

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND ZONE 5 MEETING 23 FEBRUARY 2001

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Corporate Plan Output: Public Accountability	

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief summary of the Local Government New Zealand Zone 5 meeting held on 23 February 2001 in Greymouth.

While there was a reasonably good attendance at this meeting it was notable that some of the Local Authorities most remote from Greymouth did not attend the meeting. Further, by a strange quirk of timing, none of the West Coast Mayors nor the Chair of the Regional Council were able to be there because they had all been summonsed to a meeting to consider the management of the West Coast economic development package. The main items dealt with at the meeting were as follows:

1. **Matters Arising: Representation of Local Authorities**

At the last Zone 5 meeting in November last year, a motion was moved on the Environment Bay of Plenty local bill authorising the establishment of a separate Maori voting roll to elect two members of their Council. In November the Zone 5 meeting resolved that the resolution lie on the table and after further debate at this meeting it was again resolved that the resolution lie on the table.

2. **Local Government New Zealand Report Update**

A copy of the written report included with the agenda is attached to this report. The most important things to note about it are the reports on the progress of the various legislative reforms including:

- The Local Election Legislation.
- The Funding Powers Review
- The Local Government (Elected Members Remuneration and Trading Enterprises) Amendment Bill.
- The Local Government Bill

3. **Building Growth: Grey District**

The meeting was given a short presentation on the GROW Strategy that the Grey District is sponsoring for the improvement of the economic development and wellbeing of Greymouth and environs. The approach taken is very much community based with co-ordination between four GROW clusters:

- GROW Industry
- GROW Tourism
- GROW Commerce
- GROW Community

4. **Road Funding**

There was a proposal before the meeting that the Government be urged to provide more roading funding "in view of the significant increase in taxation received in 2000 as a result of the volatility in petrol prices". As the subsequent discussion showed, the premise of this proposal is ill-founded. Increases in petrol prices do mean that the Government gets more GST from petrol, but this is largely at the expense of GST that it would collect in other areas. Further, petrol consumption falls as petrol prices rise with the effect being roughly that a 10% increase in the price of petrol at the pump results in a 1% reduction in consumption. Since the Government's tax take (other than GST) on petrol is at a flat rate per litre, the net effect of the volatility in petrol prices last year has been a reduction in Government tax revenues. In particular Transfund is concerned that it will not have sufficient revenue to meet its budget and may have to look at raising the benefit/cost ratio for the projects it funds.

5. **Land Information New Zealand**

Tony Fraser, Regional Manager, Land Information New Zealand gave a presentation to the meeting explaining the “Landonline” changes that LINZ is making. Landonline is the conversion of the land information records to electronic form and the moving to electronic processing of land information changes. A consequence of this is that practitioners (surveyors, conveyancing lawyers, and specialist information providers) will buy licences to access the database and that there will be limited web based access provided to casual users. The price to be paid for this is the closure of a number of regional offices and the centralisation of the office in Christchurch. Not surprisingly, a number of the Zone 5 members for whom this will make access to a physical office much more difficult were not happy. In particular they were concerned about the need to go through a third party to access information which they can currently get by going into their local office, and about the loss of access to historical archive material which will be centralised in Christchurch. Examples of the latter are some of the early survey record books and early survey plans that contain important genealogical information. These are currently held in local offices but will now all be centralised in the regional offices and they will not be digitalised so they will not be available on line.

6. **Shortage of Rural GPs**

This concern was raised by Hurunui District Council, but from the reaction it appears to be a matter that affects most of the more remote rural territorial local authorities. There was a lot of discussion about the rural locum scheme and other steps that the Government had taken to improve the situation but there was a belief that this is not sufficient. Eventually the meeting resolved to ask Local Government New Zealand to take this up as a national issue with the Ministry of Health.

7. **South Island Loop Road**

A Tasman District Council representative provided an oral update on their progress with this issue. Their idea is that there is a need to build a road from Karamea to Collingwood (about 70 kilometres) and to complete the Haast to Hollyford Road in order to provide a tourist loop around the South Island. Their concentration is on the Karamea to Collingwood Road, but they are strongly supportive of the Haast to Hollyford Section as well. They are moving to establish a web site and to begin a promotional campaign on the merits of this proposal. They acknowledge that it will be controversial, that the focus in the campaign will need to be on the tourism benefits and they are open to creative options. For example they talked about it being a toll road, and they suggested that while they have identified a route for the Karamea to Collingwood section they would be open to alternative suggestions including for example a link between Karamea and the Cobb. The meeting received the oral update without a resolution.

8. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is a combined Zone 5 and Zone 6 meeting to be held in Christchurch on 31 May and 1 June. Likely agenda items at this meeting include:

- Improved Government Funding for Historic Heritage.
- South Island Co-operation on Waste Minimisation.
- The Minister of Transport on his plans for transportation policy.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.