

WELLINGTON CABLE CAR MUSEUM

Wellington's second busiest museum expands May 2004



Plans to extend the popular Wellington Cable Car Museum and to restore and display another historic grip cable car are looking more secure, as the just-published Wellington City Council's draft annual plan includes funding for the project.

John Gilberthorpe, Chief Executive of the Wellington Museums Trust (which manages the museum), says he's delighted that funding looks set to go ahead. The Council's draft plan earmarks \$650,000 to be spread over the next two financial years.

John says the extension is vital as the museum, which is located in the historic cable car winding house at the top of the cable car route, was built four years ago in anticipation of 90,000 visitors annually. However, current visitation levels are over twice that, making the museum the most visited facility in Wellington after Te Papa.

"We attract a huge number of tourists, both national and international, to this museum, and we believe it is essential to offer them a high quality visitor experience," John says.

"This extension will allow us to restore and display a nationally significant grip cable car (c1905), provide better interpretation for the cable car system and for the site, including its early Maori history. We will also be able to provide interpretation for the Botanic Gardens and for Wellington attractions generally, in recognition of the museum's role as a signpost for local activities."

John says the Trust secured a seeding grant of \$50,000 from the New Zealand Community Trust, while the Lotteries Commission Environment and Heritage Committee recently approved a grant of \$100,000 towards the project.

“We are still working to raise a bit more money but, all going well, we should be able to start the conservation of the grip car before the end of this year.”

John says that detailed building plans will now be drawn up and site work will start immediately after the museum’s busy summer season, to minimise disruption to visitors. The museum extension should be completed by the end of next year.

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