

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

Kia ora and welcome back. In behalf of Auckland Council, our partners and our sponsors, I bid you a warm welcome to Auckland. To those of you have arrived as visitors and also colleagues.

There is about 550 people here tonight, so jam-packed. You are not forced to come, you are here because...

(Laughter)

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

It is really quite humbling. Without you, it is not possible.

Welcome to everybody, my name is Ludo Campbell-Reid. I am a member of the Be. Accessible Fab 50. The general manager of the Auckland Design Office at Auckland Council and the design champion. I'm going to try to MC the evening. Looking forward to a great night.

It has been an incredible day today, amazing talks from inspiring men and women from all around the world. Lots of incredible workshops and some walkabouts across the city with different stuff. It has been incredible and tonight is a culmination of what has been an awesome day.

We had our new mayor, Phil Goff, opening the plenary session. He is so busy, the fact that he even took out half an hour or two hours of this morning to come along showed us he was really eager and keen to support us, and we copied all his notes and there's some really fertile language in there around helping the team drive is through the organisation through the city. So we will be utilising and abusing those quotes. It is really cool to have him here.

Let's get cracking. We are going to be running a process whereby we have live... What do we call it? Live captioning, which is a really cool way to capture the words that are spoken. When we have the questions and answers later in the session with the panellists, please wait until you get a microphone because otherwise the captioner cannot get your words. They are actually sitting in Australia tonight. We are working across the world, that is pretty exciting.

We also have a live filming of the event, there are people watching and listening all over the planet. The vision is we would be the TED talks of the Southeast Asia. It's always good to have dreams, and we will get there in the end. We are the first city that wakes up in the new day so why can't we be the first people who get ideas out across the world.

We also have a social media presence in the room today, wherever Natalie is. There you are. We will keep linking to you guys. There is a live feed and the #AKLConversations. As people get on board with Twitter, we will gather the more interesting questions and at the end of the panel session, I will be fed those on the team. Please keep firing goes through.

There is also a magazine on your seat, Our Auckland. It is important the council gets it can occasion with its citizens and the people it serves, and that is one of our vehicles to do that. Have a look, take it home and peruse, and give us feedback.

The other thing is housekeeping. In the very unlikely event of a fire or emergency, there will be a very loud alarm and we will be directed out of the building by ushers. It is best to wait for the ushers to tell us what to do. All of our teams with visual impairments and so forth will work through with the ushers.

If you need the lavatories, they are back through the doors you came in. Go straight ahead and the toilets are across the hallway.

As I said, this evening couldn't happen without you all here tonight but also without our general sponsors and partners. I would really like to thank, in particular, the architectural designers of New Zealand, Astrid and her team, for collaborating with us on tonight's performance and talk, and also sharing the venue because it keeps our costs down.

They are also holding their 5th-year anniversary at the same time. They have a whole series of Best awards for their groups and members which are all celebrated and highlighted at the back of the room. Please have a look at those when you can.

Auckland Conversations would also be possible without the ongoing support of a whole range of private organisation who have been with us for many years. I want to thank them. I want to thank Resene, who are fantastic. Our program supporters who are Brookfield lawyers, Boffa Miskell, Architectural Design NZ, the New Zealand Planning Institute. Could you put your hands together and thank them?

So, on to the main course. Valerie and the team. I had the privilege of listening to Valerie earlier today and really inspired by her experience and her knowledge, so looking forward to another stimulating talk from her. And thank you for travelling so far from Boston to be here. You are a special person.

Valerie has been executive director of the Institute of Human Centred Design since 1998. She has helped shape the global principles of Universal Design. With many years of engagement in advancing accessibility in Universal Design, Valerie has a deep knowledge and their perspective of the challenges of moving forward the agenda for all people.

She currently overseas projects ranging from consultation design services in higher education, consults, outdoor areas in government. It is a process of creating (inaudible). She has a master's in ethics from Boston University. The Boston Society of Architects awarded her the Women in Design award in 2005. She also co-chairs the Design Industry Group of Massachusetts and represents North America on the board of the International Association for Universal Design.

This is her first trip to New Zealand and I'm sure it has caught her heart. Although she has only been here for two days, I'm sure she will no doubt provide us with some great insights on the ongoing design of cities with people in mind. Please welcome Valerie.

(Applause)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

Thank you, Ludo. Good evening, everyone. The view from those windows looks fake.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

I'm already deciding Auckland is too good to be true. But I said earlier today, and I only have arrived in Auckland yesterday morning, but I am 16 years later.

My sister Kate lived in Auckland for many years, married a Kiwi and now living in Hawke's Bay. I have been hearing details about Auckland and fie me for being so tardy. I'm glad to be here and am dazzled by the experience of today. It was a terrific time. I learned a lot.

I'm going to talk to you about inclusive design is consequential innovation. I hate the word innovation, but I'm going to try it out tonight with a bit of a slant.

We are an international design NGO. Dedicated to enhancing the experiences of all abilities, ages and cultures through excellence in design. Part of what excites me so much about what you are doing in Auckland is that you seem genuinely committed to making human experience a celebration.

My country seems to be struggling with this lately. I used to use the word trump on a regular basis and now it is lost to me. I assure you, we aren't nearly as alarming as we seem. I think.

Anyway, I'm from Boston, so we are different.

What do we believe in?

We believe design matters. It matters tremendously and too often, it matters in a negative way, too many people at the edges of the spectrum left out. If it works at the edge of the spectrum, it works better across the spectrum.

The other thing we believe is that difference in ability is really ordinary. It surely isn't special. Those of us lucky to live into the 21st century living so much longer and surviving so much more.

We change our parts on a regular basis. Those of us old enough to have parents who have already passed, they couldn't believe people have been changing their knees, hips and shoulders on a regular basis and barely missing a week at the gym. But that is life today and we are damn lucky to have it. Special isn't anything I deal with. I don't like that idea.

I am very proud of my town. I'm a native to Boston, it is the place that calls my heart. I like to think we are one of the great liveable cities, even if Forbes doesn't include us on the list. I have a series of images of our fabulous city and they please invite you to come and see how we are doing.

We always have a long way to go, before the first time in a long time, we really deservedly acknowledge and celebrate our diversity. But it is also a place that reminds me of how thoroughly we can get off track. I thought I was born in the Athens of America, and in the 70s, I found out I was actually from the racist capital of America.

This is an image of a friend of mine, Ted Landmark. He is being stabbed with an American flag because he was a black man in a difficult time in the city. There was a great deal of tension around integration.

I'm not proud of this image, but Ted has survived. This is part of my history and part of why I feel so strongly about what we are doing here.

These are the valedictorians of our 50 high schools in Boston and there were two white kids this year. It's kind of delicious.

I was bowled over to immerse myself in Auckland, at least reading over the last couple of months. I have read the good bit of the Auckland plan. How many have written that?

Don't raise your hands. It is a bit of a slog. It's hefty. But priority one says create a strong, inclusive and equitable society that ensures opportunities for all Aucklanders. How terrific. I wish I had seen this kind of language everywhere I go in the world.

You have a chance to distinguish this place as truly the most liveable city in the world. I'm having a hard time here. Let's see.

The 20th-century impetus underlies our commitment today to social sustainability and we all understand environmental sustainability is really the dominant leg of the three legged stool. I'm here tonight to talk about social sustainability to get some substance in one of the things I know every day, is that it is very difficult to get people to feel any sense of urgency when the topic you're talking about is the result of success.

That's where we are in social sustainability. On average, with its 30 years longer than we did 100 years ago. Success. We did something right in the 20th century. We live longer and survival.

When I was a kid, the idea that I would know today many people who were born with conditions like cerebral palsy who have grandchildren. They didn't even grow up or we didn't expect that would happen. We are so extraordinarily fortunate to live in a world in which these things are true.

Global ageing is the big story. I used this image because I want you to understand this isn't a condition of wealth. This is a condition of the world. The ARC is the same, whether you are in the developing world or the developed world. Of course, most of the world is in the developing world so those are the turquoise bars leading the dominant colour in those bars from 1950-2050.

Those of us in developed nations are the little gold tops of that. The next time someone tells you China is going to eat our lunch, you remind them that China is one of the oldest countries in the world. And China is struggling with, how do we have more young people in China? Because multiple generations of one child per family has resulted in a nation – the largest on earth – that is rapidly ageing.

We need to remember that the work we do to figure out how to design for the reality of longer lives and more functional limitation is a challenge that all the world needs to mount.

Those of us that are old, one of the things we like to make sure everyone knows, and so many of you are young, and I'm glad to see a handful of you that would make the same argument on the issue of the cohort of ageing is and 65-dead. It is nicely nuanced, if you think about. You have the young old, 65-74. A little further along are the old, 75-84. And then there are the old old of 85+. And our needs are different.

Remember that. We young old actually have very demanding expectations of our lives for the rest of our lives. And we set expectations for places like cities. I want to congratulate New Zealand for the positive ageing strategy. That idea that is a keen argument, that says, "If we don't figure this out, we will all pay."

Because if people cannot sustain life independently, if we cannot figure out how people can live full lives all of their lives, we end up with something that the statisticians call 'the dependency ratio' getting out of control. You do not want to see that.

Yet those of you who are in your 20s-30s, you do not want to look down the road at every generation taking more money out of your pocket to care for all of us who are dependent upon you and on human help.

One of the advantages of design and one of the reasons it is worth investing attention and money is that design is incredibly cost-effective. You don't invest every single day and pay by the hour for good design. You do it thoughtfully upfront. And I think Auckland is mighty lucky to have Ludo leading a larger team that I know of any big city in the world... (Laughs) He is obviously a very convincing fellow.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

I hear he has 35-40 people? Mm. You have got the capacity here to really pull this off. And just before I leave this image, by 2050 64 nations will have 30% of their population over 60. Auckland is going to hit the mark in figuring out how to be a leader in this.

Notions of disability is the second driver in the world on issues of inclusive design. One in seven people on the planet have a disability. It's more like one in five. Many of my colleagues in Asia don't like to acknowledge that people with brain-based conditions should be counted. Unfortunately, that means there is a dramatic under count in parts of the world. The same applies in Africa – very little counting of brain-based conditions which is the most rapidly rising reason for disability in the world.

I am borrowing hear from my much deeper understanding about reasons for disability in the United States. We have got pretty good statisticians and this is a game we have been playing for 60 years. But the most prevalent type of disability is for children is something that has changed fundamentally since I was a child, when physical disability was the primary reason for disability in children.

Today, 80% of reasons for childhood disability are brain-based. And part of that is because we have conditions that did not exist in high proportions 20-30 years ago, like autism spectrum disorder. But it's also true that being in a world in which being able to learn and work is critical in the modern world. And we need our children to be able to thrive. Thus we are looking at support is that will make it possible for our children in school to prepare for work.

When we look at adults, we looked mostly at disability occurring in chronic conditions. We live long enough and survive long enough, so most of us will experience chronic conditions for part of our lives. We live long enough to be able to lose our acuity of sight and hearing, we live long enough for the arthritis that was an irritation at 50 to become something that can be profoundly limiting at 80.

But however we look at this and however diverse it is, we are looking at three broad categories. But I urge you to think of these broad categories in every facet of design – physical, sensory and brain-based conditions. Whether it is the design of a website, or distance learning, the design of a building like this or the extraordinary urban design that Auckland is so investing in getting right.

The disability rate in Auckland is 19%. It is clear to me in a short time here that Auckland has been a magnet for young people. Maori and Pacific people have higher rates of disability. This is true all over the world. People who are likely to be characterised by lower socio-economic assets are likely to have higher rates of disability for all kinds of reasons.

Statistics on the incident and prevalence of disability are notoriously varied based on data methodology. The primary data methodology determining who has disability in the world is that they ask you. And my sister would back me when I say that our dad, who is no longer with us, who was blind and deaf, was on oxygen and eight through a stomach tube, was not disabled in his mind.

"Honey, I have never used a wheelchair." So that meant there was a hard line in his mind. I was completely unsuccessful converting my father to have any sensitivity around these issues.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

Record-breaking, world-class cultural diversity. I thought I had been pretty attuned to the most savvy city in the world on embracing cultural diversity and that is Toronto, which I have come to love. But I think you guys might be a little bit smaller, but I think you are going to – what I would have once said – trump Toronto.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

You are going to eat Toronto's lunch. And I think that is partly because Toronto needed to do something to welcome immigrants to a city that was not distinguished for its diversity. And it was ageing rapidly and it was remarkably white.

And now, their website is translated into 41 languages. It has become a place that people love to visit. It is full of terrific experience is in the public realm. Believe me, the old story about Toronto when I was a kid – if you won the prize for something and you got a trip to Toronto, the top winner got two days and the second prize was a week.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

That is no longer true! Hut you, the immigrant arrivals have been at an historic high since 2014. Auckland attracts more than half. You are also home to the largest Maori population in New Zealand, where the 11% of the population.

I must say, my exposure today to a little bit of that extraordinary culture was among the most moving aspects of this extraordinary trip and I am deeply grateful for that.

And almost 40% of Aucklanders were not born in New Zealand. What an extraordinary fact! That distinguishes you in a big way. And it's a reason for tremendous pride.

I want to take a little bit of time this evening to prick a few balloons, a few ideas we are all familiar with and I think if we are going to engage in transformative design and consequential innovation, we have to stick one of those pins and a number of balloons.

Starting with accessibility, I don't want to take anything away from accessibility as the baseline, but in a country ahead of everyone else, we are at a point to recognise what is not working. What is working is the idea of design and a civil and human right is a big idea. And it's a big idea, I think our country can actually take some credit for that. I am quite quick to critique my country but I think we were the first to recognise that the only way you could extend civil rights to people with disability was to pay attention to design.

But today, two unintended consequences prevail and they are deeply problematic. One, unfortunately represented by my dad – an assumption that there is a sharp line between us and them. I was unsuccessful with my father but I will spend the rest of my days getting others to recognise this. There is no sharp line. I am talking about the human condition.

And the other thing that we are left with in a world that has deep infrastructure, extensive infrastructure on accessibility – I am proud of that – but I have got to tell you there is no recipe for big ideas when all anybody hears is, "Just tell me what I have to do." Inspirational? Just tell me what I have to do. Attractive to any young designer? Just tell me what I have to do.

No way. We have got to find another way.

Another balloon – my colleagues at IDO, we owe them a great deal for getting people to think differently about design. They have really made it important that it is a deeply human process. It relies on our ability to be intuitive naturally as part of being human, and to see and recognise patterns to be able to construct emotionally meaningful ideas.

Express ourselves, overlapping process, it's not an iterative process that is tidy. It's really messy and they have made people celebrate that. They have also made it clear that you cannot lead without a great story easily told and they do that brilliantly. They initiated this thing called design thinking – I don't know if it is happening much in New Zealand, but when the Harvard business review does a cover on design thinking, you know it is reaching another level.

We now have MBA programs where you can do a specialty in design. Interesting! So successful that they have become the largest design consultancy in the world. But design thinking and making things people want can tend towards solving all the wrong problems. It can tend towards something other than consequential.

And I want to share some of the examples of inconsequential design from a colleague Alison Arif, who writes for the New York Times. These are recent innovations – a smart button and zipper that alerts you when your fly is down. It has some utility, but consequential? I don't think so.

A service that delivers beer to your door. Perhaps consequential. A service that sends someone to fill up your car with gas, has this reached New Zealand yet? It is being advertised everywhere in the states.

And lastly, a sensor placed in your tile's nappy that sends you an alert when it needs changing. There is an app for that. I actually thought nappies were one of those multisensory experience is that worked quite well.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

But there is an app for that. Some venture capitalists thought that was worth big money.

Maslow's hierarchy of need. Maslow was an immigrant and a very clever fellow. He was able to promulgate the idea of a pyramid that beguiled business. And I have to say, there have been a few efforts to actually question, does this pyramid really make sense?

One of the things we have at our disposal today is a lot of information from social sciences that have been amplified by new information from neuroscience. And it turns out that our physiological needs may not actually... Trump... our social needs. The social may really be the very baseline of that hierarchy of needs.

The babies that take care of themselves. We are born into dependence. We should take a second to think about this idea of neuroscience. My friend, Ann Sussman, is the author of a book called 'Cognitive Architecture' and we have done a lot of work on eye tracking and how people look at buildings and the way that architects look at things in a different way than mere mortals.

They do. But among the things that neuroscientists look at, is the brains of our ancestors including rats, and snakes. I would urge you to think about the next time you go into a restaurant that is largely empty, is there anyone in a nearly empty restaurant who sits in the middle?

No. We like the edge because we need the protection of the edge. Anne has been looking at how we create environments that work with the deepest level of our framework. This is satisfied the subconscious need to feel seen. I think Auckland is doing quite well.

It is also the idea we want to aspire to the average. Baloney. Taylorism was a 19th-century idea that we had to get a lot of people to be very average to work in the factories. We don't need this anymore. They have blown big holes in this idea of average.

This fellow, Todd Rose, celebrates the idea of jaggedness, where people cannot be reduced to a single score or category. If you pick up his book, 'The End of Average', you will find yourself reading whole chunks of it to your nearest and dearest. There are things that reinforce, you're not crazy. Those people who tick off all the big boxes and are in all the best schools in graduate top of their class may not be people who can do the work we need to have done today.

They are not necessarily good at solving your problems. He is arguing that equal fit is the only thing that offers equal opportunity. Added you to take a look at his website in which he is really talking about individuality as the reality we live with and celebrating that as something that will give many people, who worry about not being average, a little heart.

These two fellas are actually the ones I like to give credit. Both of them are long gone, but two architects and both of them had polio, Ron Mace of the United States and Selwyn Goldsmith of the United Kingdom. Ron had polio at 8, Selwyn just after finishing architecture school.

These were guys with disabilities that were visible, perfectly obvious. They said, "Not about me." They stressed with it to be clear about the differences between accessibility and Universal Design. I don't use the term Universal Design that much because it is watered down in my country. It is like a flat white on accessibility.

I'm talking about something that is more transformative. Selwyn argued on a shift to reframe normal as individual and not as average.

This Universal Design, inclusive design, design-for-all, our friends in the European Union use the hyphenated design-for-all, it is a framework for thinking differently about humans. About designing everything, not as special, but as anticipating the true diversity of our time and welcoming that.

We use the term with everything in mind. I'm not sure I was the wisest person in the world to have thought about that change of name, but we have lived with it.

The principles of Universal Design was something that our organisation developed in 1997. They are pretty terrible, not revolutionary design ideas. There are various interpretations around the world. I'm actually sharing one from India.

Our colleagues in India have actually supplemented this. It really looks at equitable, usable, cultural and economic and aesthetics as resonant in their culture. One of the things the Indian world has looked at is the critical reality of economic adversity as part of the mix of thinking about accessible cities.

We're losing diversity very rapidly in North America because we are pricing it out. In San Francisco, we had more than 20% of the population African-American. We are now down to 3%. That isn't a fate we want to embrace for Auckland.

In thinking about equity and inclusion, economy has to be important to the picture. All of this rests on the idea that the World Health Organisation, the UN health arm, redefined in 2001 and basically realised diagnosis does not determine destiny. We had no reason to believe those old ideas any more.

They said function limitation is now a universal human experience. If you are lucky enough not to die young, you will meet functional limitation. They use mental and physical reasons, regardless of the fact it is the toughest sell for them.

They told me at WHO that they probably could have done this work in a year if they didn't insist on this provision. There's a great deal of resistance that the brain is equal to physical functional impairment.

The idea that functional limitation is universal human experience, we need to think about disability as a contextual phenomenon. That we experienced disability at the intersection of us, mere humans, and the environment.

They holistically designed information, they knew we could not think about the environment in a simplistic 20th-century way. They defined... When they did this, they also said this is not about barrier removal. Barrier removal doesn't go far enough. It's not about accessibility alone.

This is about identifying facilitators in all of those environments that are responsible to the rising proportion of human diversity in a way that makes it work. And I'm pleased to see that the UN has once again got another iteration of goals.

I trust you might be working with these. Are you working with the sustainable development goals? The US has not yet noted that these are out. There is still not enough on inclusive design and I'm hoping we can make some progress in the coming year.

One of the things I would urge you to think about here in Auckland, and I think it is the most doable thing in the world, we need to understand what works and what fails in real places with real people and I would suggest you take a page from our book, which is called Contextual Inquiry Research.

Working with user experts, people whose life experience is different from the typical designer. I'm not talking about personas, I'm not talking about people who are different who have been invented a designer students. Bad idea. They never talk back and they never have a surprising idea. Do not go down that road.

But working with real users, thrilling. We have about 200 or 300 people in Boston that we work with. From teenagers to the 90s, people across the spectrum of functional limitation, physical, sensory and brain-based, and also people across the spectrum of culture.

We would not think of doing... For example, we are reviewing the website for public transport and we are using people from the teenagers to the non-digital natives in their 70s and 80s to figure out what works on that website. And also figuring out what works and immigrants. Can a Chinese national, who has only been in Boston five years and is 78, use this website?

This idea about context in designing for diversity is also at the heart of the Madrid International Plan of Action, which is ensuring enabling supporting environments. This is our best work in the world on ageing cities, on age friendly cities.

Is Auckland pursuing age friendly cities? Not currently. You should get on that bandwagon. You could pull that off very readily.

In the last one, when New Zealand deserves a great round of applause for New Zealand's role in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In the run-up, you might know that United States has had a chequered history. My government has not participated in the development of the convention because we knew it all.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

We had nine people sitting in the room every day and my colleague advised I should pretend I was comedian.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

In the end, President Obama signed it and we are making a bit of progress in the last eight years. The image on the right side of your screen is actually the gang in Kathmandu and a central guy, the leader is a testament to the power of opportunity for people who once upon a time for just dismissed.

His name is Deepak (unknown term). He was dropped off at an orphanage at six days old and he has an extraordinary architect. This is before they took off on an organising trip to Mongolia. This is a world you want to live in.

A few illustrations. Let me share some stories on the spectrum of environments.

This is a friend of mine, Junko Kobayashi, in Tokyo. She is Japan's Toilet Queen. Don't let anybody tell you you can have inclusive cities with no public toilets. Don't pay any attention to Los Angeles, which doesn't seem to have any.

It is a measure of civilisation and great design when you do it well. The Japanese do it better than anyone, but I think you can get there.

This is a good example of age friendly New York. The United States took up most of our benches because we didn't want homeless people to have a place to sleep. Age friendly New York has returned them. We have 1500+ and we invited older people throughout the city to advise on where they go. A pretty terrific sense of ownership has grown up.

These are colleagues from England. This is a really clever take on attitude as absolutely at the core of getting this right. This is about access to live music for everybody. It is brilliantly led by a woman named Suzanne Bull, who is a woman with disability and a junkie for fabulous live music. I think for five times a week.

They have made an emphasis on ensuring the whole experience and have done this with the process of conversion which is now in the hundreds of entities in the UK.

Singapore have done is rather well. It can be easy to dismiss Singapore because when they say we are going to do, that actually do it. This is something they have done well. It followed very quickly after them accepting environment sustainability.

They incentivised architects and developers and that was critically important. Every year there is a competition.

The Singaporeans are mad for competitions and it made an enormous difference in their willingness to jump on this bandwagon.

I'm sure many of you have been to Singapore? True? 85% of the top elation lives in these estates. They do this to have shared public space out of doors. They have met their needs for housing for an ageing population within these large developments.

They prioritise spaces for children and older people, to play.

This is an example from our friends in Toronto, and I have to admit I no longer have the same level of complete awe now that you guys have stepped into first place, but they are doing some great things. This firm Quadrangle is one of the best.

This is a really simple building. Everyone has got lots of these, this is a really ordinary building that was used for self-storage and now it is an innovation building. It's all about go-go entrepreneurs and they have transformed the building partly by transforming the lobby – this gorgeous thing – with ramps and bright orange.

Everybody thinks this is the coolest place around, even though it started out as a nasty rabbit warren of stairs.

This is one of our projects, lucky enough to design a renovation for an architectural college. Architectural colleges have so many architectural firms that intersect at them. It had to be an oddball group like us to take on the renovation of this building. But a wonderful historic building and we tackled the historic preservation, green and inclusive design in this renovation in downtown Boston.

It started out life as a police station, then became the Institute of contemporary Art which pretty much destroyed all the historic features and we tried to bring them back.

London's Southbank, I'm sure many of you know the extraordinary work that has been done on Southbank. It's the real appetite for London. I always start on Southbank and try to stay there as much as I can. But very nice work, very participatory and smart features.

The French are sometimes dismissed as not being interested. They never get old and never admit to disability. But that is not really true anymore. The French are carving their own way in this world and doing it with the usual flair.

When my colleagues in the preservation world in the US disparage what can be done that is aesthetically satisfying, I like to point to some of the French examples we have the pleasure of looking at. This is the Chateaux of the Dukes of Brittany in Nantes, and it's a 16th century castle that can be made into a very cool environment and it's also fully inclusive so I think we can do better in the states.

It is a small example of the details that make the difference. This is a carousel that was created out of drawings by third graders. They developed the original ideas for Boston creatures that would become the Boston carousel on the Rose Kennedy Greenway.

It had to be accessible because that is the law. Thus it has ramps that pull out from the bottom. They came to us and wanted something more, they wanted it to be inclusive, "What is this all about? What would you have us do?"

We met with the designer who was not interested at all, but he came round. One of the things we did was to think about children today, on the spectrum of disability, among those our children that cannot go around and around and up and down at the same time.

So we did a rabbit on this carousel that has a gorgeous carrot and that rabbit does not go up and down. It goes around like all the other animals but not up and down. And that young man wrote for the first two hours on opening day. He is 21 and has almost no experience in public space. And he loved it!

The bottom picture is of a group of women, not the usual carousel riders. But as you can see, they don't have to mount an animal. They can sit on the bench.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

This is another example from Canada. Canada has no national laws, and yet, they are doing some very interesting work at the prefecture level or at the state level. Ontario is the lead, but this is not Ontario. This is Winnipeg.

Not everybody's shortlist of destinations to hit. But this is an extraordinary place and great fun. They made a commitment from the first idea of a human rights museum for Canada. This was a place that was going to raise the bar, set the bar, on inclusive design in exhibits. Not exhibits, in the whole museum.

It's a fascinating place. We worked on this to some extent, particularly on the wayfinding aspects of it. A little out of the way, perhaps, but worth the trip. One of the things they have done as well as anyone in the world is the state-of-the-art app. Everyone does it, but these guys got it right.

Back to the French – and I hear Auckland is talking about light rail. Are you going to do it?

ANSWER FROM FLOOR:

Yes.

VALERIE FLETCHER:

Do it! It is the most effective stealth design choice for inclusive cities you could make. There is nothing as powerful as ease of transit.

The idea of on and off seamlessly, you don't have to think. You don't have to plan. It is amazing. And the French, not the Parisians, but the French in secondary cities across the nation have bought into this idea of light rail with the quality of French elegance and style that you really have to study. So this is my favourite. This is Bordeaux. As you can see, this is simply magic. There is no catenary. They float like magic carpet trains. And this is no small feat. This is a big system. There are three separate lines and 89 transit stations.

But it has transformed Bordeaux, which you may know is the second city in France in terms of historic treasures. Second only to Paris. And they have made this work. Look how close to the historic structures!

One more tour in Singapore. This is a testament that you can do something with outdoor parking lots. This started out its life for 35 years as outdoor parking at a Singapore estate. One of the first estates in downtown Singapore. It is now a sensory garden. Quite extraordinary. And it aligns with the Singaporean emphasis that we want our outdoor spaces to be places for people to play, who are children and who are old. And this is one of those delightful places and very multi-century.

I don't want to ignore the United States. We do some things well. This is one of the delights of mayoral leadership. We had the pleasure of listening to Mayor Goff this morning and I hope you got every word down and you are going to disseminate every piece of information because it will shame leaders across the world.

Has anyone been to Millennium Park? A really good place. Thrilling, actually. This is a place that from the get go was born of an idea of inclusion and welcome and it works.

London has actually done some of the best guidelines on inclusive housing, accessible housing to begin with, and then inclusive housing, but this project of Queen Elizabeth Park is built on the old 2012 Olympic site.

The architect responsible for this, Anisha Patel, a young Indian immigrant to London, was not satisfied with the calibre of the design guidelines that existed. She spent over a year going into the community, meeting with people on their turf, asking what they wanted and needed and reinvented a whole set of housing styles for (inaudible) Manor, which is her project – 850 homes, a very large project.

One of the things she did is the extraordinary design of a house which is part of a dense urban block. This house has a smart design of a courtyard and on one side of the courtyard is a small apartment which is part of the house. You buy the house and you get the small apartment.

The small apartment is intended to respond to issues across the lifespan. It's where the Nanny sleeps so she doesn't hear you having the argument. It is where your teenage children live when you cannot bear them under your roof any more.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

It's where you bring your parents when you cannot bear to have them living in your house but they need you. And it's where, one day, you can make money renting it out. Then maybe at the tail end, you have people helping to take care of you and making sure you don't have to leave your house and you have a place for them to live under your roof that is affordable for you to be able to manage.

I don't need that long.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

I have a small suggestion. God knows you guys are doing such good work I don't have a lot of suggestions for you. I just want to stand back and applaud as all this rolls out for you.

Remember priority one, creating a strong, inclusive society that includes everyone. In order to make that real, I suggest you add a principle employing design that anticipates functional limitation and goes beyond barrier removal for enabling and facilitating environments.

At least give that some thought. And last points, you've got to focus on getting upstream through policy. I think Auckland has already proven that they get that. You need to engage developers as well as designers.

Developers call the shots in the end. And you have got to get them on board. You've got to get them to understand that this is partly about making great places. I would urge you to think about getting diverse user experts into design school studios.

Architects and designers create the context for our lives. And if they are exposed to no one but people who are just like them, they won't get it. And if they design personas that never talk back, we are in trouble.

This is beyond self-expression. This is beyond innovation. This is a world in which we need designers to help us figure out how to really be able to celebrate the diversity of our world in the 21st century.

Consequential design is inclusive design. And also, I am not shining you on, but know that Auckland has the potential to be a global model and we sorely need a global model that doesn't drive out the diversity by not thinking about all facets of this.

And I strongly urge you to remember that economic facet, or you will lose the extraordinary diversity that characterises you today.

You notice I have used a number of Saul Steinberg drawings. This is one I want you to take a minute to look at. 'I do, I have or I am'.

You are about 'I am'. You can be so much more than 'I do' or 'I have'. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

What a tour de force. That was fantastic. I was riveted there, thank you.

Right, I have been doing this for quite a while and I don't think I can... trump... the diaper app. I can't trump it.

That was wonderful. Thank you so much. And what an incredible story. You've got a great turn of phrase as well. It's wonderful, thank you so much.

We are going to give Valerie a few minutes breather. Would you like glass of wine or maybe a bottle of water? What I will do is invite to fantastic people up on stage to join Valerie for a bit of a panel discussion.

Then we are going to talk with yourselves and have some questions and answers. I'm going to invite Jane and Martine up. Jane, would you mind joining Valerie on stage? And I will come and get you, Martine.

OK, so we have Westin who has joined us on the stage.

We have two amazing ladies to join us for the discussion. I will introduce each of you one at a time and ask a question, if that's OK, and ask you to answer that question. We will go to the next person, come back to Valerie and start the discussion.

Jane, are you ready? Welcome, Jane, and good afternoon. Thank you for coming along today. Jane is the founding director of the newly established centre of the Universal Design in Australia. And she is really well placed to give us a view on what is happening across the Australia Asia Pacific.

And recently, Jane ran a Universal Design conference which was last month in Sydney, which brought together experts from all around the world. So it's going to be great to hear that a bit about how that went. Jane has a background in community services spanning more than 30 years and her experience has ranged from direct service to management roles.

She has a Ph.D. in urban studies, specifically looking at barriers to urban design in housing. She is also awarded the Churchill Fellowship in 2004 to look at Universal Design across the world. She has also travelled to Auckland especially to attend tonight's Auckland conversations and the Universal Design Symposium. We just couldn't resist asking her to join us on the panel.

Jane, a question. Could you tell me how you got involved in Universal Design in the first place? What was the clarion call perhaps? I would also be interested to hear what are the key findings of your Churchill trip?

Are we all miked up?

JANE BRINGOLF:

Yes, I can hear my voice now. Thank you for the question. That has been asked of me before and I'm still stumbling over an answer to it because I can't really remember how I came to understand what Universal Design is.

And I can only assume that I've been like a lot of other people, who have come to it step-by-step by gradual understanding. Most of my background has been working with people with disability and with older people.

Some things gradually become obvious to you if you look closely enough. And it was when I was working at the Independent Living Centre in New South Wales, working alongside occupational therapists and access consultants. I kept wondering why we had to keep telling architects and designers over and over again. Why can't they remember what we tell them the first time? And why do we have to...

It's a great income for us. It took me a while to realise they weren't really interested in learning about it at all. They were just interested in having somebody else tick off they have met their accessibility requirements. That's when I applied for the Churchill Fellowship.

We needed to do a whole lot more about how to get more people understanding the disability is part of the human spectrum. It's part of living. When we're talking about takeaway messages from the Churchill Fellowship, this amazing woman... You get to meet the most amazing people unexpectedly and for me, one of those was Judy Heumann who was working at the World Bank. She is now in the State Department.

And she said to me, "There are only two kinds of people in the world. People with disability and people yet to have a disability." That was one of my takeaway messages. What are people doing in other places? I know there are Universal Design centres around the world. How did they get set up and going?

That was my quest. So not only did I go to North America, but I went to Denmark, the UK and to the Netherlands as well. And just to come around to the question about the take-home messages, I've got that one. The other one was be everywhere on the issues. If you really want to do something about this, you have to be everywhere where the topic is happening.

So where am I now? I'm here. And don't miss the chance. As Martine said to me just now, if you are not at the table, you're on the menu. I think that is...

(Laughter)

JANE BRINGOLF:

I'm sorry, I have stolen your line. It is nothing about us without us.

The other more serious thing that I have probably gotten real understanding for was a bit of a conundrum. And that is, we are talking about a group of people who are excluded wanting to be included, and the issue of being included requires you to identify that you are excluded in the first place.

So what does that mean for inclusion in terms of if you get partial inclusion, will you suddenly disappear and become invisible? I think that is an issue that we still struggle with.

In order to be included, you need to show that you are excluded. And that then lead me on to thinking about what is inclusion in what is inclusiveness, and the conclusion I come to is inclusion is still something we seek. It is a futuristic idea. Whereas, inclusiveness is something that you have already. And what we need is inclusiveness.

So that's my take home message.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

That's fantastic. It's interesting, just reflecting on your point about the architects and designers telling over and over again. We have a new member of the team called Phil Rahungi. He is probably the world's first Maori design leader for the city.

He talks about us listening better, and you need to do more talking with your ears. It is interesting people have this turn of phrase, but sometimes it is on the money.

It gives everybody in the audience a bit of a sense of what Jane stands for. We will hopefully teeth out some questions. Thank you for your answer, it was great.

Next up, I am thrilled to invite - not invite, she is ready on stage. Martine Abel is an extraordinary woman. I would like to take you quickly through her bio. I'm just trying to find it.

(Laughter)

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

Here we go.

Martine works as a specialist adviser with Auckland Council. She is also a strategic objective leader at the World Blind Union which is an international advocacy organisation, representing 225 million blind or partially sighted person is across the world.

Martine also serves on many boards, New Zealand's only Community Law Centre, the Auckland Disability Law, Disability Connect, Independent Living Services and Blind Citizens of New Zealand.

Martine is totally blind and is accompanied by her guide dog, Westin. I thought I would ask you a question, Martine. In terms of Auckland Council, there are several things we are doing and we are working really well in many areas I would like to ask you, Auckland Council has committed itself to an empowering communities approach by establishing this unit.

What does this mean in terms of Universal Design and access to the environment?

MARTINE ABEL:

Thank you very much. I think most people associate local government with a regulatory and legislative role and we sometimes forget that we also have systemic advocacy role.

It was established a year ago, it has now empowered communities. Because it's supposed to be more about - instead of handing out funding for a local group to meet once a week for coffee or sponsoring any event, or enabling a community hall to be inexpensively rented. We are meant to be more dynamic.

Communities need to let us know what we would like to do, how to contribute to society, and we support them. We don't necessarily steer them stopped that is where the problem often comes in.

If someone says they cannot access their local swimming pool, I can't take my children to the beach, I can't go fishing, I can't take my dog to the park, that disabled person or older person or person that is not sure about their environment is actually excluded from participating in society.

So we are actually disempowering them. For me, the link is between, if council is responsible to have our physical environment accessible and inclusive, we don't want to see people potentially housebound because we are actually doing the opposite.

The new empowered communities approach focuses on the participation of diverse communities and we got the words in there, equity and inclusion. Many people interchange equity and equality and I like to say equality is the democracy. For instance, a whole local board votes to have a new safe beach or a new pool. That is equality. People stuck their hand up, it was voted as a priority.

The equity comes in, who could use that pool or beach excessively and who could be excluded from its use.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

That's a good answer.

I guess it was interesting, we heard earlier about the diversity of Auckland's population and it seems the challenge is around communication with a certain group and how do you see that as a challenge as well.

Are we talking to the right people? Those that are actually utilising the city and using the city. I think is there a challenge there around the actual communication with those diverse groups?

MARTINE ABEL:

Definitely. Many of them in the past to show us it is not the most highest participation. Mostly people say I don't know the people and I'm not sure what they stand for and it is better not to vote. It is hard to say to people, "Go to a local board meeting."

Because it seems like a bureaucratic system, you wait for an open forum, time runs out. Now that we have captioning, NZSL interpretation, Braille, easy read documentation. Just in the process of developing Waitemata, Otahuhu, Papatoetoe - those local boards have worked out local plans were they know how to communicate excessively.

The crucial example, someone's dog is impounded because the deaf person didn't realise that a certain breed is classed as a dangerous dog breed. The letter they received about the impoundment is about the impoundment because of the dangerous dog breed. All that person might think, is that the different literacy standard and because English is their second language, because New Zealand sign is their first language, that they can just pay a cost or they don't know how long it is.

Of course, the law says ignorance is no excuse. We can often work in situations with dire consequences to people. It is a lack of communication appropriateness, that we actually get not communicated with and they have ignorance on their side.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

Those are interesting insights. Thank you, both of you. I was going to ask Valerie a question but I will come back to that later.

We have two microphones. Who else have we got? There is a lady here in the middle. Let's start there and maybe somebody from that side.

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

I have a question for Valerie. I am a member of a community led group in Ponsonby, Auckland. I consider us user/experts. However, it's not a problem to get in touch with the council or the University of Architecture but we have had a hard problem getting in touch with the architects. What do you suggest for community led groups as a better way other than email or calling?

VALERIE FLETCHER:

Are you working on a specific project?

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

We have a space that the council has asked us to collect information about. We are facilitators collecting with community wants in local area.

I was trying to meet with architects to get ideas but it's hard as a user expert just walking the streets back and forwards.

VALERIE FLETCHER:

I am looking at the leader here, in the front row. I have some ideas but I think it would be interesting... You will need a microphone. But I think part of it is that if you have got trade organisations and architecture and landscape architecture, who are committed to these ideas, they are your natural partner. And they will attract people. Is that true?

ANSWER FROM FLOOR:

I am the CEO for Architectural Designers New Zealand. We primarily represent architectural designers but also some architects as well.

I think that maybe connecting with the local people here in Auckland and the local NZIA, there would be enough people keen to support.

VALERIE FLETCHER:

And there is enormous value in media and getting visibility about what you are doing. Telling stories is so powerful. Being concrete about it, not just that you are doing it, but these are the things you are finding.

People are so surprised. There are often small things that confront people's ability to participate, to fully engage as other people take for granted. I was doing that for the first time ever last night and I can absolute you see that it is a gem. Good luck.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

The lady in the middle there. Shall we talk afterwards? We have connections to thousands of architects and designers and we will happily pass you their way.

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

Hello. We all get old and we were all once young. We have spoken a lot about the disabled and the elderly. I am lucky enough to have a yard for my kids, but I know that in the future there is going to be much more dense housing and I'm wondering what the answers might be to giving our children under the age of 10/12 access to the city and places of place. Because I don't know what they are going to do if I don't have a yard.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

Who would like to pick that up? Jane?

JANE BRINGOLF:

I'm happy to say something about that because I live in Sydney. I have... I am on the City of Sydney's inclusion panel. Play spaces have come up several times in the way that all our cities in Australia are wanting to maximise the transportation and other services, so it is much more dense living.

But what I have seen is not only some good play spaces coming up within the higher density living areas, but accessible play spaces. What I mean by accessible is having, you know, like the spinner some of us would have scooted around and spun around and lay down and watched the sky go around, it is to make them wheelchair accessible.

These are places that are not near traffic. And there is a movement in Australia called Libby's Place, which is a not-for-profit that was started up in memory of a child, Olivia. They have been working really hard at getting local government to do more of these play spaces. They also include water play in some of them.

And it's really good to see that we are starting to think about, not just can we have a playground but can we have an inclusive playground? If you go to Darling Harbour, at Piedmont, there is one right there.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

Thanks, Jane. Perhaps Martine and Valerie, the question is also asking how are we going to provide, where and the amount? You are concerned that you will lose...

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

(Inaudible)

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

It's interesting, down on the waterfront here literally across the road, the cheapest piece of the kit we built when we created the waterfront is a little park. A sandpit and it's free, and anyone can come down there. The cheapest part was a mound of earth that was left over from the development of the basketball court. We put some fake grass on that and the children play on that all day.

There are moments where it has been done. But I suppose it is really thinking about living and high density and wondering where these outdoor spaces are to play. So we have lots of ideas around converting streets into parks, streets into green spaces. It's about being challenging. There is space out there, but it is how you use it.

Martine, I wondered if you had any thoughts on this idea.

MARTINE ABEL:

It's interesting because it reminds me of the saying 'it takes a village to raise a child'. We need to go back to that grassroots local community development, where we can just leave our kid at the park and come back 15 minutes later and everything is fine because we all look after one another.

So I think in the big city that often gets lost. Some of us don't know our neighbours. If we lived kilometres apart, we would have. So I think part of the physical design we need to bear in mind is the social capital and how we can actually get in touch with one another more.

And I think some initiatives such as Connect4 and neighbourhood plans, which are there for emergence it prepare it must in case of disaster, can actually prepare us for ordinary life strategies as well.

If you see a child walking to a pool, if you see someone that young, it is everyone's responsibility. So I think a lot of it is social cohesion as well.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

That's a good response. Thank you. We've got a couple of questions coming through the Twitter account. Let's try this. It's always a challenge with modern technology. I like the good old-fashioned question, but go for it.

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

Given the link between nature and health, how do we keep nature accessible to all?

VALERIE FLETCHER:

I will take that one, may I? We currently have a project centred on that issue. Massachusetts is a small state but 10% of the entire state is state park. Lots and lots of state parks for all kinds of things.

They've done a great job on accessibility for special programming. They have a universal access program, they call it. It's about adaptive sport and you can do all kinds of things.

They have ice hockey wheelchairs, they have kayaks that work for people who are blind, and they have worked out ways for it all to work. They have hand cycles.

But what they haven't got is state parks that welcome everybody without it being special program. So we are working with them to really think about, how do you create a sense of welcome? And we are doing that with user experts. We are doing a review for the baseline of accessibility are but really what we are doing is getting all sorts of people out there.

So when I go home, I'm going to spend two days tramping about in a big, urban park that has all kinds of things like camping, fishing, picnicking, hiking. And we are going to do that over two days. One day will be with people 70+, and we will find out how it is working for them. The next day we will do that with people who are on the autism spectrum and find out how it is working for them.

I already know that both of them care about a place to pee, and the only place to pee in this park is near the parking. And how the devil do you walk for two hours hiking if there is no place to go? So we know that is part of it but we are really looking forward to finding out how it works.

But it is the out of doors, we are so sick of health and recreation and assuming that older people should do that inside.

(Laughter)

VALERIE FLETCHER:

As if recreation could be experienced adequately around a chair. So, I think it is a movement. I think we are going to see this as something that is going to deliver a whole load of new ways to think about inclusive outdoor spaces that really do work for everyone.

In Massachusetts, we have three organisations that are blind birding organisations, made up entirely of blind users. News to me, but they are zealously trying to get us to help make sure the parks work for them.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

All comes down to good old-fashioned common sense, doesn't it? It's extraordinary. There is a gentleman in the back there. It's a lady, sorry. I can't see.

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

Shereen Maloney from the New Zealand (inaudible) cooperative. I wondered if you could talk to urban design and dementia. With the ageing population, there will be significantly more people with dementia in a short space of time. I bet horrified to hear that Auckland does not have plans to develop an age friendly city. But I'm sure you have done a lot of thinking about dementia and urban design – could you talk about more about that?

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

Is that directed at me?

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

At the panel, or you.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

I will let the panel have a go and if there is something I can add, I will be happy to do so. Martine is going to have a crack.

MARTINE ABEL:

At a few levels, we have started to pick up on that. For instance, (inaudible) council is liaising with Auckland Transport. We have two groups, one is the transport accessibility group and the other is capital project accessibility group.

All that means is that instead of just talking access and inclusion, we have people in that group that advise us as council staff and as Auckland Transport staff around signage, inclusive signage, for older people. Even with early onset dementia.

With that, they talk to us about some colours that are more conducive. Some spaces that could be seeming confining. We have the Phobic Trust that liaise with us. We are so security conscious these days, people may be scared to go into what they see as confined spaces.

And also signage, so if someone is forgetful, how can signage be suitable without being there so much that people forget about it. That is a specific example. I know it's not the whole gamut. And I know that just before the elections, all the panels were disbanded because the new mayor will put the panels together.

And of course, we had a senior's panel as well as the disability panel. And the senior's panel was extraordinarily active in liaising with other panels and driving this specific matter forward as well.

And I'm sure, I know that the new mayor has said that he will reinstate the panels in some way, shape or form. It may need a bit of changing like anything else does. So that is just two examples at the practical level that I know and I have heard people raise the matters around dementia, a about the ageing population, and really trying to put a nonthreatening spin on it but a positive inclusion design spin on it.

VALERIE FLETCHER:

To share with you something that has been a joy to me over the last decade. There is the organisation in the United States called ARTZ, Artists for Alzheimer's, which started at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It's one of the idea that even people with dementia can generate great new memories from experience and to be able to bring people into a museum, gallery, in an organised way and give them a chance to interact with the art.

It has been a remarkably successful program. It also has another part of what they are doing which brings people with dementia to movie theatres on an afternoon when the movie theatre is often not used. They are showing old movies, and again, it is the idea that experience is still available, even when memory is gone.

Culture and, god, New Zealand has culture. To be able to have a dementia program in the cultural sector seems very doable.

JANE BRINGOLF:

I would just like to add, dementia isn't just the province of an older person. You can get dementia for all sorts of reasons, acquired brain injury can cause memory problems as well.

I want to redirect something Martine said, in a public environment, yes, Auckland needs to look at the WHO ageing cities program. I think one of the other areas, and this is the most tricky one and this is actually something that Judy Heumann said to me. Changing attitudes is really the heart thing to do.

What we have to do is the bit that is easier and change the environment. Our next step is about attitudes. Even though they may be able to get around in the environment, and they don't get lost, is the attitude of other people in shops and services, which is really the defining experience that they have. That is what stops them from continuing with their confidence in being able to get out and about.

I think added to the environment things and programs we are finding that people with dementia can actually do a lot more than people thought they could. That should start to lead people into thinking, maybe they didn't remember that right now, they will remember a bit later.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

Great. It is always difficult with such a large audience, would you mind leaving us with one thing you would like Auckland Council to do going forward. What is the one thing we need to start getting right?

I was reflecting on Martine's comment, "It takes a village to bring up a child," and it goes to the centre of the concept of how to design walkable neighbourhoods and communities. It's not rocket science, but somehow something has happened.

I travel a lot around New Zealand and we seem to be putting a lot of old people in remote places called Happy Valley. I couldn't think of a worse thing than having to get into a car to do anything. They need old people around, not young people.

I'm nervous about the future and where they plan to put me.

(Laughter)

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

One takeaway we need to get right. Martine, do you want to be first? What do we need to be concerned about?

MARTINE ABEL:

When I first walked with the dog, I was so scared because it is hard enough trusting another person to guide you. Even though people mean well, anything can happen. When I walked for the first time with a guide dog, I realised... It is profound.

That dog had to interpret the environment. Can the environment be made so accessible that my dog can continue to interpret it successfully? We need to liaise internationally so we don't reinvent the wheel. We need to liaise nationally because in the end, we have a central government and we want to be on the same page.

And then of course, everything good starts at home. We need to start with our dogs as a working guide, whether it is with our council, we need to build up trust and collaborate. And then we can work on the solutions and the environment.

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

There you go.

(Applause)

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

Who's going to trump that one? Jane?

JANE BRINGOLF:

I think there is a bit of an elephant in the room in terms of what we haven't talked about and that is housing. We had a piece this morning from Jeff Penrose, and as he said, your home is where you wake up every morning. It is the centre of your life. It's where you create memories. It is the beginning and end of the day where you live.

We can talk about accessibility and Universal Design of the built environment externally, but we have to join the dots. If you cannot get out of your home to enjoy that environment, what's the point?

And the other factor is if you have members of your family... For example, if granny is in a wheelchair and you have six steps up to your own and you have always had a family Christmas party there, what's going to happen? Did that mean you will certainly go to the local park because that is the only place that is accessible? Nobody has a home that is accessible for Granny to come to anymore?

And the other thing that often gets forgotten, housing is the biggest infrastructure any country has. The fact that it might be private when you are living with it, went on the market, it becomes public again. We forget we all have ownership in each other's homes in that regard.

So I would like to see that Auckland Council push the idea of having at least some very basic visit-ability features so that people can at least visit your home, so you can participate in activities.

The research in Australia is if you think about those articles and features right now, it doesn't cost any more to put them in. What I used to say to people is we have Universal Design in our homes already because we all have walls, doors, roofs, bathrooms. All we have to do is tweak those universals to join the dots between the public environment and our homes.

(Applause)

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

Pressure's on, Boston.

VALERIE FLETCHER:

I am truly optimistic. And I think having had a little exposure to you for the last day, I am very optimistic that design is going to have a very good run here for the foreseeable future.

But I would urge a sense of urgency. A lot of this takes a long time and we don't have any more time. We have to figure it out now. And I think that sense of urgency will be reinforced by a commitment to participation and diverse participation.

We have heard something about a commitment around participation, we have heard about your colleague, the Maori architect who said we had to do more talking with our ears. I think genuine participation in urban development is rare.

There's a lot of lip service, but I think you need to avoid the... You're going to present three schemes at the meeting, and only a handful of people are coming out. You are going to know which you want them to choose and you manipulate that meeting.

It Auckland is going to lead this way, you have to avoid three schemes and you have to do more talking with your ears. But I think you can do it.

(Applause)

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

There we go. Some golden nuggets there are these three wonderful women. Thank you. Could I ask you and warmly thank Valerie Fletcher, Jane Bringolf and Martine Abel.

(Applause)

LUDO CAMPBELL-REID:

I have one last thing to do. Our sponsors for the night who have been the Auckland designers, ADNZ, Astrid Anderson is their CEO. Astrid, could you please give a vote of thanks? That's it from me and over to Astrid.

(Applause)

ASTRID ANDERSEN:

What a tough act to follow. I'm not sure where I can start. I think I have more scribbling than you have, Ludo, and I'm starting to think that ADNZ is starting to stand for Alzheimer's and Dementia New Zealand.

ADNZ represents architectural designers in New Zealand, a nationwide organisation with a strong presence here in Auckland. It has been really interesting to hear the speakers today and this evening and see how they resonate with very much where we as ADNZ are heading.

We have a plan, our people, our place and our architecture. The board is focusing primarily on our people with a strong focus on diversity. It's interesting how things converge very much. And that was just signed off in August. It is interesting that we have got to that place.

I've learnt a lot this evening and I love that if you are not on the table, you're on the menu. If that is not more about standing up and showing up, and having courageous conversations and stepping up to the plate, I don't know any more.

Thank you, both. You can share the glory on that. I think that was amazing to me.

Also, Martine, I love the idea of where you took equity as equity of outcomes. It is not about the starting gate, it is about how we all have the same outcome. I think it is a lovely thing to remind ourselves and how we make design connectful. I think that is really important as well.

Earlier today, I spoke about some of the personal experiences in my life of my late husband having motor neurone disease, and I said I wasn't going to cry this evening. I hadn't intended to, but sometimes these things happen.

A lot of things have happened over the years that make you realise how challenging like this the different people. As I watched my elderly mother, who had been extraordinary, she had been in the underground at the age of 15 exporting Jews out of Denmark, a young girl.

At 15, I was complaining because I wasn't getting enough pocket money and she was doing extraordinary things, and to see her lose her sight and hearing in her old age. And for me to reflect on maybe I shouldn't have put my head in the speakers at a rock concert.

