibility down the line? |
| Lorraine | I don’t have the actual figures but I know [inaudible] might have some figures around accessible homes but the general feeling is if you’re building a new building and you for example do your door widths wider, you put in a lift, your corridors are wider, all sorts of things like that It’s minimal cost with huge benefit in terms of future-proofing your building. |
| Sally | Ok well we might have another break and we’re going to listen to an interview I did just before with Becky Watson. |
| Sally | So I’m here with Becky Watson who is a nineteen year old singer/songwriter based here in Christchurch, and we’re going to be playing her song ‘Roots’ in just a minute but, Becky, before we play it, could you please tell us what does the song mean? |
| Becky | Well the song is something that came from some thoughts on a plane ride back into Christchurch and I was just kind of looking over New Zealand and we have these amazing big landscapes and mountains and when we were flying into Christchurch I was like, ‘Man, this place is quite small and it’s very neat with all the Canterbury Plains all lined up’, um, but it’s just the place I call home, and the place that sits in my heart, and so I just wanted to create a song that encapsulates that and hopefully stirs up those feelings in other people as well. |
| Sally | I think it definitely does actually. And Becky, if we’re thinking about Christchurch, and Christchurch being your home, what would you like to see as we move forward with the rebuild? |
| Becky | Well, I’d love to see it be a place that continues to express creativity and a place that everyone can feel that they can play their part, and um, be able to express who they are, and be able to access different areas and different things that can help them show who they are, and put their voice into what their city is as it continues to grow and develop. |
| Sally | Awesome, so this is ‘Roots’. |
|  | **MUSIC – ‘Roots’, BECKY WATSON** |
| Sally | Nau mai haere mai, welcome back to Speak Up – Korerotia, here on Plains FM 96.9. We’re with Lorraine, Ruth and John speaking about accessibility in Christchurch and we’re going to think about as we finish up the segment, how are accessibility and inclusion linked and what are the sort of the other barriers, not just the physical barriers but the other barriers that are broken down by building for accessibility? And John we might start with you talking about some of the results that you’ve been finding out from people in your studies. |
| John | We identified around five themes with our initial 13 interviews and they stand alone as individual themes but they’re also inevitably connected to one another.  And the first theme was that the earthquakes has magnified pre-existing barriers so what participants were referring to there, was there were all these barriers prior to the earthquakes, barriers to inclusion and accessibility such as roads and footpaths and inaccessible buildings and trouble finding accessible housing. And following the earthquakes these things were just magnified, so it was even harder to find an accessible house or it was harder to negotiate footpaths and roads, it was harder to get into buildings and things like that.  And that led to the second pattern or the second theme which was that inaccessibility is exhausting. It’s physically exhausting and it’s emotionally and psychologically exhausting. As one participant said to me, every time she left the house she had to think not “Can I do this?” but “Have I got the energy to do this today?” I think Ruth referred to it earlier in the piece, how you always have to think about, can I get in there or do I have to go down the side? So it’s not only that physical inaccessibility but it’s a psychological inaccessibility, it’s exhausting.  And that in turn is connected to the third theme – how important social connections are. Not only for enabling access through helping people who might need help accessing buildings - which they probably wouldn’t need if things were accessible in the first place - but also accessible environments facilitate social connections and social engagement. So people, if they have an accessible environment, can meet their friends for coffee or engage in employment or engage in educational opportunities and that contributes to peoples’ wellbeing, as Ruth said in the break, and Lorraine. Canterbury needs anything that can facilitate the wellbeing of our communities. So an accessible environment does that, as referred to by the participants in my work.  The fourth theme was all participants referred to, as I mentioned earlier, how they see this as a huge opportunity, a huge opportunity to actually eliminate those pre- and post-earthquake barriers that I referred to and subsequently the energy it takes to negotiate those barriers. If we can eliminate that, people can actually focus on other aspects of their life and identity, not their disability or their impairment which at the moment an inaccessible environment takes up a lot of their time.  Finally, the last theme we named: is accessibility a private choice or a public right? And what we were referring to there is whether or not accessibility is something that private developers or people who are building the buildings just have to adhere to what minimum requirement of the legislation, or is it a moral and ethical issue of what we should do for our fellow citizens in society? And so we don’t have an answer for that, it’s just a debate and something that needs to be brought up. |
| Sally | I was just going to ask you did you have an answer, shame! |
| John | No, no we don’t. Ideally it would be fantastic if everyone subscribed to the idea that we have a moral obligation to make society as accessible for all members of our community as we can. The reality is that it’s a very complex thing and economics inevitably comes into that. But I think my personal opinion is that if we make society accessible it actually benefits not only in a social context but also an economic context. I was just reading this morning that some research out of Australia by Simon Darcy who explores accessible tourism found out that between 10% and 17% of the Australian tourism market comes from disabled tourism and by the end of 2030 around a quarter of the population will be in the - what’s the polite way to put it?- middle-aged to late-aged cohort, and the disabled sector of our population is only going to increase. So I think it’s beneficial to all of the community to make an accessible environment now. |
| Sally | Do either of you have comments to add on this idea of connectivity and links between physical and social accessibility and wellbeing particularly? |
| Lorraine | I think if you relate it to Canterbury in particular, because of the earthquakes and the impact of the earthquakes on people in Canterbury, we talk about eliminating barriers but we actually have to design in a way that will actually create an environment where people can get well again. So we were exploring, if you’ve got a multi-storey car park, how can you actually design that and looking at the landscape, we’ve got a landscape designer so that it’s a really well place to be in rather than a depressing place? And it’s sort of a way of looking at things - not just about eliminating but about creating. And I think that with Christchurch… Because Cantabrians… we need to work towards the wellbeing of the people as well as the building so I sort of see that as an opportunity and that’s about inclusion and wellbeing and getting us better than we were before. |
| Ruth | And I think the people that support us - and that includes staff and lots of people that support us - are also getting better. So I know lots of examples so we support people themselves who have been anxious about moving around the city so if they’re supporting disabled people to move around the city then they’re already experience anxiety and trepidation about that, it’s going to be a lot harder. The other thing I was just going to say was that families are a really important part, because disabled people come with lots of people, like we all do whether we like them or not at Christmas or in the new year. So we come with kids and sisters and brothers and partners and all the rest of it and we want those guys to experience what we experience and what we experience to be the norm. So I think that, yeah, let’s not just have it for one portion of the community but as Lorraine is saying, let’s have it for all of us. Because if all of us can enjoy Christchurch then disabled people will be part of that anyway. |
| Sally | I heard a really nice story the other day, I ran into Sally from Gap Filler and she was talking about how they’ve made their Dance-O-Mat wheelchair accessible and that’s such a good example of something that’s very unique to Christchurch, very unique to this rebuilding environment but making an effort to make it so people can be included and the social wellbeing that can come from having a boogie on the Dance-O-Mat. |
| Ruth | I’ll see you there! |
| Sally | Exactly. |
| Ruth | And we could promote that I think now that we know that, we could promote it and have an activity there or something too. |
| Sally | I think that would be fantastic, really cool. And Ruth, speaking of cool things going on to promote disability and access, maybe you could tell us about the mural that you guys have just created? |
| Ruth | Yeah look we’ve been really fortunate to have [inaudible] and a whole heap of people with all sorts of abilities and disabilities create a mural that is on the corner of Antiqua and Belfour Street promoting accessible Christchurch. It’s a huge picture that really depicts lots of people using the city and walking down the street and I think there’s a goat on top of a building and all sorts of fun stuff so it has lots of messages on there but it doesn’t push anything too dramatically, it’s Christchurch and people using Christchurch in all its forms. |
| Sally | And again so appropriate to this rebuilding environment, street art being a big part of the city at the moment. |
| Ruth | Yes and I think so and CERA and the City Council were really supportive of it going up and it remaining and I’m really chuffed that we have a legacy. |
| Sally | It’s going to stay is it? |
| Ruth | I hope so, I will staple myself to the mural so it does stay. |
| Sally | Fantastic, really cool and just to finish off then: As a final topic for thinking about and pondering, what can people do to help push this idea of an accessible city? |
| Ruth | Write letters, watch for the EDLG Facebook page next year to promote good access, we’re going to have some competitions running that will promote good access. So tell good stories, write to politicians asking for what we deserve and what we expect but I think it doesn’t need to be staunch – it can be: this is what I can do, these are the results of this not happening. I think ministers are really open to learning if they don’t know and I just keep encouraging people to tell our story. |
| Sally | Anything to add? |
| Lorraine | I think this probably sounds staunch but it isn’t but it’s about not compromising, not saying oh well it’s ok if it’s not quite right this time. Because I don’t think there’s a need to compromise, we should be going for what’s right, what the Human Rights Act and the Building Act say and we don’t need to compromise so we shouldn’t. |
| Sally | John how about you, any last words of wisdom? |
| John | Like well what Lorraine said there, about not compromising because I think just to use a random example, an accessible roll-on shower is actually great for able-bodied people as well and in fact probably better for able-bodied people than a traditional shower. So access actually benefits the whole of the community, it’s not some special add-on thing. I remember at one of the Earthquake Disability Leadership Group meetings someone was giving a presentation and they brought up the challenge of trying to make accessible infrastructure aesthetically pleasing and I was really stoked to see a lot of people in the room pull him up on that and say there’s no reason why accessibility can’t be architecturally pleasing to the eye and I’ve seen many examples of that. So we’ve got to get out of this mind-set of thinking that it’s these big horrible ramps or things like that, it can look really good, I think it can benefit anybody. |
| Ruth | I think form and function can absolutely go together. |
| John | Exactly. |
| Sally | That seems like a really good place to finish up so thank you so much, kia ora to our guests for some very insightful comments and to all you listeners out there. Do please tune in again in February, it will be on the 17th and 21st of February and also check out our Facebook page. And we’re also on iTunes so go and check out these different media that we’re now on. Thank you very much. |