



## A Social Script for visitors on a tour of Government House in Newtown, Wellington

*This guide is written for adults who have booked to visit Government House and would like to know how a tour is run and what happens on a tour.*

**Accessibility:**

We have 2 wheelchairs and a walking frame available.

We have accessible toilets and wheelchair access for the visitor centre and house.

Support animals and guide dogs are welcome. Please let us know before your tour.

We may be able to get NZSL interpreters if you need one. Let us know when you book.

We have a change table.

We have marked mobility parks.

All tours are in English.

Let us know if you might need extra support on your tour.

**Your tour will take about 90 minutes to 2 hours. Shorter tours can be arranged.**

**If you have needs you would like us to be aware of,** please email [bookings@govthouse.govt.nz](mailto:bookings@govthouse.govt.nz) or call 04 3820837. Our aim is to make our tour programme accessible to everyone.

## Getting to your tour

Check in for your tour opens 15 minutes before your tour start time. If you arrive too early, you may need to wait outside the gate.

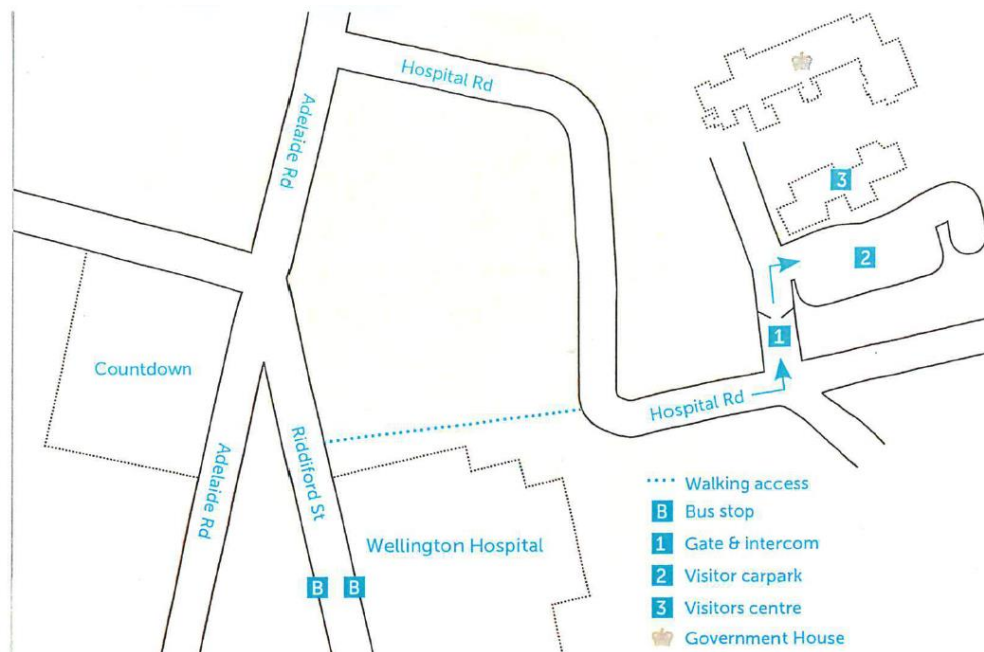
You can drive or walk to the Visitor Centre. If you are walking, the route is hilly. The closest bus stop is at Wellington Hospital.

Wear tidy clothes and comfortable shoes. We may go into the gardens as well as the house.

The tour is free. We do not have a cafe or souvenirs for sale.

The entry gate for people coming on tours is at the end of a short driveway on the left side of Hospital Road.

Here is a map to help you find our gate:



[Government House visitor centre - Google Maps](#)

## **Who can come on the tour**

Places on tours must be booked at least 24 hours before your tour.

- If you are part of a tour for a community or education group, the names of people in your group will have been sent to Government House before the tour, by the person who organised your group to visit.
- If you are coming on a public tour, we will have your name through the booking process.

This system means your name will be on the entry list for your tour.

Do not bring anyone extra with you who is not already booked onto the tour.

- If you have a support person you can book them on a tour. If there is not enough space left on the tour for your support person, add their name in the 'notes section' of your booking or call the Visitor Centre before you arrive.
- If you are getting dropped off and picked up again at the end of the tour, tell the staff who check you in at the gate.

We need you to check in when you arrive, because we need to know who is coming onto the property. This is to keep staff and visitors safe.

## How to check in



Intercom button. Press and release to activate and speak to the duty officer.

- If there is no one at the gate to check you in, use the intercom. To work the intercom, press the white button and release it again. Once the intercom is answered by the staff, you can talk to them without pressing the button again.

- If the gate is open already, use the intercom or speak to a staff member before you enter the property. This is so we know who is here and why.
- If there is a Government House staff member or a police officer standing at the gate, tell them you are on a tour and give your name. Their job is to check the right people are here for the tour. They might ask you to show some identification. If you do not carry ID, they might ask for your address.
- School-age children do not need to bring identification.

Once you are checked in, the gates will be opened, and you can walk or drive through them.

The Visitor Centre building and carpark is on the right, once you have come through the gate.

## The Visitor Centre and parking

The tour will start at the Visitor Centre. The entrance door is shown in the photo.

Park in the Visitor Centre carpark. There are carparks and marked mobility parks. There is no charge for parking.



This is the Visitor Centre. Come in through the front door (shown in the photo).

The Visitor Centre has toilets and places to store your bags.

## People you may meet

The Visitor Centre staff will take your tour of Government House.



Richard Chapman, Kate Olsen and Heather Mills run the tours programme at Government House.

Tours are usually 6 - 20 people.

*If you would prefer a smaller group tour, contact the Visitor Centre before your tour date.*

Other staff in Government House. People will be working in the house and gardens while you are on your tour. They could be in ordinary clothes, marked Government House clothing or police or military uniform.

Dame Cindy (the Governor-General) and Dr Davies live at Government House.



Dame Cindy and her husband Dr Richard Davies, have 2 small dogs Pebbles (on the left) and Lucy (on the right). You probably will not see them on the tour.

You might hear Pebbles and Lucy. They are friendly dogs but they sometimes bark.

## You are told this health and safety information for the tour

- Bags are left in the Visitor Centre. The Visitor Centre doors will be locked while the tour is on. Bags can also be locked in the Visitor Centre Office.



Cubbyholes for bags are by the Visitor centre toilets.

- There are toilets in the Visitor Centre. If you need to use the toilet while the tour is in Government House, let a staff member know.
- Stay with the tour group when you are in Government House and in the gardens.
- Look after the items in the house by not touching things, unless invited.
- You will be told you can sit down on chairs and sofas during the tour. Do not sit on the thrones in the ballroom. They are only used by the Royal Family and the Governor-General.



These are the thrones.

- You can take photos on the tour, but you can't film during the tour. Do not ask the Governor-General for a photo.

**If there is an emergency:**

- If there is a fire alarm, the tour will go back to the Visitor Centre or to the Visitor Centre carpark.
- If there is an earthquake please drop, cover, hold and stay with the group. The Visitor Centre and house are earthquake strengthened.

***If you need to leave the tour early, ask a staff member to walk you back to the Visitor Centre.***

***If you need a quiet place to sit for part of the tour, let a staff member know.***

***Visitors must not leave the tour without advising a staff member.***

## What happens on the tour?

The tour will start in the Visitor Centre.



Visitors are usually asked to wear a lanyard.



The Visitor Centre has displays and touch screens. Your group might see a short film about the history of the house and the job of the Governor-General. You will be in the Visitor Centre for approximately 30 minutes. The rest of the time will be spent in Government House and in the gardens.

There is a 50m walk from the Visitor Centre to Government House. Entry to the house is via the front door (official entrance) or the ballroom door. Both entrances have wheelchair access.



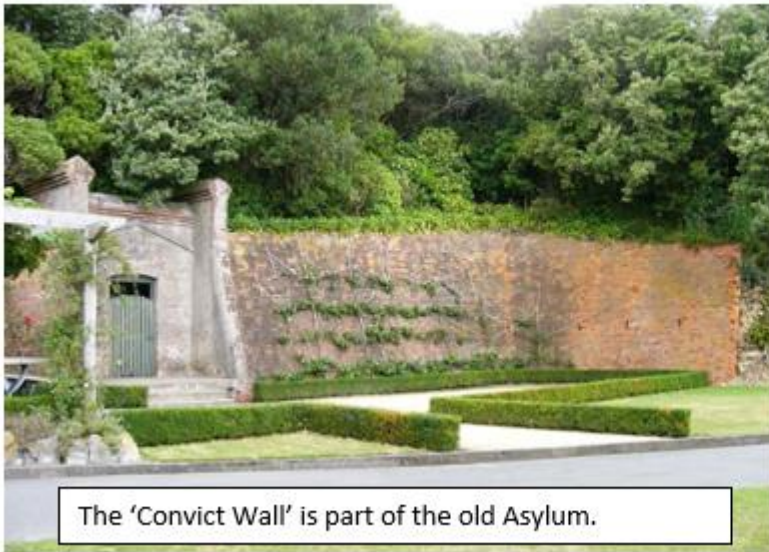
The tour will look through the ground floor of the house. The upstairs floor is for the Governor-General and guests. There is a lot of art and patterns in the house. Talk to your guide if you are becoming overwhelmed.

These photos show some of the rooms you will visit:



After the house tour, your group might visit the gardens. The gardens include the remains of the 1873 Mt View Asylum, which was on this site before Government House was built.

Some people prefer not to visit the remains of the Asylum. Let a staff member know if you would prefer not to visit that site. That section of the gardens is not easily wheelchair accessible.



The 'Convict Wall' is part of the old Asylum.

The remaining part of the Asylum is the wall of an 'Airing Courtyard' where patients could get fresh air. The bricks were made by prisoners at the Terrace Goal and are stamped with arrows. Some bricks have etchings done by patients.

The tour will finish at the Visitor Centre. A public tour will return to the Visitor Centre at approximately 3.30pm.

## **What will happen at the end of the tour?**

On returning to the Visitor Centre, you can take some brochures, bookmarks and stickers. You are welcome to sign the visitors' book.

If you have a lanyard, return it to the Visitor Centre staff before you leave.

Your bags can now be collected from the Visitor Centre cubby holes or from the Visitor Centre office.

Staff will open the gate for you, or you can use the intercom and ask for the gates to be opened.

**If you have any questions before, during or after your tour please ask.**

**We hope you enjoy your visit to Government House.**