

Officer responsible Director of Policy	Author Stephen Phillips/Mike Richardson
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The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the opportunity to make submissions on the document “Scenarios for Local Government to 2010” which was produced as a foresight planning exercise by the Department of Internal Affairs, Local Government New Zealand and the Society of Local Government Managers.

INTRODUCTION

The document outlines three possible scenarios which depict different views of New Zealand in 2010. They represent different degrees of take up of the knowledge revolution, and different levels of social cohesion. They are but three of many possible scenarios, and the opportunity exists to include any other scenario that may be appropriate to local government.

Submissions are sought by 26 February. Over 5000 copies of the document have been distributed throughout the country, including to the national office of all business and community organisations. Community Boards have been invited to make submissions and have been provided with “Champions Kits” to help facilitate wider input from community groups. It is anticipated that Boards will lodge submissions and encourage community groups to do likewise.

The scenarios are **not** government, **nor** local government policy.

Following the current consultation phase the steering group which has been managing the process will **develop a preferred scenario** which will be fed into the policy development process of central government. From this will flow a programme for policy and legislative reforms that respond to the challenges facing central and local government into the next millennium.

As the responses to these scenarios will influence the government’s views on the future of local government it is well worth making sure that there is a strong Canterbury response. This response needs to be related to our plans for holding a local government forum in Canterbury later this year.

SCENARIOS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO 2010

The document introduces the following mega-trends that were identified by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology for the early part of the 21st century:-

- New Technologies
- Knowledge Revolution
- Social Organisation
- Globalisation
- Industry Convergence
- Changing Consumer Markets
- Environmental Tensions

The outcome of an Environmental Scan (conducted by BERL) to the year 2010 to cover trends in the New Zealand economy, society and local governance is also detailed.

Set against this background the following three scenarios were developed:-

Scenario 1: Muddling Along

New Zealand is caught like a possum in the glare of the oncoming future. But possums are hardy creatures and New Zealand muddles along by finding new markets for traditional agricultural products and combating falling prices with new production technologies. Skills and attitudes have not moved to embrace the knowledge revolution and New Zealand has fallen behind comparative countries in this regard. An entrenched underclass exists and there is considerable tension. Meanwhile the countryside still looks beautiful and provides attractive lifestyle options for the well heeled from overseas and from Auckland. But New Zealand seems to be on automatic pilot, not responding to changes and opportunities.

Scenario 2: Lean and Competitive

After a period of economic difficulty, New Zealand has adapted quickly to keep up with the changes of the early 21st century. Rapid uptake of new technology and the internet, and the success of the entrepreneurial approach, have made us a highly individualised society of sharks. New Zealand is diverse and entrepreneurial, but sharply divided and lacking in social cohesion, and although economically the nation is sound, socially it is in great danger.

Scenario 3: Governance for Citizens

Around the world, there is much interest in the social change that has occurred in New Zealand over the first decade of the 21st century. What marks New Zealand out from other countries is a strong and widely shared sense of purpose—a national intent. New Zealanders are a nation of Kahikatea, standing together.

The document summarises Scenario 3 as:-

Local government has moved towards the view that it is there to provide for citizens rather than provide services to citizens. This has allowed a major disengagement between the governance process and services. With privatisation and contracting out, local government has taken on the role of promoting leadership decisions at local levels and implementing a very broad-based democratic process rather than simply a consultative one.

Local government is seen as the powerhouse for facilitating choices within common, agreed goals and brokering future desired outcomes. Local government's new identity is people-skilled, focused on empowerment of an informed citizenry.

Having regard to government's desire to reform roading, water and waste, the Council's consultative style and people focus as reflected through a range of policies and practices Scenario 3 would no doubt be the preference if the Council had to choose only one of the futures outlined in the document.

DRAFT SUBMISSION

Based on the questions posed in the document the following is proposed for consideration as a draft submission.

(a) Megatrends

The Council accepts that the most important megatrends influencing local government are those identified by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology.

While there is a mixture of internal and external influences provided by the trends, it is likely that the greater impact on the local community will come from the internal type trends. In particular:-

- Environmental tensions, e.g. clean air, protection of open space, Treaty of Waitangi customary rights.
- Social organisation, e.g. increased pressures on utilities, infrastructures, levels of unemployment and poverty.

(b) Features most wanted in Local Government in the future

Based on the key points identified under the various scenarios the Council sees the following as priority features:-

- Local government being genuinely responsive and accountable to its community rather than to central government, with freedom to choose the most appropriate responses for local conditions.
- Local government providing leadership in articulating a community vision and facilitating outcomes (including the ability to identify and respond to community needs in effective and innovative ways).
- Integration of service delivery across the whole of the public sector, the not-for-profit sector and business, in order to achieve the outcomes.
- Stronger units of local (provincial?) government.
- Partnerships developed with local iwi.
- Flexibility in terms of own service delivery (ie, a mix of contracted out or private provision) and asset ownership.
- Extensive use is made of technology in local government and community processes, while recognising that communities comprise people.
- Strong levels of innovation and visions in Councils.

(c) The Most Important Feature

The one important feature selected from (b) above is articulation of community vision and facilitation of resulting outcomes.

(d) The Ideal Future

The Council sees the ideal future of local government in the year 2010 being best described as providing a forum for leadership and decision making at community

level and implementing very broad-based policy and programme delivery processes which are inclusive in nature. The focus is on empowerment of an informed citizenry and ‘ownership’ by them of **their** governance processes (refer Scenario 3).

Community government is about recognising the common elements that make up a community, that bind it together and allow it to set its own aspirations. These may well be distinct from other communities.

(e) **Disadvantages of the Ideal Future**

The Council does not see any group in the community being disadvantaged by its ideal future for local government.

(f) **First Choice from Scenarios Offered**

Had it to choose only one of the futures it would choose scenario 3 – Governance for Citizens.

(g) **The Scenario Most Disliked**

Whilst both scenarios 1 and 2 are unacceptable, scenario 2 which portrays a “society of sharks” and a divided community with vast gaps between the rich and the poor is most disliked.

(h) **Priorities for Science and Technology**

The knowledge/information revolution being brought about by new technology, which is viewed by many of the scale of the early 1900s industrial revolution, will be the driving force on a global scale, that influences the other trends.

The Ministry then needs to assess the impact of the knowledge revolution, as the first priority.

(i) **Steps Forward**

To move forward local the agenda might be widened to look at community governance in the context of public policy/governance more generally. Canterbury local government will provide a forum for such widening of the agenda, in June/July this year.

Recommendation: That a response based on the above points be prepared with the final wording to be agreed by the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Committee.

Chairman’s

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.